



Contest Rules

&

Adjudication System

2011 Marching Band Open Series©, MBOS©

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Mission Statement

Marching Band Open Series (MBOS) exists as a division of the Winter Guard Association of Southern California (WGASC). The purpose is to cultivate personal growth through educationally competitive marching band performances in an organized forum that promotes student teamwork and self esteem. To this end, MBOS will provide high quality performance venues, apply consistent rules and policies, and employ the finest music educators and pageantry professionals to adjudicate its performances. With an emphasis on music education, MBOS will also respect and recognize visual creativity, artistic freedom, and in doing so, reward the students, music educators, staff, and marching band fans who take part in the MBOS experience.

WGASC Contact Information

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WGASC Staff

Director of Operations Scott Bilbruck
Color Guard Coordinator Carl W. Nelson
Educational Coordinator Chris Casteel
MBOS Coordinator Mike Stone
Music Licensing Administrator Tracy Williams

E-Committee

President Kevin Roberts
VP-Records Debby Gibson
VP-Finances Daniel Mack
VP-Adjudication Richard Kramer
VP-Public Relations Robert Hahn

Board of Directors

Greg Llacer
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Marching Band Open Series

The Marching Band Open Series (MBOS) was founded in 2006 as a new division of the Winter Guard Association of Southern California. (WGASC) If this is your first year competing or if you are returning, welcome to MBOS. The MBOS adjudication philosophy and contest format updates are included. This manual replaces all previous versions.

MBOS competitions are open to high school bands on a first come basis up to a maximum of twenty four (24) bands for 2011 events.

MBOS has automated contest applications found on line at <http://mbos.wgasc.org>

Applications must be completed online. If entrance fees are not paid online via credit card, your official registration is based on the postmark date of your payment by check or money order to the office. Your entry however is held to avoid shows closing. After two weeks if payment is not received, your preliminary slot will be rescinded.

MBOS events are Prelims and Finals contests. A maximum of 10 bands advance into Finals. Finalists include each division winner (so long as there is more than one band in that division). Bands in a division without a competitor must qualify for finals as one of the top scores for the evening contest. Finals will also include up to six (6) additional bands based upon score. Venues may dictate fewer finalists at some contests.

All preliminary lineups are determined by the bands payment date. Upon completing your application via credit card, you will automatically be given your preliminary time for that contest. The earliest applications receive the latest preliminary time slot regardless of classification. Bands whose applications are received on the same day are then seeded by time. M.B.O.S. classifications will be shown on scoring recaps and awards will be given by class in prelims.

The 4 MBOS classifications are - Marble, Black-Opal, Onyx, and Sapphire.

An awards ceremony will be held following prelims.

At this ceremony band placements (not scores) will be announced within each MBOS classification. Bands placing 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in their respective classifications receive an MBOS award. Bands not placing 1st – 3rd will receive a participation certificate. Additionally, MBOS will recognize in Prelims and Finals:

High Music (Ensemble + Individual Music)
High Visual (Ensemble + Individual Visual)
High Effect. (Visual + Music Effect)

Finalists will be announced at the preliminary awards ceremony. The Finals schedule is determined by placing bands in reverse order of score and then randomly scrambling bands 6-10 and bands 1-5.

Marching Band Open Series (Continued)

Finals is an open competition, classifications are not used for the evening event.

Each performing finalist member will receive an MBOS patch. All Championship bands will receive a participant or Finalist patch.

Day of event admission is \$12.00 per person. This is valid for both prelims and finals.

Discounted presale tickets are available at <http://mbos.wgasc.org> up to one week prior to the contest for \$11.00 per person.

At designated MBOS events, a complimentary DVD of your band's performance is provided for educational purposes so long as the copyright paperwork has been completed. (See section on Copyright) Action Photography and DVD's of single shows and divisions are for sale at each event and also online at <http://mbos.wgasc.org>.

Marching Band Open Series - Championships

Beginning in 2008, MBOS will host an annual championship contest(s) the week following the final Open Series contest of each season. Qualification for 2011 Championships is a performance in at least one (1) MBOS event prior to Championships. A Unit located more than two hundred miles (200) miles from the four level intersection of freeways in downtown Los Angeles is not required to attend an MBOS sanctioned event in order to qualify for MBOS Championships. In keeping with the MBOS philosophy, Prelims for championship contests are based on payment received date. To ensure an educational and positive experience for each band, a maximum of thirty (30) bands may register for championships. After the first thirty (30) bands a wait list is created. Should the waitlist reach fifteen (15) bands, a second Championships site will be contracted.

Division Championships – MBOS will recognize division champions in each of the four (4) MBOS classifications. These four (4) champions will automatically advance into Finals. Additionally, the next 8 highest scoring bands regardless of round and classification will advance into finals. Performance order in Finals is in reverse order of score with the highest six (6) scoring bands randomly sorted and the next six (6) highest bands randomly sorted.

CHAMPIONSHIPS PRELIM and FINALS AWARDS

Awards for championships are facilitated in the same way as the season shows. Along with the four (4) division winners, there will be eight (8) bands advancing to finals. If there are less than twenty-four (24) bands in Prelims, only six (6) additional bands advance.

Finalists will be announced in alphabetical order at the preliminary awards ceremony. The Finals schedule is determined by placing bands in reverse order of score and then randomly sorting bands 7-12 and bands 1-6.

The Finals award ceremony invites all performers to participate in a full retreat. Following the retreat the 1st place band in finals may do a repeat performance of their show or a victory concert if they choose.

Day of event admission is \$15.00 per person. This is valid for both prelims and finals.

Discounted presale tickets are available at <http://mbos.wgasc.org> up to one week prior to the contest for \$14.00 per person which includes prelims and finals.

A complimentary DVD of your band's performance is provided for educational purposes so long as the copyright paperwork has been completed. (See section on Copyright) Action Photography and DVD's of single shows and divisions are for sale at each event and also online at www.wgasc.org.

Definition of Key Terms

A. Eligibility

All high school bands up through 12th grade are eligible to compete at Marching Band Open Series events. Any person contributing to the band performance must be an enrolled student per the “Student/Performer/Member definition”. If contributions are made by a non-enrolled person, the band will be disqualified.

B. High School Band

MBOS defines a high school band as a marching group of musicians and visual guard/dancers whose participating members are enrolled at the same high school or are part of a marching group within a single district. Students participating from all feeder schools are also permitted.

C. Student/Performer/Member

A person currently enrolled as a student in a high school or a lower grade feeder school. Said student must be enrolled in band subject to state law and/or school policy. Home-schooled students within the high school district are also eligible.

D. Enrollment Classifications

MBOS classifications of competition are based on the total number of musicians. All brass, winds, pit and battery percussion make up the total number of musicians. MBOS offers four classifications.

Marble - No more than 60 total musicians in performance

Black Opal - 55 musicians and no more than 85 total musicians

Onyx - 80 musicians and no more than 100 total musicians

Sapphire - No limitations on total musicians

The overlap in the divisions allows for additional educational and competitive freedom.

E. The Stage/Performance area

A regulation size football field will be used for MBOS competitions. The field will be marked and lined every five yards. Hash marks will exist, however depending on the venue may vary from stadium to stadium. MBOS will publish any sites using a field which differs from standard high school markings. The performance may take place inside or outside the field sidelines so long as the performers are on grass or field turf. The track surface is for band entrance and exit purposes only.

Exceptions:

Conducting podiums may be placed on the track

Sound mixing boards may be set up on the track

A student running a mixing board is exempt from boundary regulations

PENALTY One-tenth (0.1) of a point penalty shall be assessed for each member for each boundary offense or violation.

Arrival Guidelines and Pre-Performance

A. Check-In

The “Check-in” table will be located between the bus parking lot and the stadium. Signs and volunteers will direct you if necessary. Because of “no shows”, Southern California traffic, etc. it is possible, though unlikely, for prelims times to change the day of the event. Directors are encouraged to CHECK IN EARLY on the day of your performance to be sure that the schedule has not changed.

B. Parking

Buses and equipment trucks will be directed via signs and by high school personnel to a designated staging area. ONLY BUSES AND EQUIPMENT TRUCKS will be allowed in these parking lots. All cars and other vehicles must park in spectator parking areas. Parking space is limited and all bands will need space to prepare effectively.

C. Credentials for stadium

Directors will receive two types of stadium credentials at “Check-In”. Each director will receive six (6) director/staff wristbands which allow full access to Prelims and Finals for that day’s event. MBOS will also issue fifteen (15) Field/Pit Crew wrist bands which allow entrance through the band entrance gate for setup purposes and allow entrance for visitor side seating. Performers and field crew must wear wristbands to enter through the Band Entrance gate.

PENALTY Three-tenths (0.3) of a point penalty shall be assessed for any persons on or in the field/set up areas without proper credentials.

D. Practice Fields/Warm-Up Time

Warm-up practice areas will be assigned and only available to you during your bands assigned time. Each band receives forty five (45) minutes in a specified area. Finalist bands’ warm-up times will be assigned during the finalist directors meeting at the first awards ceremony. Bands may not warm up in event parking lots unless otherwise authorized.

E. Report Times

Report time for your bands performance is ten (10) minutes before their scheduled time. Credentials will be required to enter the stadium. MBOS does not have a mandatory “Check-In” time however it is encouraged that your band is checked in two hours prior to their performance.

PENALTY Five-tenths (0.5) of a point penalty will be assessed for delay of contest.

Arrival Guidelines and Pre-Performance (Continued)

F. Field Set-Up and On-Field Warm Up

MBOS staff will help pre-stage pit during the band prior to your performance. A thirteen (13) minute interval time is used for scheduling performances. MBOS does allow fifteen (15) minutes from the band entrance to the end of the show. In an effort to assist with the flow of the show, the line-up is scheduled with thirteen (13) minute intervals. Each band is still allowed fifteen (15) total minutes if needed. The fifteen (15) minute timing begins once the entire band is in the performance area.

G. Prop Set-Up

Props and equipment must enter through the band entrance gate. Props may not be assembled near the Performance Area in order to minimize distraction from the preceding band's performance. Following the end of the band's performance, all props and equipment must proceed in continuous movement until removed from the stadium. No gasoline powered vehicles are allowed past the band entrance gate.

H. Electronic Warm-Up/Testing

MBOS will allow participants to test their electronic equipment during scheduled breaks. A Director/Staff badge will be required for early field entry. Electronics may be used at your bands own risk. MBOS takes no responsibility for supplying power however will do its best to make sure each host site can provide.

I. Start of your show/Start of timing

The first note of music or the first step by a member of the band proper will start the timing of your show and must occur within thirty (30) seconds from the completion of your bands announcement. After thirty (30) seconds, timing begins automatically.

The Performance

A. The Participant

Only students may participate in the performance. No adult activity during the performance may contribute directly to the musical or visual program.

Exceptions:

Directors or staff with Director passes/badges may conduct during the show

Adults may set up and take down equipment before and after the performance

An Adult running a sound board on the track

All music from traditional wind and percussion instruments, human voices or electronic instruments, must be performed by a student(s) live and in real time. The use of sampled sound (“prerecorded/sequenced”) of human voices, woodwind, brass wind and percussion instruments will not be permitted. Sounds other than music such as narration or sound effects, may be prerecorded and used without penalty. (Please see Copyright Compliance section on page 12 regarding prerecorded material).

PENALTY Five-tenths (0.5) of a point penalty will be assessed for each adult found contributing to the performance.

B. Prelims

MBOS is unique in that its Prelims/Finals format creates two very different contests in the same day with several of the same bands. The purpose of the preliminary competition at MBOS events is to first determine each band’s ranking in relation to the philosophy of the score sheets, and secondly, to determine which bands will participate in the finals competition.

C. Timing (length of show)

A band is allowed a performance time of at least seven (7) minutes and no more than eleven (11) minutes. Bands are scheduled in thirteen (13) minute intervals, with appropriate judges’ breaks. Show timing stops at the obvious conclusion of the bands performance.

PENALTY One-tenth (0.1) of a point penalty will be assessed for each three (3) seconds or fraction thereof

D. Never Allowed

The following are not allowed at MBOS events:

- Pyrotechnics of any kind, including fireworks, discharge of arms, etc.
- Lights-out routines
- Animals
- Hazardous equipment or illegal use of equipment

PENALTY - Disqualification.

Post-Performance Guidelines

A. Field Exit/Re-entering the Stadium

Following your bands performance, they will exit towards the band exit gate. The wristbands will allow students to change out of uniform and into street clothes. Re-entry however will be on the visitor's side. Any cadence/music used when exiting must cease once the Performance Field is vacated. We caution you to be conscious of the microphones, recording equipment, etc. while exiting.

B. Photographs

MBOS offers "Action" photos which are shot throughout prelims and finals. Creative Photography will once again provide these photos for sale at each event.

C. Availability of Scores and Adjudicator Comments

In the interest of giving all finalist bands an equal opportunity, prelims scores will not be available to the judging panel nor announced publicly. Your sheets and scores will be available in your packets following the Prelims award ceremony. Judges performance comments will be available on a digital media device following your groups performance.

D. Finals

Finalists will be announced at the preliminary awards ceremony. The Finals performance order is determined by placing bands in reverse order of score and randomly sorting bands 1-5 and bands 6-10. The Finals contest is void of any classifications. All competing finalists will receive an "MBOS Finalist" patch.

Bands placing 1st, 2nd, or 3rd in Finals receive an MBOS award. Additionally, MBOS will recognize in Finals:

- High Music (Ensemble + Individual Music)
- High Visual (Ensemble + Individual Visual)
- High Effect. (Visual + Music Effect)

The Finals award ceremony invites all student leaders to participate in retreat. Following the retreat the 1st place band in finals may do a repeat performance of their show or a victory concert if they choose.

E. Finalist Directors' Meeting

Immediately following the announcement of the finalist bands, a meeting will be held with all finalist director's or representatives. At this time warm-up areas will be assigned, performance order determined, and performance times announced.

F. Recaps and Finals Score Sheets

All score sheets, Finals judges commentary, and all recaps (Prelims and Finals) will be available immediately following the Finals awards ceremony.

COPYRIGHT COMPLIANCE REQUIREMENTS

A. Copyright

To establish a set of rights and protections for original works of authorship or creation, the law Copyright was created. The protection of Copyright extends to musical, literary, dramatic works to name a few. Today, any creative work that is fixed in a manner that can be perceived by human eyes or ears is able to be protected by Copyright. Protected are (1) the right to reproduce the work, (2) the right to perform the work publicly, (3) the right to display the work publicly, (4) the right to create new works based on or derived from the work and (5) the right to initially distribute the work.

B. Compliance

MBOS requires all enrolled bands to comply with all Copyright laws in regards to performance and/or arrangements of copyrighted music, visual images, spoken text, and other materials. Any prerecorded sounds used that are copyrighted must have permission obtained for their use. MBOS will request evidence of such authority.

C. No Copyright, No Performance

No band will be permitted to perform if it is not in compliance with the copyright laws of the United States. Participants must take the necessary steps to obtain and provide MBOS with evidence that it has purchased or obtained permission/license to use and arrange music performed by it, as well as any visual and/or audio images presented. MBOS will provide "Permission to Arrange" forms and compiled lists of various publishers and musical pieces to assist you in the compliance process. All bands must provide evidence of written permission for custom musical arrangements from the copyright holder before they will be allowed to perform. MBOS recommends that directors begin the process of obtaining permission at least three (3) months in advance and before beginning any custom arrangements. Use of visual images in the form of artwork, props, signage, and other media also require permission/license in advance of performance. Similarly, the use of copyrighted, printed materials, spoken word and sounds require permission and license. Participating bands are required to provide MBOS with evidence of the grant of such permission. Bands should contact publishers and copyright holders directly concerning these matters.

PENALTY – Disqualification

D. MBOS Copyright Assistance

We also encourage you to contact Tracy Williams at cgohana@aol.com or the MBOS office when you have questions or are otherwise in doubt. If you are using a stock arrangement, please fill out a Music Copyright Compliance form. Above forms are available on the WGASC website.

MBOS ADJUDICATION SYSTEM

In 2006, MBOS created a Marching Band Advisory Committee (MBAC) consisting of six top music educators and designers. The MBOS adjudication system consists of seven adjudicators and a chief judge. First and foremost, in support of music education and music educators in California and throughout the country, “music” is the primary emphasis in the MBOS philosophy. In support of this philosophy, the allotted possible music points are 800 where the allotted possible visual points are 600.

All competing MBOS bands will be adjudicated in the following captions:

- 1 Effect Visual
 - 2 Effect Music
 - 3 Effect Music
 - 4 Ensemble Visual
 - 5 Individual Visual
 - 6 Ensemble Music
 - 7 Individual Music
- (MBOS will also provide a Timing and Penalties judge)

MBOS places 60% of its score value on music and 40% on visual. In creating the captions mentioned above, MBOS also places an emphasis in the effect categories. The two Effect Music judges and the Effect Visual judge make up 60% of the possible points for each competing band.

MBOS believes in the importance of teamwork and the importance of planned coordination of the music and visual elements that create a successful field show program. To this end, MBOS decided not to evaluate the Color Guard and Percussion units separately, but rather to include them in the music and visual captions. MBOS supports all of the pageantry arts activities and looks forward to the winter season when indoor Color Guard and Percussion are showcased.

MBOS Adjudication Ethics & Philosophies

The Marching Band Open Series Staff and Adjudicators will adhere to the following:

Being professional at all times

Adjudicators will rank the bands in the assigned caption

Adjudicators will rate the bands in the assigned caption

Adjudicators will assist bands in improvement of their Performance through commentary

AFFILIATION: A judge may not adjudicate a class in which a competing unit is one with which he/she has an affiliation as defined below.

PRIMARY AFFILIATIONS: Designers, instructors, management, marching members.

CONSULTATIONS: A current MBOS judge is not permitted to give any consultation to any Band.

CONDUCT: No judge may display interest or preference toward any competing band he/she may judge. Judges are encouraged to give input regarding the ethical standards of the judging community. Any concerns in this area should be directed to the Chief Judge.

MBOS Captions

Each MBOS score sheet consists of two sub-captions each worth 100 points. Therefore, a single score sheet is worth a maximum of 200 points. When computing a band's final score, four of the seven score sheets are averaged. By averaging the Ensemble and Individual Visual sheets as well as averaging the Ensemble and Individual Music sheets, MBOS is able to distribute the music and visual weight according to its philosophy.

Below lists information on the intent of each caption, the judge location when evaluating that caption and the point value allotted.

1. Effect Visual (200 points)

This Effect sheet is adjudicated from the press box level and is not averaged with any other sheet. A digital recorder and a judging sheet are used to record comments. The Effect Visual judge uses two sub-captions consisting of "Effectiveness of the Repertoire" and the "Effectiveness of the Performers"

The intent of this sheet is to:

Evaluate the effectiveness of the program and the performers. The ability to maintain a connection with the audience through a combination of components contributes to effect. The performers are measured in part through excellence but, more significantly, in their ability to communicate the product to the audience

2. Effect Music (200 points)

This Effect sheet is adjudicated from the press box level and is not averaged with any other sheet. A digital recorder and a judging sheet are used to record comments. The Effect Visual judge uses two sub-captions consisting of "Effectiveness of the Repertoire" and the "Effectiveness of the Performers"

The intent of this sheet is to:

Evaluate the effectiveness of the program and the performers. The ability to maintain a connection with the audience through a combination of components contributes to effect. The performers are measured in part through excellence but, more significantly, in their ability to communicate the product to the audience

3. Effect Music (200 points)

This Effect sheet is adjudicated from the press box level and is not averaged with any other sheet. A digital recorder and a judging sheet are used to record comments. The Effect Visual judge uses two sub-captions consisting of "Effectiveness of the Repertoire" and the "Effectiveness of the Performers"

The intent of this sheet is to:

Evaluate the effectiveness of the program and the performers. The ability to maintain a connection with the audience through a combination of components contributes to effect. The performers are measured in part through excellence but, more significantly, in their ability to communicate the product to the audience

MBOS Captions (Continued)

4. Ensemble Visual (200 points*)

The Ensemble Visual sheet is adjudicated from the press box level and when scores are tabulated, this sheet is averaged with the Individual Visual sheet. A digital recorder and a judging sheet are used to record comments. The Ensemble Visual judge uses two sub-captions consisting of “The Composing Process” and “The Achievement”

The intent of this sheet is to:

Evaluate the skill of the writing team through the composing process. Evaluate the over all skill of the performers through their ACHIEVEMENT, which measures their ability to perform the responsibilities not only of the visual but also to perform the visual in combination with their musical responsibilities.

5. Individual Visual (200 points*)

The Individual Visual sheet is adjudicated from the field level and when scores are tabulated, this sheet is averaged with the Ensemble Visual sheet. A digital recorder and a judging sheet are used to record comments. The Individual Visual judge uses two sub-captions consisting of “Technique and Training” and “The Achievement”

The intent of this sheet is to:

Evaluate the overall skill of the performers through their ACHIEVEMENT, which measures their ability to perform the responsibilities not only of the visual but in combination with their musical responsibilities.

6. Ensemble Music (200 points*)

The Ensemble Music sheet is adjudicated from the press box level and when scores are tabulated, this sheet is averaged with the Individual Music sheet. A digital recorder and a judging sheet are used to record comments. The Ensemble Music judge uses sub-captions consisting of “Achievement of Musicianship” and “Sound/Tuning/Technique”

The intent of this sheet is to:

Evaluate the achievement of the musical ensemble. All parts of the ensemble, (Winds/Percussion) contribute to the success of the performance. Recognize the complexity of what is being performed and acknowledge how well it is performed.

7. Individual Music (200 points*)

The Individual Music sheet is adjudicated from the field level and when scores are tabulated this sheet is averaged with the Ensemble Music sheet. A digital recorder and a judging sheet are used to record comments. The Individual Music judge uses sub-captions consisting of “Achievement of Musicianship” and “Method and Timing”

The intent of this sheet is to:

Evaluate the achievement of the wind and percussion players. Individual musicians contribute to the success of the performance. Recognize the complexity of what is being performed and acknowledge how it is performed.

MBOS Captions (Continued)

MBOS adjudicators utilize a unique score sheet to evaluate the six captions (seven score sheets). MBOS score sheets are designed for band directors, staff and adjudicators to easily understand and utilize. Each band receives credit for the positive presentation of music, design, and performance proficiency. MBOS score sheets are subjective and are intended to be driven by the “achievement” of the performers.

The front of each score sheet contains two sub-captions and underneath which are some of the key descriptive components commonly accepted in pageantry within that caption. A judge may use the front of the sheet for making notes, to give written comments, as well as provide extra discipline and avoiding commenting out of caption.

On the back of each score sheet, additional tools are provided to assist a judge in ranking and assigning numeric values to each performance. The primary tool utilized is the “five box system.” The boxes run left to right with 1 on the low end and 100 at the top. Each box contains a descriptive such as “Excellent” or “Superior” and below that, a range of numbers such as 70-89. Perhaps the most helpful tool in the MBOS judging system is the descriptive statements which utilize specific components and concepts familiar to each respective caption.

Please see the following pages containing “sample” 2011 MBOS score sheets.

Copyright laws prohibit the use of Marching Band Open Series score sheets without the written consent of Winter Guard Association of Southern California. Contact the WGASC office www.wgasc.org if you are interested in utilizing the MBOS score sheets.

Conclusion

MBOS takes great care to provide the highest level music and visual adjudicators who will effectively communicate and provide constructive feedback to each unit. MBOS adjudicators will display an understanding of the MBOS score sheets and caption philosophy. MBOS is proud and honored to provide a variety of adjudicators from across the country with extensive experience in both education and pageantry. Any concerns regarding adjudicators should be directed to Mike Stone, <mailto:MStone@wgasc.org> immediately.

In pageantry, the educators and designers are pushing audiences and judges to recognize and respond to new and creative concepts. Therefore, rather than concluding the adjudication section of this manual, MBOS views this section as “living”, and will continue to be open to new and creative concepts. MBOS will continue to publish new articles and information often to further stimulate and educate its audience and participants.

The Marching Band Open Series places the highest priority on the quality level of adjudication it provides. MBOS stands behind its adjudicators and in its adjudication system.

In developing the MBOS score sheets it was important that they be effective in evaluating each bands performance, regardless of style, and still gain a good deal of uniformity, objectivity, and consistency. The emphasis of this examination is on the achievement level displayed by the performers. Achievement is the product of two elements (Content and Performance) that occur simultaneously: Content, which is what is being performed, and Performance, which is how well it is being performed.

Not wanting to eliminate designers and adjudicators individuality is important to MBOS, but equally important is scoring consistency. MBOS also understands the marching band activity and the tremendous growth in the activity over the last decade. So not to stifle any designers creativity and to not disregard the various backgrounds a group of judges brings to any contest, MBOS has created the following system and explanations regarding its scoring philosophy.

Judges are positioned in the stands or on the field depending upon the caption. This gives them the best vantage point of the individual or total ensemble. Judges are equipped with digital recorders and are expected to provide a flow of dialogue appropriate to the caption they are adjudicating. The Criteria Reference System and the process of impression, analysis and comparison is the method whereby number grades are earned. It should be understood that individual band scores may vary from contest to contest. Obviously, Performance variations are a factor, but impact is also made with the dynamics of the contest. The number of contestants and the overall level of achievement of those contestants may impact scoring within scope of a particular criteria reference. Although impression and analysis may indicate a score within a particular criteria reference box, it is through comparison that a specific score and subsequent scores within that range are determined.