

FMBC AUDIENCE AND VISITOR GUIDELINES

- 1) **The remote Semi-Finals site depend heavily on their concession sales to help finance their band programs in these tough economic times.** Please make use of their on-site concessions at the remote sites whenever practical for your band and band program. It is simply not acceptable for the volunteers at a school sites to have to clean up the debris left in their parking lot from one or two groups who chose to ignore our request and bring meals or purchase food off-site at chain restaurants and consume it in the school's parking areas.
We understand that all programs have financial pressures and competition traditions, but we must respectfully insist that meals consumed on the Semi-Finals remote site premises come from the on-site concessions. Please, help the booster programs at our remote sites, and respect their premises. Use the links above, take advantage of the advance meal orders available at all remote sites. Send in the form and the Band Boosters at that site will have meals ready for you on your schedule. Please, no 'tailgating' at the remote sites.
- 2) There is no charge for parking at the remote Semi-Finals sites. However we have no control over parking and concession prices at the Tropicana Dome. **All fees for parking and profits from concessions at the Tropicana Dome go to the City of St. Petersburg and their contracted vendors, and not to FMBC or its affiliates.** Discounted parking is available near Tropicana Field, and various independent restaurants near Tropicana Field may offer more favorable food prices. Participating directors can purchase bulk discount admission tickets in advance of the event. All tickets for FMBC Semi-Finals and Finals Events are non-refundable.
- 3) **During the show, it is considered poor etiquette to exit, leave, or move around the stands when a band is performing.** Please wait until the band has completed their show before changing your seat or walking around the stands for any reason.
- 4) **Please applaud and cheer for every band.** These students have worked hard to put together an entertaining show for you to enjoy. Please show them that their efforts are appreciated, even if they are competing against your school.
- 5) **Judges are not favorably influenced by your screaming and shouting during a band's show.** In fact, sometimes excessive noise during a performance can make it more difficult for a judge to appreciate, and in turn, reward the details of your band's performance. **Please exercise good judgment when cheering for your band.**
- 6) We understand that trophies and awards can be great fun and a great motivator in any endeavor in life, from spelling bees to winning an award at work, for doing an outstanding job. But we hope it is never the only goal. **Know that if your band made FMBC Semi-Finals, they are, without question, already winners.** They really don't need a trophy to prove it.

Therefore, **when awards are presented, good sportsmanship is expected of all.** It is very disheartening to the students who have worked hard when the parents and supporters of another band make disparaging sounds and remarks when their band receives awards. Note that extremely poor sportsmanship can result in a penalty for your school. Instead, help all participants celebrate their achievement by being supportive to ALL of those who participate, from the staff to the judges to the competitors. That is what FMBC is all about.

UNDERSTANDING THE JUDGING PROCESS

WHAT ARE THE JUDGES LOOKING FOR?

INDIVIDUAL MUSIC (1 Judge) - This individual is located on the performance field. The judge moves around, listening to the individual contributions made by all of the musicians on every instrument. He or she is listening for the details - the sound quality, the precision, the articulations, the intonation and the way percussion instruments are used. He or she can credit up to 10 points for achievement in this area.

ENSEMBLE MUSIC (1 Judge at Semis - 2 Judges at Finals with scores averaged) - These judges listen to the quality of the music presentation overall. They evaluate not only how well the music is performed, but also consider the challenges involved in performing it on the field, and evaluate how well the ensemble overcomes those challenges. Pitch, tempo, balance, dynamics - and many other musical elements are considered. They can credit up to 20 points for achievement in this area.

GENERAL EFFECT MUSIC (1 Judges at Semis - 2 Judges at Finals with scores averaged) - This is often the most misunderstood area of evaluation. It is the GE Music judge's job to evaluate how 'effective' the band is musically at communicating the intention of the composer and how effective is the job the ensemble has done in taking music that may have been composed with an indoor environment in mind to an outdoor environment. They are required to take an 'overview' of the music as performed, and are not as concerned with individual items as they are with the overall effectiveness of the musical performance. They each can award up to 20 points in this area.

GENERAL EFFECT VISUAL (1 Judges at Semis - 2 Judges at Finals with scores averaged) - The judges in this caption have the most 'Universal' job of the judging group. They are assigned the responsibility of evaluating how all of the elements fit together to generate the complete picture. They are required to keep their focus on the presentation as a whole, and to evaluate how effective that presentation is, both musically and visually, at presenting the concept and intent of the music. They can award up to 20 points each.

ENSEMBLE VISUAL (1 Judges at Semis - 2 Judges at Finals with scores averaged) - These judges evaluate the quality of the visual presentation. They look not only for visual precision, but also for the appropriateness and quality of the choices made in presenting the visual program. They can award up to 20 points for achievement in this caption.

INDIVIDUAL VISUAL - (1 Judge) - This judge is on the field, and has the responsibility to evaluate the training and precision of the individual performers. Considerations include the content of the challenges the individuals have been asked to perform and evaluating how well they succeed at these tasks. Body carriage, balance, strength, horn angles - all of these things and more are evaluated and credited by this judge. The judge can award up to 10 points for achievement in these areas.

PERCUSSION AND COLOR GUARD (Semis only) - The scores from these two 'support' caption judges do not enter into determining the total score of the band.. The Color Guard, or Auxiliary Judge watches the performance from the press box and evaluates the individuals whose primary responsibility is to add visual interest to the program. This includes baton twirlers as well as others that are handling visual props such as flags and rifles. The Percussion Judge is on the field, and evaluates the contribution of the percussive instruments, including the drums, xylophone(s), etc. At FMBC semis, an award is given for the highest level of achievement in both of these captions, in each size class.

HOW DO THEY DETERMINE THE SCORE?

The judges must understand what the band is attempting to achieve, and then credit the quality of that achievement. Many people think that the judges' job is to find mistakes. That is not the case. The judges are there to credit achievement, not to search for individual momentary errors (although a lot of momentary errors can affect the score). Remember - judges credit (and numerically rank) levels of achievement - that is the key to understanding adjudication. And this takes us to the concept of 'Content.'

On the music side, in competitive music evaluation, if a band plays very simple music with lots of unison parts well (like a very fine middle school band might choose to play at a concert), chances are that it does not achieve to the same degree as a band that plays more complex music well (like a very fine high school or college band). The style is not important - it does not matter if the band has chosen rock, jazz, classical, or any style music - it does matter that the musical arrangement has the 'Content' necessary to display the musical style and in turn that the band plays their

music very well. A part of the challenge is how well the band adjusts to playing on a football field - are they able to adjust their volumes for good balance, and are they able to play together with precision, good breath support and intonation despite the physical challenges of marching a demanding drill at the same time? And does it all fit together in an appropriate and interesting manner, communicating the musical concepts to the audience?

On the visual side, the casual visitor in the audience might see straight lines and watch flags that seem to move together most of the time, and think that alone will make the band score well. If the lines and rows are straight, but the performers have bad posture and march with all different kinds of styles, and the flags simply do the same thing over and over, they are not achieving the same level of visual excellence as a band whose lines are straight, but have great posture and march, move, and even dance with identical styles, and where the people moving flags use different, perhaps challenging appropriate moves to express elements of the music, and their scores will reflect this.

The support caption of 'Color Guard' is evaluated two ways. First of all, it is evaluated on a 'stand alone' basis at semis by a judge whose score does not enter into the total band score. The Color Guards are, in a way, competing at semis for their own 'Best In Class' award independently of the band itself. In addition, the Color Guard can add visual interest to the band's presentation, enhancing their total show. A band is not required to have a Color Guard, and it is possible for a band to qualify for semi-finals and even for finals without a color guard. (For example, one band in FMBC 2010 Finals did not even have a color guard!). However if the band does not have a color guard, their visual presentation of the instrumental members of the band then has to 'stand on its own' and the band must be able to present and communicate the visual side of their program without the help of a color guard unit.

The support caption of 'Percussion' is evaluated in a manner similar to the Color Guard Caption. First of all, it is evaluated on a 'stand alone' basis at semis by a judge whose score does not enter into the total band score. The Percussion Units, including Marching Percussion and stationary percussion are, in a way, also competing at semis for their own 'Best In Class' award independently of the band itself. A band is not required to have a marching percussion section, and it is possible for a band to qualify for semi-finals and for finals without a marching percussion section. Many bands - especially smaller bands - choose to 'ground' their percussion sections in one or two areas of the field (often called the 'pit' no matter where the grounded percussion are located) rather than to have the percussion section moving around the field. Of course, if the percussion section or a portion of the percussion section is moving, the judges are asked to credit the increased difficulty of moving while playing.

SOME GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT FMBC SEMI-FINALS & FINALS ADJUDICATION

When a band qualifies for FMBC Finals, the scores from their semi-final performance are discarded, and they start 'from scratch' with a clean sheet of paper, and except for 4A bands, they are performing in a very different venue. The scores of these five finalist bands in each size class are usually very close, and very slight differences in performance from Semi-Finals to Finals can affect the order of finish. Because of this, a band that finishes 5th in its class in Semi-Finals can in fact finish first in its class in Finals. The performers are often able to tell you as they leave the field that they had a 'good run' or that things did or did not 'click' for them at a specific performance. But it is important to remember that although they can control their own performance, so can the other bands that they are competing against, and although they have 'notched up' their Finals performance, their competitors may well have done the same thing!

Bands do a blind draw to determine their order of performance at Finals. Since the Finals Judges are for the most part different judges than those who evaluated the band at Semi-Finals, and the Finals judges do not know the scores or order-of-finish at Semi-Finals, it is very possible for the band in fifth place entering Finals to notch up their performance and be the Class Champion at the end of the day

And finally, always keep in mind that the judges are there to reward achievement, not to take points away because of individual errors. No judge is overly concerned with an error by a single performer, even if the error is musically or visually large - for example, the student who may slip and fall on the field will not affect the score nearly as much as the student who never trips and falls, but marches out-of-step or with bad posture for an extended time during the show. So when you are watching bands perform at FMBC events, look for and listen to those elements, and you may know the order of finish, even before the scores are announced! But above all reward these students with your applause, and then sit back and enjoy the show.