

BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF BARBERSHOP SINGERS

GUILD OF JUDGES CONTEST RULES

CONTEST ADMINISTRATION

Contest Rules Version 8

Amended 17th August 2008.

Applicable from 1st September 2008

Article 1

Scope

- (a) These rules apply to all British Association of Barbershop Singers (BABS) contests
- (b) In general these rules apply to quartet and chorus contests, the word "contestant" being used to denote either a quartet or chorus. Where the word "quartet" or "chorus" is used, that rule shall be specific to that type of contest. Such rules are identified by the letter **Q** or **C**, as appropriate.

Paragraphs in italics are for guidance of contestants and do not form part of the Contest Rules.

Article 2

National Contests

The National Quartet and Chorus Contests shall be held each year in conjunction with the BABS Annual Convention and shall be under the general supervision of the BABS Guild of Judges, hereinafter called "The Guild". The following procedures shall be observed unless otherwise ordered by the Guild.

- (a) Preliminary Contests may be held as deemed necessary.
- (b) If necessary, byes may be given in the Preliminary Contests.
- (c) **Q** At the BABS Annual Convention, quartets shall be judged in the first stage of the contest, which will be known as the BABS Quartet Semi-Final.
- (d) **Q** From the Semi-Final, the top six quartets plus ties shall be selected to compete in the Final Contest.
- (e) **Q** At the end of the Final Contest, the placing of quartets shall be computed by the combined scores obtained in the Semi-Final and Final Contests. Contestants placed first, second and third shall be designated Medallists, whilst the remaining contestants appearing in the Final shall be recognised as Finalists.
- (f) **C** Following any Preliminary Contests, choruses shall be judged in only one stage, this being called the Final of the Chorus Contest.

Article 3

International Quartet Qualifying Contest

An International Quartet Qualifying Contest shall be held concurrent with the BABS National Quartet Semi-Final and Final at the BABS Annual Convention. The top two quartets will, under the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding, be put forward to represent BABS at the Barbershop Harmony Society's (BHS) International Convention the following year.

(a) **Q** Following the contest at Convention, BABS will send a request to the Society for the following quartets to compete at International:

1. The new BABS Gold Medal quartet (providing that quartet had achieved more than 70% average in the overall contest)
2. The other quartet will be the highest placed quartet that had scored more than the threshold score set out by the Society

(Currently 76.3%). This score may vary from year to year and quartets will be notified of this threshold before each contest.

(b) **Q** All of the BABS National Competition entrants who qualify from the Prelims will automatically be entered into the International Quartet Qualifying Contest.

(c) **Q** Following the BABS Youth contest, BABS will send a request to the Society for the champion quartet to compete at International the following year, subject to them meeting any qualifying score. Consideration will be given on an annual basis to request that a second quartet also be subject of a request to compete.

(d) **Q** Following the BABS Seniors Quartet Champion contest, BABS will send a request to the Society for the winning quartet to compete in the next-but-one Mid-winter Convention, subject to any qualifying score being met.

Confirmation of acceptance of any quartet for the International Quartet contest will not normally be received before the end of January immediately preceding the contest.

Article 4

Seniors Quartet Contest

A contest for BABS senior members shall be held, (*normally held in conjunction with the BABS National Quartet Preliminary Contest*) as directed by The Guild. The winners shall be known as the "BABS Seniors Quartet Champions".

Entry qualification is by age: 55 years or over with a minimum aggregate quartet age of 240 years. Seniors Quartets shall be held on a separate register from the National Quartet Register.

Article 5

Youth Quartet Contest

(a) An open contest for youth quartets shall be held, (*normally held in conjunction with the BABS National Quartet Preliminary Contest*) as directed by The Guild. The winners shall be known as the "BABS Youth Quartet Champions".

(b) Entry qualification is open to young men by age.

(Currently under 26 years of age on the day of the International Collegiate contest the following year. For this contest there is no stipulation regarding BABS Membership)

Article 6

Eligibility

The rights of an individual to compete in BABS contests are described in the BABS Articles of Association. A copy of the relevant section may be obtained from the BABS Director of Administration. This section may be summarised as follows:-

- (a) Everyone on stage will be male. The only exception shall be a lady Chorus Director, who shall not be heard to sing.
- (b) **Q** With the exception of quartets entering the Youth Quartet Contest, every Quartet member shall be a full member of BABS. Quartets entering the National or Seniors Contests must be registered with the BABS Quartet Registrar at least 28 days before the contest. Quartets entering the Youth Quartet Contest must register with the Contest manager at least 7 days before the event.

Quartet members who are not full members of BABS should check their eligibility to compete with the BABS Director of Administration or BABS Membership Secretary.

- (c) **Q** A quartet winning the National or Seniors Championship/Contest shall not compete in that competition the following year unless entering the International Quartet Qualifying Contest; a quartet winning the Youth contest may compete in that competition the next year, providing that all members of the quartet are still eligible. A champion quartet shall be defined as containing more than two members from the original personnel of the quartet that won, regardless of any name change.
- (d) **Q** A member shall be permitted to compete with more than one quartet provided he is a member of each quartet before the Preliminary Contest. Where no Preliminary Contest takes place then the member should be registered with each quartet 28 days prior to the contest
- (e) **Q** A BABS novice quartet shall have never previously competed in a BABS contest with their present personnel and may include not more than one previous Finalist.
- (f) **Q** Professional quartets may not enter.
- (g) **C** Each chorus shall consist of certified members of a fully paid up BABS member club, i.e. all persons on stage including male and female Directors. Certified members shall be registered with the BABS Membership Secretary no less than 28 days before the contest.
- (h) No-one is allowed on stage during a contest performance who is not a member of the competing quartet or chorus.
- (i) **C** Each BABS member club may enter only one chorus.
- (j) **C** Two or more BABS member clubs shall not combine to form one competing chorus.
- (k) **C** A member shall be permitted to compete with more than one club provided he is a member of each club before the Preliminary Contest. Where no Preliminary Contest takes place then the member should be registered with each club 28 days prior to the contest
- (l) **C** A chorus winning the National Championship shall not compete the following year.
- (m) Violation of any of the eligibility articles (6(a) to 6(k) incl.) will be penalised under Article 14.

Article 7

Entry To Contest And Provision Of Contest Rules

- (a) Entry shall be made on the appropriate form which is sent to all registered eligible contestants. The completed form must be returned to the Contest Manager to arrive not later than the published closing date.
- (b) Late entries may be accepted at the discretion of the Contest Manager and shall sing in a draw position to be determined by him.
- (c) Copies of the current Contest Rules can be obtained from the Guild Secretary or web-site.

Article 8

Order Of Appearance On Stage

- (a) Contestants shall sing in the order in which their names are drawn by the Chairman of the Guild or his appointee, except as allowed in Articles 7(b) and 9.
- (b) Violation of Article 8(a) will be penalised under Article 14.

Article 9

Penalties for Tardiness

Any contestant failing to perform in the assigned order of appearance shall, unless there are exceptional circumstances, be penalised. The penalty will be 15 points on a single panel of judges, 30 points on a double panel, 45 points on a triple panel etc. The Chairman of Judges shall have the power to waive the penalty where the situation that has arisen to cause the tardiness is clearly outside the control of the contestant.

The Chairman of Judges shall permit such contestant(s) to appear where minimum inconvenience is caused to other contestants.

Article 10

Contest Material

- (a) A song performed in contest must be in good taste, be neither primarily patriotic nor primarily religious in intent, and have a melody and implied harmony consistent with the barbershop style. All songs performed in contest must be arranged in the barbershop style, which is an unaccompanied vocal style of music. Songs must be sung without any kind of musical accompaniment and without instrumental introduction, interlude, or conclusion. The latter provision applies to both the entire performance and each individual song.

*Contestants are referred to the BABS Judging Reference Book or to any qualified member of the **Music Category** for a detailed explanation of the Barbershop style and suitability of a song.*

- (b) In chorus contests, selected use of a soloist, duet, trio or quartet is acceptable providing it is brief and appropriate. At no time should the musical texture exceed four parts.
- (c) Songs used in contests should be sung in the English language except for the occasional word or phrase which may occur naturally as part of the song.

Any difficulty in understanding a song (whether due to language or otherwise) reduces a judge's scope for rewarding the performance.

- (d) Disregard of Articles 10(a) - (c) may result in points reduction or forfeiture by one or more judges, as explained in the BABS Judging Reference Book.
- (e) Contestants must comply with copyright laws in the acquisition, arranging and learning of songs for contest performance.

Article 11

Number of Songs

- (a) At each stage of the contest, including the Preliminary Contest, contestants shall sing two songs, either or both of which may be a medley.
- (b) **Q** Taking the Semi-Final and Final Contests as a whole, no song (including constituent songs of a medley) may be sung more than once.
This rule is not intended to bar the use of musical quotes. Material sung at a Preliminary Contest may be repeated at a later stage.
- (c) **C** No song, including constituent songs of a medley, may be sung more than once.
This rule is not intended to bar the use of musical quotes. Material sung at a Preliminary Contest may be repeated at a later stage.
- (d) The title of every song, including the constituent songs of a medley, shall be recorded. The Chairman of Judges will penalise any violations of Articles 11 (a), (b) or (c) under Article 14.

Article 12

Scoring Categories

Judging of contestants' performance will be carried out in three categories: Music, Presentation and Singing. Each category may use up to a maximum of 100 points per song per judge.

For the criteria being judged refer to the current BABS Category Descriptions from the Guild Secretary or web-site.

Article 13

Sound Equipment and Stage Effects

- (a) Lighting and electronic amplification will be the same for each contestant during a contest. Contestants may not use their own or additional in-house electronic amplification, sound producing equipment or changed lighting.
Establishment of pitch using an electronic pitch pipe is permissible.
- (b) Contestants may use props, but they should be limited to those which can easily be taken on and off stage by one person. The Presentation Category Judge(s) will be responsible for applying penalties up to and including forfeiture for violation of this rule.
- (c) Contestants should leave the stage in the same good condition as they would wish to find it for their own performance and props should be chosen accordingly. Anything that can be quickly cleared by a stage hand is acceptable. Contestants may check out props with the Chairman of Judges at the pre-Contest briefing, or earlier, if required.
- (d) Violation of Article 13(a) or (c) will be penalised under Article 14.

Article 14

Disqualification

The Chairman of Judges shall be responsible for penalising violations of Articles 6, 8, 11, 13(a) and 13(c). The penalty is disqualification and such contestants shall receive no score and shall not appear on the official scoring summary, except by way of a note using the wording

"Contestant.....disqualified: Violation of Article....."

Article 15

Verbal Comment

Non-singing dialogue is generally not a part of a contest performance. Brief comments made with supporting visual communications may be permitted. Spoken words deemed to be excessive or detrimental to the performance shall be penalised by the Presentation Judge(s) up to and including forfeiture.

Article 16

Disturbances during Contests

Should any event occur which, in the opinion of the Chairman of Judges, adversely affects the contestant, such contestant shall be offered the chance to sing again after the last contestant has finished and at least fifteen minutes after the disturbed contestant has left the stage. The contestant shall be given a reasonable period of time to make a decision. If the contestant accepts the offer, the scores from the first performance will be discarded and the contestant will be judged on the second performance.

Article 17

Ranking of Contestants

- (a) Contestants shall be ranked in accordance with the total score of points awarded by the judges.
- (b) If two or more contestants are awarded the same total score, including all previous rounds except Preliminary Contests, ties will only be broken for 1st 2nd and 3rd places in Finals. The method used for breaking ties will be:
 - 1) The highest total score awarded by the Singing Judges will be ranked as the "Tie-break" and that contestant will be ranked above the other(s) in the tie.
 - 2) If a tie still exists the highest total score awarded by the Music Judges will be ranked as the "Tie-break" and that contestant will be ranked above the other(s) in the tie.
 - 3) If the tie is still not broken the following shall apply: The "Tie-break" shall be the highest total score at the Preliminary contest. If the tie continues unbroken the Singing score at the Preliminary contest shall be the "Tie-break" and if still not broken the Presentation score at the Preliminary contest shall be used.
 - 4) In the event where a tie cannot be broken for 1st, 2nd or 3rd place, joint medalist status will be awarded

- (c) Total scores for 4th place and below will be ranked as equal placing. At Preliminary contests ties will be ranked as equal placing and if there is a tie at the cut-off for the Semi-Finals or Finals contest, all tied contestants will go through.

Where there have been no qualifying Preliminary rounds, it may be necessary, if the above procedures result in a tie, where only one can go forward to a Society contest, for a draw to be held to determine which group is given first refusal to go to that contest. Such a draw would have no effect on the status of the groups concerned.

Article 18

Publication of Results

At all BABS contests, results shall be made known by the Chairman of Judges for each stage, as follows:

- (a) An Official Scoring Summary shall be displayed at the contest site, showing the score per category and per song; details of any penalties or disqualification by the Chairman of Judges, including the Article number violated; details of any ties; and the names of the Judging Panel.
- (b) The scores obtained by the Finalist Quartets in the Semi-Finals shall be held over for publication after the Final.
- (c) There shall be no public announcement at the venue of penalties and disqualifications.

Publication of a full report detailing penalties, forfeitures and individual judge scores will be available on the web-site in a suitable time frame after the contest.

- (d) Following the public announcement and publication of results to the satisfaction of the Chairman of Judges, there can be no change to rankings or scores.

Article 19

Trophies

(a) Quartets

The following quartet medals and trophies shall be awarded at the National Quartet Contest:
Quartet Champions

1st Place	Gold Medals	Tyneside Trophy
2nd Place	Silver Medals	Michael Sides Rosebowl
3rd Place	Bronze Medals	The Ian Stone Trophy
Novice Quartet		The Sheng Pitch Pipe
Youngest Quartet		The Merrick-Hine Award
Seniors Quartet Champions		Seniors Champions Trophy
BABS Youth Quartet Champions		The Steve Hall Trophy

The rules governing the award of the Sheng Pitch Pipe and the Merrick-Hine Award are set out in Attachments 1 and 2.

(b) **Choruses**

The following chorus trophies shall be awarded at the National Chorus Contest:

1 st Place Chorus	Gold Medals	Crawley Plaque
2 nd Place Chorus	Silver Medals	Bristol Cup
3 rd Place Chorus	Bronze Medals	Wearside Trophy

Individual certificates shall be awarded to the top 3 choruses
Chorus certificates shall be awarded to all competing choruses

Small Trophy Award	Jim Carter Trophy
Most Improved Chorus	Cambridge Scroll

The rules governing the award of these two trophies are set out in Attachments 3 and 4.

End of Contest Rules

Attachment 1

The Sheng Pitch Pipe

The Sheng Pitch Pipe shall be awarded to the highest placed novice quartet in the BABS Quartet Final. If no novice quartets appear in the Finals, it shall be awarded to the highest place Novice quartet from the Semi-Finals.

A novice quartet consists of any quartet which:

- (a) Contains no more than two members who have previously competed together in a BABS quartet contest (Preliminary or Semi-Final)
- (b) Contains no more than one member who has previously competed in a BABS Quartet Final

Seniors quartets are not eligible for this award.

Attachment 2

The Merrick Hine Award

The Merrick-Hine Award shall be awarded to the youngest quartet competing in the Semi-Final round of the BABS Quartet Contest. The total age of each quartet shall be determined from the aggregate of the members' ages as at the date of the Semi-Final round.

Attachment 3

The Small Chorus Award – “The Jim Carter Memorial Trophy”

In order to encourage smaller choruses to enter the BABS Chorus Contests, Reading Barbershop Harmony Club donated in the 1970s a trophy, to be known as The Jim Carter Memorial Trophy, to be presented to the highest placed small chorus competing in the annual chorus contest covering both preliminary and final rounds.

The rules governing the award of this trophy are:-

- (a) Add the number of performers on stage (excluding the chorus director(s), male or female) to the rank attained in the chorus final for the qualifying choruses or, in the case of the non-qualifying choruses, the ranking attained in the preliminary contests.
- (b) The chorus with the lowest aggregate total resulting from the application of (a) above will be declared the winner. In the event of two or more choruses sharing the same total, the smallest chorus shall be declared the winner.
- (c) The winning chorus may not win the award more than once in any five year period

Attachment 4

The Most Improved Chorus Award – “The Cambridge Scroll”

As announced at the 1997 Convention, the Cambridge Barbershop Harmony Club donated a trophy to BABS to be awarded annually to the most improved chorus. The Guild of Judges was invited to determine how to measure "improvement" and hence to establish the rules for determining the winner of the trophy. This was discussed in some depth and a formula was devised in 1997. The formula was applied to the results of previous years and a subjective judgment subsequently made as to whether the results appeared fair and also met the intentions of the donor chorus. The formula and its application are as follows:

- (a) The results of two successive contest cycles will be used unless decreed otherwise by the BABS' Contest Manager to accommodate unusual circumstances.
- (b) If a chorus does not compete in any one year, they will obviously be ineligible for the trophy in that year and also in the following year.

Two consecutive scoring appearances in the nominated contests are required.

- (c) In any one year all choruses, who competed in the previous year, will be eligible with the following exceptions:-
 - 1) Any chorus forfeiting all marks in any one category, and
 - 2) Any chorus scoring in the Society's Class A category - i.e. an average of not less than 81 marks per song per judge for any contest.
- (d) The chorus with the highest positive "Improvement Factor" (IF) will be declared the winner and awarded the Cambridge Scroll.

The IF is evaluated on the basis of the following formula:-

$$\text{IF} = (\text{S2} - \text{S1}) / (\text{X} - \text{S1}) \times 100\% \text{ where}$$

S2 = the second nominated contest score

S1 = the first nominated contest score

X = 1200, 1800 or 2400 depending whether the total scores were awarded by a 2, 3 or 4 judge/category panel.

The formula outlined above gives a positive measure of how much closer to perfection a chorus has climbed. It also recognises how much more difficult it is to make substantial improvements to a score the closer to perfection one gets. The following examples illustrate how it works with a 3 judge/category Panel.

Chorus 1 scores a total of 540 marks (average of 30 per song i.e. a class D category performance) in the first year and 720 (an average of 40 per song) in the next. Their IF is calculated as:-

$$\text{IF} = (720 - 540) / (1800 - 540) \times 100 = \mathbf{+14.3\%}$$

Chorus 2 scores a total of 900 marks (average of 50 per song i.e. a class C category performance) in the first year and 1026 (an average of 57 per song) in the next. Their IF is calculated as:-

$$\text{IF} = (1026 - 900) / (1800 - 900) \times 100 = \mathbf{+14.0\%}$$

Chorus 3 scores a total of 1260 marks (an average of 70 per song i.e. a class B category performance) in the first year and 1332 (an average of 74 per song) in the next. Their IF is calculated as:-

$$\text{IF} = (1332 - 1260) / (1800 - 1260) \times 100 = \mathbf{+13.3\%}$$

The Guild of Judges is charged to ensure that the results of this contest fulfil the original intent of the Cambridge Barbershop Harmony Club in presenting this trophy to BABS. If it is found that this intent is not being satisfactorily met, the ground rules outlined above will be modified accordingly.