



WSMA State Marching Band Championships
Director and Adjudicator Handbook • Revised June 2025

Please note: WSMA regulates and sponsors only the State Marching Band Championships. The following rules and regulations apply to this annual event. Host schools sponsor their own independent marching band shows and may or may not adopt the following rules.

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- I. Purpose of WSMA State Marching Band Championships
 - A. Provide opportunity for performance by marching bands from WSMA member schools.
 - B. Recognize and support marching band as an important component of a comprehensive instrumental music program.
 - II. Eligibility
 - A. The WSMA State Marching Band Championships is open to all bands from any WSMA member school.
 - B. Marching band is defined as all members of the participating unit including playing members, auxiliary personnel (flags, rifles, etc.) and command personnel (drum majors, color guard captains).
 - C. No co-op marching bands are permitted at the State Marching Band Championships. All student members must be enrolled in the same WSMA member school or affiliated middle/junior high member school. Students must regularly attend and participate in their school marching band program.
 - i. A written waiver request may be submitted to the WSMA Program Director prior to the State Championships for permission to allow a student to participate from another WSMA member school that does not offer a competitive field marching program. Requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
 - D. Performance accommodations and modifications can be made for a student's special or exceptional needs that have been verified by school officials through a formal identification process. A written waiver request including the accommodations and/or modification should be submitted to the WSMA Program Director prior to the State Championships.
 - E. If WSMA learns of an eligibility rule violation the day of or the days following the State Marching Band Championships, the scores; placement and awards will be expunged for

that band. Their performance will be classified as “Exhibition Only.” The official recap sheet will be adjusted to reflect the new placement order.

III. Entry Options

- A. The following entry options are available to marching bands for participation in the WSMA State Marching Band Championships:
 - i. Competitive – Ranking and rating are given and announced.
 - ii. Judged Exhibition – Numbered score will be given but not announced. Judged Exhibition will not be ranked within their assigned class.

IV. Band Class

- A. Each participating band will be assigned a class based on their school’s total enrollment as reported to WIAA by the school. Class is determined by dividing the total number of participating bands into four approximately equal numbers of bands in Class A, AA, AAA, and AAAA. Classes will be determined in February of even years and emailed to participating directors.
 - i. New bands joining in odd years will be assigned within the already established classes.
- B. Competitive bands will be assigned to classes in even years as illustrated in the table below.
 - i. WSMA will post the enrollment information with class assignments on the WSMA website.

Class AAAA	7	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	9	10	10	10	10
Class AAA	7	7	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	9	10	10	10
Class AA	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	9	10	10
Class A	7	7	7	7	8	8	8	8	9	9	9	9	10
Total Bands	28	29	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40

- C. Bands participating in the State Marching Band Championships as Judged Exhibition will be assigned a class solely on the school size. Judged Exhibition bands will not be considered in dividing competitive bands into the four classes.

V. Scheduling

- A. The WSMA Marching Band Committee will create the schedule of participating bands in random order within their assigned class in accordance with the method agreed upon by the participating directors. A tentative schedule will be posted on the WSMA website by April 1st.
- B. The State Marching Band Championships will be placed on the Saturday of Week 15 as determined by the National Federation of High Schools (WIAA) calendar.
- C. WSMA will open online registration prior to the March Marching Band Committee Meeting to allow time to research and determine band classifications.
 - i. All entry options within an assigned class will be included in the schedule draw.
 - ii. Any band not included in the tentative schedule in March will be placed at the beginning of their class.
 - iii. Any band changing their entry option will be placed at the beginning of their class.
- D. WSMA will post a finalized schedule online no later than 4 weeks prior to the event.

VI. Facility

- A. The performance field will be a regulation-sized football field, 160 feet deep by 300 feet long. Field boundaries will be lined every five yards.
 - B. NCAA and high school hash marks may be present on the field.
 - i. NCAA inserts are aligned with the single yard hash mark and are 60 feet from the sidelines with 40 feet between.
 - ii. WIAA inserts are not aligned with the single yard hash marks and are 54 feet, 4 inches from the sidelines with 53 feet, 4 inches between.
 - C. Yard markers will be placed every 10 yards on the field.
 - D. Field vehicles should be equipped with wide, air filled tires to move equipment to and from the football field. All wheeled equipment should use air filled tires whenever possible.
- VII. Performance Requirements
- A. A representative(s) from the group will secure the use of (purchase, rent) and/or gain the permission of the publisher, composer or copyright holder for any published or copyright-protected material that the ensemble will be performing during the WSMA State Marching Band Championships. The unit representative(s) and unit further hereby hold harmless WSMA, its staff, and Board of Directors from any misuse of this material caused by failure of the representative(s) to gain such permission.
 - B. No band may use the competitive field for practice the day of the event. Penalty: Disqualification.
 - C. Bands will be assigned a warm-up area prior to performance. The designated warm-up area will be away from the aural range of the competitive field as much as the facility allows. Any band that warms up in an area other than the assigned destination within aural range of the competitive field will be penalized. Penalty: 5.0 points.
 - D. Bands will be scheduled in 13-minute intervals. Each band must report to the field at its assigned time. Penalty: 0.5 points per minute or fraction thereof.
 - E. All bands must be in performance for a minimum of 6 minutes. Performances lasting less than 6 minutes will be penalized. Penalty: 0.1 point per 5-second violation up to a maximum of 2 minutes.
 - F. All bands, including equipment, must be off the field at the conclusion of the 13-minute interval. Penalty: 0.5 points per minute or fraction thereof.
 - G. Directors may conduct an on field warm-up but must then exit the field.
 - H. A standard pre-performance announcement will be read at the beginning of the show. The announcer will read the following statement when it appears that the drum major(s) are ready:
 “Joining us from [Name of City] please welcome the [Name of Band]. Musical selections include [Insert Show Title & Music]. WSMA is proud to introduce [Names of Drum Majors] and the [Name of Band] in Championships Competition.”
 - I. Performance timing will begin following the conclusion of the pre-show announcement.
 - J. The Post-Performance Announcement may include previous band honors, all director and staff names, and thanks to parents/school administration. Post-Performance Announcements should last no longer than 90 seconds.
 - K. Field entrance may be made from the left, back and/or right boundaries using the press box as the point of perspective. The band may form anywhere on or off the competitive field. Bands are free to conclude their performance on or off the competitive field as long as all other requirements are met.
 - L. Adults or non-uniformed personnel may place props and grounded equipment while the preceding band is leaving the field.

- M. Adults and band staff are not allowed on the field or behind any props during the performance. Penalty: 2.0 points. All equipment must be removed immediately following the band's performance while the band is exiting the field.
 - i. Exception: At the discretion of the WSMA Program Director or Executive Director, adults may be allowed on the field to secure props and equipment in adverse conditions to maintain safe performance areas.
- N. The use of amplification/electronics is permitted as part of the marching band's performance. Electricity will be provided at field level but bands must supply extension cords.
- O. The use of lights-out routines, live animals, pyrotechnics of any kind including fireworks, discharge of firearms or any other hazardous materials is not permitted. Penalty: Disqualification
- P. Drones or any remote-controlled helicopter, aircraft or similar items are not allowed. Penalty: Disqualification
- Q. Any infraction or improper conduct by band or audience members for which no rule is given may be grounds for warning or penalty by the WSMA Program Director. Penalty: Minimum of 0.1 points to a maximum of disqualification.
- R. If distractions occur in the press box, on the field or a situation arises that could endanger or compromise the participants, the WSMA Program Director will delay the event until the situation is rectified.
 - i. If a group's time on field was interrupted as a result, their performance will be restarted from either field entrance or the beginning of performance time as decided by the group's director and WSMA Program Director.
- S. As much as the weather allows, the field must remain in the same condition for each band's performance. Effects such as streamers, confetti, environmental effects and other items that change the field's condition making it unsafe for future performers must be removed completely and immediately following the performance. Penalty: Minimum of 2.0 points to a maximum of disqualification as deemed appropriate by the WSMA Program Director.

VIII. Adjudication

- A. WSMA State Marching Band Championships adjudicators are expected to follow these procedures using Competition Suite and other provided forms:
 - i. Judge the performance of the day.
 - ii. Scores should be determined by using the rubric for the assigned caption. Comments should be reflective of scoring and box $\frac{1}{3}$. Language should speak to which box they have attained.
 - iii. Judge all units on the same scale regardless of class. Size of band is not a factor in determining quality of programming.
 - iv. Judges are expected to keep detailed notes of each band using the provided Tote Sheets so that scoring reflects the program totality.
 - v. Lock in numbers at the end of each class in Competition Suite.
 - vi. No overall ties regardless of class, and no subcaption ties within a class.
 - vii. Stay within caption during verbal comments.
 - a. Identify what is heard and seen, explain how it is happening, and provide constructive comments on how to reach the next level of excellence. It is not our job to fix a program nor should we suggest that we can.

- b. All verbal comments should be appropriate for teachers to share with students, parents and school officials.
 - viii. Weather conditions may be considered when adjudicating.
 - B. Judges will be assigned to evaluate the WSMA State Marching Band Championships as follows:

Caption Area	Number of Judges	Points	Score is:
Music Performance	1 – in press box	20.0	Determined by 1 judge
Music General Effect	2 – in press box	25.0	Average of 2 judges
Percussion	1 – on field	5.0	Determined by 1 judge
Visual Performance	1 – in press box	20.0	Determined by 1 judge
Visual General Effect	2 – in press box	25.0	Average of 2 judges
Color Guard	1 – in press box	5.0	Determined by 1 judge

- C. Band directors are not permitted to contact judges at the event or prior to their performance. Penalty: Disqualification. Directors may contact the WSMA chief judge following a competition with concerns or issues.
 - IX. Awards
 - A. Each competing band will receive a division award based on the final score. Division awards are determined as follows:

Class	1 st Division	2 nd Division	3 rd Division
Novice	60 – 100	30 – 59.99	0 – 29.99
All Other Classes	72.50 – 100	35 – 72.49	0 – 34.99

- B. Caption Awards in each Class with more than four entries will be presented during the Awards Ceremony as follows:

Caption Award	How the Award is Determined
Best Visual Presentation	Highest score in the class by adding the Visual Performance and Visual General Effect average scores.
Best Musical Presentation	Highest score in the class by adding the Music Performance and Music General Effect average scores.
Best Percussion	Highest percussion score in the class
Best Color Guard	Highest color guard score in the class

- C. A representative drum major from each participating band is required to participate in the Awards Ceremony for their band class. After the collegiate Marching Band Exhibition, drum majors will be asked to form a line on the field.
 - i. Exceptions can be made for extenuating circumstances, including but not limited to: adverse weather, long travel time, etc... Please communicate plans clearly with the WSMA Program Director as far in advance as possible.
 - D. Drum majors and field personnel participating in the Awards Ceremony may wear attire appropriate to the weather.
 - E. Drum majors are asked to please take at least one step forward when their school is announced. Award presenters will shake hands and congratulate students. WSMA

personnel may take photos during the Awards Ceremony. Other drum majors are permitted (but not required) to salute out of respect for the other band.

- F. The Class AAAA Best Visual Presentation Award honors the memory and contributions of Doug Greenhalgh.
- G. The Class A Best Musical Presentation Award honors the memory and contributions of Mary Elsner.

X. Audience Information

- A. Tickets are required for spectator entrance to the WSMA State Marching Band Championships. Performers, staff and directors must wear wristbands provided by WSMA for entry into the stadium prior to or following their performance.
- B. There are no reserved seats for this event. Spectators may not mark out their seats early in the day for evening performances. If a seat is unoccupied by a spectator for a long period of time, another spectator may use that seat.
- C. Audience members should remain seated during performances. Audience members are also asked to not enter or exit the stadium during a band's performance.
- D. Audience information will also be made available on the Marching Band webpage.

XI. Director Information

- A. The WSMA Program Director is the final authority on interpretation of WSMA State Marching Band Championships rules. If you are not sure about any issue, please contact the WSMA Program Director.
- B. If you, one of your students, or fans has a minor injury during the day, please notify the press box for assistance; if anyone suffers any significant health concern the day of the event, please dial 911. Emergency personnel are present at the event. WSMA or the State Marching Band Championships Committee will not be held responsible for any injuries suffered by any band during the day's activities.

XII. Weather Emergency Plan

- A. Before the Day of the Event:
 - i. The WSMA Program Director will provide a method of communication to all participating directors to be used the day of the event.
 - ii. The host site will reserve an indoor facility for use by the State Marching Band Championships each year.
 - iii. The Weather Emergency Plan will be posted on the Marching Band page of the WSMA website at www.wsmamusic.org. The home page of the WSMA website will also include information regarding the event on the day of the WSMA State Marching Band Championships if inclement weather is a consideration.
 - iv. If inclement weather is a concern, the WSMA Program Director will contact the National Weather Service and communicate information with participating directors.
- B. On the Day of the Event:
 - i. If inclement weather (especially lightning) is a consideration before or during the event, the WSMA Program Director, Event Director, Site Manager and Public Safety will meet. Based on the conditions, site protocol and the information available a decision to remain outdoors or move to the inside facility will be made.
 - ii. Any decisions made will be communicated to the directors using all available means including cell phone, webpage postings and the public address system.
 - iii. If a delay of the show is necessary, approximate performance times will be announced using all available means.

- iv. The WSMA Program Director, Event Director, Site Manager and Public Safety will continue to monitor the situation as needed as long as the inclement weather continues.
- v. Every effort will be made to finish a class of bands prior to moving the event indoors.

C. Facilities:

- i. If the indoor facility is large enough to accommodate a full performance including drill for all participating bands, the event will be adjudicated utilizing all captions.
- ii. If the indoor facility is not large enough to accommodate drill, all bands will perform a standstill. The Visual Execution caption will not be adjudicated nor included in the final score.
- iii. Whenever possible, the indoor facility will be operated in the same manner as the outdoor facility as it relates to performance, equipment, seating and adjudication.

D. Audience:

- i. The selling of tickets may or may not be eliminated at the discretion of the WSMA Program Director.
- ii. Priority seating will be given to the class in performance. Other spectators will be seated as availability and public safety officers allow. If it is necessary to clear the performance area to assist in this process, Public Safety officers will follow internal procedures to assist.
- iii. An Awards Ceremony will be held at the conclusion of each class if the event is held indoors.
- iv. Ticket refunds will only be issued for those who have purchased tickets and have not been able to see any bands perform. Refunds will be issued the day of the event only.

XIII. WSMA State Marching Band Championships Committee

A. The Marching Band Committee will consist of the following membership:

- i. WSMA Program Director
- ii. WSMA Event Director
- iii. Four directors appointed by WSMA:
 - a. Two northern directors
 - b. Two southern directors
- iv. Three at-large directors as voted on by statewide vote, serving a two-year term.

B. Election and Term

- i. The WSMA Program Director and Event Director are committee members at all times and without term limits.
- ii. Appointed Committee Members
 - a. The four appointments will be determined by the WSMA Program Director, with approval from the WSMA Executive Director and serve a three year term.
 - b. Directors chosen through this process must:
 - a. be leaders in the activity statewide
 - b. be fully dedicated committee members with 100% attendance at all meetings, including committee and statewide director meetings. Statewide travel is required.

- c. Upon completion of a three year term, appointed committee members may submit a "Statement of Contribution" to be considered for an additional term.
 - i. Statement of Contribution should include merits, services and contributions performed for the activity and a statement reflective of why the appointee is a good representative of WSMA Marching Band Activity.
 - ii. Statements will be reviewed by current committee members, WSMA Program Director and WSMA Executive Director.
 - iii. Current committee members will provide recommendation to WSMA Executive Director and WSMA Program Director for final approval.
 - iv. Directors interested in an appointed position will notify the WSMA Program Director.
 - iii. The three at-large directors will be determined by statewide electronic vote, with two positions elected in even years and one position elected in odd years. These members will serve a two-year term.
 - iv. Committee members may serve more than one term.
 - v. Ex-Officio or Advisory Members may be appointed to the committee as deemed necessary by the WSMA Program Director and/or elected committee members. These people will have no voting rights.
 - vi. Two scheduled meetings are held in Fall and Spring at the convenience of committee members. Other meetings may be called as necessary and at the convenience of the committee.
- C. Voting Rights
 - i. Appointed and elected members of the marching band committee will have one vote on all agenda items.
 - ii. The WSMA Program Director will not have a vote on agenda items.
 - iii. Any member of the marching band committee may abstain from voting on any agenda item.
 - iv. No proxy options are possible.
 - v. Voting on agenda items may be done during committee meetings.
 - vi. When deemed necessary by the Program Director, voting may also be done using mail or e-mail options.
 - vii. The marching band committee is deemed as an advisory committee to the WSMA Board of Directors.
- D. Elections
 - i. Elections for the three at-large positions will take place in October and the committee member's term begins on November 1, running for two years.
 - ii. An elected committee member's term will end on October 31. Election ballots will be sent and returned via e-mail.
 - iii. Directors will self-nominate, submitting a short statement about their candidacy to be shared on the ballot.
 - iv. If a committee member's band chooses to no longer participate in the marching band championships or if a committee member resigns, that seat on the committee will remain vacant until the following election. The vacancy will be

filled for the remainder of the term either by election or appointment, depending on the position that was vacated.

XIV. Independent Show Host Agreement

- A. WSMA will support and promote independent marching band shows only if the host school participates in the same calendar year WSMA State Marching Band Championships. Promotion and support includes:
 - i. Promote scheduled independent show on the WSMA Marching Band Activity Webpage
 - ii. Promote scheduled independent show in WSM
 - iii. Provide access to the following resources:
 - a. WSMA Marching Band Rubrics and Tote Sheets
 - b. Judge Assignment
 - c. Competition Suite (Required)
 - d. Digital Recorder Rental
- B. Schools that host a WSMA supported show, but do not fulfill their obligation to participate in the State Championships will not have registration fees refunded and may not be eligible to host a WSMA supported show the following calendar year.