



**CONTEST DYNAMICS AND
NUMBERS MANAGEMENT**

PART 1 - CONTEST DYNAMICS

1.1 VARIABLES

- A. There are many situations inherent in the judging process and the competitive format that prompt even a good judge to stop and ask questions before awarding a score. These situations require the judge's awareness to maintain the integrity of the scoring process.
- B. Such factors of size of the event, quantity of teams of similar quality or style, number of judges on the panel, and inconsistent exposure of judges can provide wide variances in rankings. Each event has its own dynamics of variables that place both judges and teams at a disadvantage. These factors, while often frustrating, are part of the system. They should to be understood by judge and coach and continually evaluated for their influence on the judging system.
 - 1. Season
 - a. Interpretation of the Linear Scale does not change during the season. Events held early in the season when teams are still building their performance skills with shows that are still developing are to be evaluated at the same standards as competitions late in the season. As the teams and shows develop, a rise in scores will be a natural consequence providing a realistic growth pattern.
 - b. With the concept of score averages or QS being a goal factor for teams, it is important to provide honest and realistic scores throughout the season. Early season encouragement in taped comments will provide more help that the confusion of inflated scores and inappropriate rankings.
 - 2. Order of Appearance
 - a. The first team to perform is often in the unfortunate position of being the 'trial' performance to set the standard for the performances to follow. First performances often receive incorrect scores, high and low, because there is a lack of comparison to other performances. With the variety in levels of quality and achievement, first team performances should not be used to set a standard on which to base following performances.
 - b. A judge should securely know the standard of average or 'Box 3' criteria before entering a competition and be able to judge any team at any time based on that knowledge.
 - 3. Incomplete Show
 - a. If the show is obviously incomplete, be sure you reflect this in your score, especially when judging Overall Effect. An *incomplete* show will often fall short in delivering a complete repertoire package, beginning-middle-end, etc. Remember not to give a score that hasn't been earned but do give verbal reinforcement of the potential you see.
 - b. On the other side, it is possible for the *short* show to demonstrate all the elements of quality and complete development of design and choreography. Length of show should not a factor of evaluation of Content.
 - 4. Caliber of Divisions
 - a. The difference between performance divisions may not only be in the size of the teams but in the caliber or quality of the entire division. While



**CONTEST DYNAMICS AND
NUMBERS MANAGEMENT**

being aware of the caliber of a division is a natural consequence of judging, it should not influence a change of standard applied to those teams or to other divisions. Giving 'sympathetic' credit to poor teams or undeserved 'critical' scores to good teams is not awarding honest, realistic scores, or scores which teams can use to compare against each other. The same Linear Scale is used by all teams in all divisions within the state. Maintaining a constant standard of analysis and using the Linear Scale as the criteria of reference is a priority.

5. Different Round/Different Perspective
 - a. Consistent scoring between rounds is an important responsibility for the judge. But even more important is the judge's responsibility to give honest, realistic numbers. When asking judges to view each performance as new and without reference, often the fresh approach is a different perspective. This can especially true during the 24 hours period between rounds at the State Championships.
 - b. While major rating and ranking changes between rounds would be questioned, it is possible for scores and rankings to change. This makes numbers management even more important. A change in a score or ranking can say as much as the score itself. If a change in perspective creates a *vast* difference in the scores, the judge is responsible for stating the reasons that resulted in the change in their recorded comments.
6. Different Judge/Different Perspective
 - a. The difference between the experience, training, and exposure judges have had to all teams will invariably create some variances in each judge's scoring. Judges cannot be expected to reflect numerical consistency to other judges in different competitions, but judges are expected to provide numerical consistency of their own scores within individual events and with reoccurring teams at other events.
7. Different Arenas
 - a. There are a variety of differences between the size of local high school gymnasiums and the arenas at championships. The viewing distance and perspective is much greater at championships which may alienate one performance and improve another. Improved or decreased scores for the same show between locals and championships is a real possibility.

PART 2 - NUMBERS MANAGEMENT

2.1 FUNNELING SCORES

- A. A Linear Scale Box divided into ranges within the points available will allow for a 'funneling' of points available from Box to Range to Score.
- B. To create a 'funnel system,' one recommendation is to:
 1. Divide up each Box of the Linear Scale into three 'ranges', such as Box 3 divided into a range of Low 60-65 pts, Mid 66-73 pts, Hi 74-79 pts.
- C. The judge's first impression will be which Linear Scale box the team is demonstrating its skills. From there, that impression will be processed or analyzed into determine if the criteria is in Low or Mid or High range of that box. Then, within that range of fewer points, a score will be chosen based on further criteria, Linear Scale descriptions, scores available, and scores already awarded.



**CONTEST DYNAMICS AND
NUMBERS MANAGEMENT**

2.2 CONSISTENCY

- A. Consistent and realistic scoring is a major concern to judges and coaches. There are some situations inherent in the judging system that leads to scores that fluctuate. The Judges' Affiliation is sensitive to the impact this has on the performers and coaches. Several factors have been identified which contribute to this concern.
- B. Being accountable for numerical decisions and their interpretation is a major aspect of the judge's job. "Number Crunching" can provide numerous interpretations about what is happening with individual teams, divisions, judges, and the activity itself. Giving attention to the 'language' of numbers will compel the judge to be more informative and more decisive when assigning scores.
- C. Teams, often seen several times during the season, should expect the judge to have a consistent perspective and recognize changes in their program. While judges are asked to judge what is presented within that day of competition, they should be aware if that performance exceeds or falls short of the score they previously assigned that team.
 - 1. The concept of judging what is presented as if never seen before is to judge primarily on first impression, the primary viewing method of Overall Effect. Each of the captions Execution, Content, and Overall Effect require use of comparison, analysis, and impression to formulate scores.
 - a. Impression is a first or external response that does not require comparison or analysis to determine the value of the program. Judging without regard to examination of depth, detail, or development would be judging solely on feeling, reaction, or notion.
 - 2. The concept of judging only what is presented within that day, is meant to inhibit the judge from judging on the show's potential or what has yet to be seen.

2.3 TOTE SHEETS

- A. Keeping a list of personal scores or a "Tote" sheet becomes a judge's 'barometer' against fluctuating perspectives, moods and attitudes between rounds and competitions. Maintaining a 'tote sheet' of their numbers and placements during the competition season can help with the judge's responsibility to provide consistent interpretation of the Linear Scale and provide reasonable decisions week to week, team to team.
- B. Tracking scores throughout the season is to collect visual postcards that represent scores on the Linear Scale. Each performance represents a number, which is used by the judge to maintain their visual interpretation of the Linear Scale and maintain a consistent scoring standard throughout the season. It is a tool to help put visual and physical examples to the verbiage on the score sheet.
 - 1. Knowing a previous score does not make a judge less impartial, less objective to creating a new score. It is more a tool for consistent interpretation of the Linear Scale than it is a reference to a team's achievement.
- C. For a judge to remain constant, the tote sheet will keep emotion, memory, and fatigue in check. Specific examples of what occurred in the second performance to measurably change scores should be explained on the recorded critique.

2.4 OUTCOMES

- A. Ties



CONTEST DYNAMICS AND NUMBERS MANAGEMENT

1. A judge who allows ties in sub-captions must understand that this tells those teams that they are absolutely equal. Tying or awarding minimal point differences may also suggest that there is a lack of understanding of the criteria of the sub-caption. The judge is responsible for giving due thought to the 'comparison' process of scoring to allow scoring room to rank all groups in each sub-caption. While ties are possible, they are discouraged.
- B. Point Spreads
1. Point spreads between different teams and spreads between one team's performances should reflect the amount of difference between the performances, not the difference in the judges' perception.
 2. Large point spreads for individual teams between rounds should be indicating that there was a great difference in the *team's achievement*. For the individual team, *major* differences are occasionally possible in the sub-captions of Execution and Overall Effect where there is performer contribution. Because of the lack of "rewriting" or changing of vocabulary in shows between rounds, sub-caption scores within the Content category should show minimal variance.
- C. Cusps
1. A score that is a number or two away from being in a different level 'box' on the Linear Scale is on a 'cusp.' A judge should leave room to place some or many teams within that box. Placing teams on or near the cusp may trap a judge without room to correctly score following teams.

PART 3 - CAPTION RELATIONSHIPS

3.1 CROSS CAPTION INFLUENCE

- A. The three captions of Execution, Content, and Overall Effect are to some extent dependent on each other. The criteria in each have a connection to the others; the complexity of the composition (Content) may determine the level of excellence of the performers (Execution) which has an effect on the degree of communication of the show (OE).
- B. While each major caption does relate to each other caption, so do each sub-caption. While the sub-captions are there to help the judge visualize the criteria of individual captions, the whole caption is about the relationship of each sub-caption to each other.
- C. Achievement in Technique will have some bearing on achievement in Precision. Creativity in Choreography will have some bearing on how it is staged in the Form. Understanding musicality will affect Projection through physical expression through the choreography. While sub-captions are scored separately, they are scored relative to each other, ie: very high technique and a very low precision wouldn't be expected, and vice versa. Low projection scores would not be reflecting high musicality because performers are not communicating the feeling or style of the music.

3.2 DERIVED ACHIEVEMENT

- A. In sub-captions where there is more than one criteria to evaluate, there is a **derived achievement** quotient. Such as in Maneuvering, *logical transitions* are being weighed with *transitional choreography*. In this instance, the judge should note an appropriate score for each then average the two creating the only Maneuvering score. (As often is the case, one aspect of the caption is done very well while the other suffers. Weighing both criteria, a numerical average between them is required to create one score.) This



***CONTEST DYNAMICS AND
NUMBERS MANAGEMENT***

is also an appropriate means of determining *Forms/Staging* with its relationship to *ensemble choreography*.