

Competition Changes — *Looking Ahead To 2014*

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Excitement is building regarding the upcoming changes to the competition system. Along with this anticipation are many requests for more information. The official materials are being prepared for release next year. In the meantime, here is an outline of how the new system will work.

The changes at the regional level affect the Evaluation Only performances. We have many quartets and choruses who love to perform and may not necessarily enjoy the competitive aspect of contest. The changes have been designed to give competitors more opportunity for success. There will be three options available for all competitors: The Open Division, The International Division and Evaluation Only.

The Open Division

The Judge Specialists, Education Direction Committee and International Board of Directors are aware that many quartets and choruses entertain in their communities with wonderful performances and shows. They have reached a level of confidence that is not always evident in the competition venues. The goal is to encourage these performers to bring their performance confidence to the competition stage and to elevate their barbershop skills at the same time. The method that was chosen to accomplish this is the Open Division (Evaluation Only) at the regional level.

The Open Division will be added to the regional competitions starting with the regional contests in 2014. Quartets and choruses who wish to perform for Evaluation Only may opt to perform an entertainment package consisting of a minimum of one competition song along with other songs and material for a maximum of ten minutes.

This ten-minute entertainment package will be evaluated with comments written using the following criteria:

- Musicality
- Unity
- Theme/Script/Emcee

- Creativity
- Communication

A detailed description regarding the preparation of the entertainment package will be available in the updated *Judging Category Description Book* (JCDB), due to be published in October 2013. The description will follow closely and expand on the current information in the Performance Packaging section of the JCDB.

As with the current system used for Evaluation Only, letter scores will be given to performances in the Open Division. Each of the four judges will award one letter score for the required competition song identified by the competitor, and one letter score for the entertainment aspect of the entire performance. Each scoresheet will reflect two separate scores, but no total. For example:

Competition Song: C+
Entertainment Package: B-

To enhance the educational value of this experience, these letter scores will be published along with the regional tabulations of scores. Although no winner will be announced in the Open Division, quartets and choruses who choose this option can see how they compare to others in the same division. This information will also help regional leaders identify educational needs of the region.

To reinforce the value of the entertainment aspect of our art form, each regional competition will grant the Audience Choice Award. This award will be given to the Open Division performer who receives the most votes from designated members of the audience. The Audience Choice Award replaces any regional award of a similar type and will be the only award given in the Open Division.

Quartets and choruses participating in the Open Division and who are also competing in the semifinals or Harmony Classic at International Convention are not eligible for the Audience Choice Awards.

The method for choosing the recipient of the Audience Choice Award is modeled

after that used in the International quartet and chorus finals and Harmony Classic, and will be outlined thoroughly in the *Competition Handbook* that will be updated and published in 2013.

Evaluation Only

Regional quartets and choruses who wish to perform two competition songs for Evaluation Only may choose this option. As with the current system, they will receive level scores.

International-bound quartets and choruses have the option to perform for Evaluation Only and receive feedback on their performances as they prepare for International Competitions. They may choose the traditional two-song package or perform a ten-minute entertainment package.

The Evaluation Only performances will not be eligible for the Audience Choice Award, and results of these performances will not be published.

The International Division

Regional competitors who choose to perform in the traditional competition will compete in what will be known as the International Division. Judges will score these performances using the current system. Two competition songs are judged and numerical scores awarded. Contestants will compete for placement in the regional competition and International awards, including A and AA placements. These performances will determine eligibility for International competitions – quartet semifinals, chorus semifinals and Harmony Classic Divisions A and AA.

To summarize the choices at the regional level, beginning in 2014, will be:

- Open Division for evaluation only — one competition song in a ten-minute entertainment package for level scores
- Evaluation Only — two competition songs for level scores
- International Division — two competition songs for numerical scores

Currently, the Music Services Department at International Headquarters

works with regions in the planning of regional competition. This will continue as the changes are introduced. All rules and details will be available in the updated *Judging Category Description Book, Competition Handbook* and other competition materials. Instructions for the Audience Choice Award will be provided as well.

Regions who offer alternate riser configuration will be able to continue that practice. The draw for order of appearance will be done according to each regional plan, as is the practice now. The draw will be done in such a way that those regions offering this option will be required to do only one riser change.

Experience tells us that the additional time required for the ten-minute packages is unlikely to create a major change in the length of the competitions since it adds only three minutes to the current seven-minute allotment for each competitor who chooses this option.

International Competition Changes

Changes to the international competitions affect the International finals packages for Harmony Classic competitors, quartets and choruses.

Beginning in 2015, at the International competition in Las Vegas, the entertainment package for the Harmony Classic competitions, quartet finals and the chorus finals will be a 12-15 minute package, consisting of a minimum of one competition song combined with additional songs and material.

The competition song identified by the competitor will be awarded a maximum of 100 points per judge, and the overall performance will be awarded a maximum of 100 points per judge. The score for the entertainment package will include the competition song evaluated with the other elements as part of the overall package.

The current practice of awarding ten (10) bonus points will be discontinued. The possible total from each judge will be 200 points. The accumulative perfect score will be 3200 points. There will be no change to the qualifications for directors to achieve Master director and Master director 700 designation, since the qualifying scores for these achievements are currently based on the total score excluding the bonus points.

The evaluation of the competition song will be done as it is currently. It will be specific to each category. The entertainment package will be judged overall by all judges and will include the five areas identified in the Regional Open division.

The finals package evaluation will be reflected on each scoresheet as shown in this example:

Competition Song	88
Overall Entertainment Score	85
Total	173

The judges will be trained in the evaluation of the entertainment package beginning in July 2013.

In summary, the timetable for the changes is as follows:

March to May 2014

- Regional competitions
- Open Division option to perform ten-minute entertainment package
- Audience Choice Award
- International Division competition for awards, placement and qualification

October 2015

- International competition
- Quartet and chorus finals and Harmony Classic require a minimum of one competition song
- Bonus points system eliminated

A final note: What stays the same is as important as the changes.

- Evaluation Only performances, including those in the Open Division, will meet the once-every-three-years requirement for choruses in regional contests.

The changes have been designed to give competitors more opportunity for success.

- Judges will continue to use current scoring levels.
- Competitors will still sing two competition songs to qualify for International awards, regional placements and entrance to International contests.
- Semifinalists at International competition will still sing two competition songs, and the top ten will qualify for the International quartet and chorus finals.
- All elements in each of the four categories will remain the same. The requirement for music that qualifies as strong competition material will be as outlined in the current Music category.

This emphasis on the competition song gives support to the existing Music category requirements and will ensure the survival of the barbershop song and the traditional art form, which is and will continue to be a priority of Sweet Adelines International. **PP**

**NEW
YWIH
Video Chorus Contest**

Sweet Adelines International is proud to announce an all-new contest for youth choruses. The contest will be by video (DVD) submission and held on June 1, 2013. Awards include cash prizes of \$1,000, \$750 and \$500 for the first, second and third place winners. All three winners also will receive a copy of the Young Women in Harmony Competition Music Folio. For more information, please email music@sweetadelineintl.org