



IRISH ASSOCIATION OF BARBERSHOP SINGERS

CONTEST RULES

EFFECTIVE FROM MARCH 2022



UPDATES from February 14, 2022

MARCH 2022	
Article 1.7	Refers to registration of IABS choruses and quartets names
Article 1.7 (Feb 14 '22)	Removed
Article 2.4	Contestants may apply for 'score only'
Article 6	Refers to youth competitions
Article 7 (Feb 14 '22)	Is now Article 4 Penalties
Article 7	Refers to use of props and banned material
Article 8.7	Additional award for national and all Ireland choruses

SCOPE

These rules shall apply to all contests run by IABS. In general, these rules apply to both Quartet and Chorus contests, the word 'contestant' being used to denote either a contestant in a quartet or a chorus.

ARTICLE 1

1 ELIGIBILITY

1.1 With the exception of contestants entering the Open Youth Category, everybody on stage, including Musical Directors, shall be a registered member of IABS, in good standing or a member of the recognised barbershop association of their area/country two months prior to the date of Convention.

1.2 New IABS members must be registered as members of IABS one calendar month prior to a Convention.

1.3 Professional quartets and choruses may not enter competitions. A quartet or chorus shall be considered professional when its members' principal means of income is from fulfilling quartet or chorus engagements. Right of appeal in the matter shall be to the IABS Board of Directors whose decision shall be final.

1.4 No person is permitted on the active stage, during a contest performance, who is not a member of the competing quartet or chorus.

1.5 Any member of a quartet may sing in more than 1 quartet in the same Competition, provided the contestant is registered for the said Competition **by 1 July in** the year of the Convention in question.

1.6 A registered IABS Quartet must retain 50% of its members in order to enter the contest under that registered name (i.e. no more than two of the named quartet can be new).

1.7 A Registered IABS chorus or quartet who is competing at an IABS Convention must be registered by closing date of Convention (currently 1 July).

1.8 A competing Chorus shall be composed of 12 or more members on stage with or without the Director. In the event of the illness of a member of a 12-size group, entry to competition would be at the discretion of the Convention Team.

ARTICLE 2:**CONTEST ENTRY PROCEDURES**

- 2.1 Completed entries for the contest and information regarding song titles must be submitted online at the time of entry and by the date specified.
- 2.2 Contestants must comply with copyright law in the acquisition of material for use in IABS contests. A judging panel may seek clarification or verification from any chorus or quartet of their use of contest material.'
- 2.3 Each chorus competing in a chorus contest must submit a list of competitors to the Convention Team by the requested date.
- 2.4 A contestant may apply to perform in the contest for 'score only' by indicating this clearly at time of registration. Scores will not be published as part of the Contest Results.

ARTICLE 3**SCORING CATEGORIES**

- 3.1 In IABS contests, two judges per category combine their results to a maximum of 200 marks for each of the three categories.

3.1.1 MUSIC

The music judges evaluate the song and arrangement as performed, in terms of musical elements in the performance, melody, harmony range and tessitura, temp and rhythm and meter, construction and form and embellishments. The music judges score on how the musical elements of the performance establish a theme and how best the performance demonstrates an artistic sensitivity to that theme and how it is displayed in the barbershop style.

3.1.2 SINGING

The Singing judges evaluates how the performer achieves artistic singing in the barbershop style, in precision of intonation, vocal skill and vocal expression, a high level of unity and consistency within the ensemble. Mastering these elements creates a fullness and expansion of sound and when combined with expressive vocal skills will convey a feeling of genuine emotion to support the message of the song.

3.1.3 PERFORMANCE

The Performance judges concentrate on how believable the theme of the performance is demonstrated in terms of its musical and visual setting, including the vocal and visual aspects of the performance and how they fuse to create the image of the song. They

also evaluate the appropriateness of the performance and the emotional impact it has on its audience.

ARTICLE 4 PENALTIES

4.1 PENALTIES IN THE MUSIC CATEGORY

4.1.1 **UNACCOMPANIED:** 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. Violation of this provision will result in penalties up to and including forfeiture by the Music judge(s).

4.1.2 **FOUR PART TEXTURE:** At no time should the musical texture exceed four parts. The spoken word, brief and appropriate, is not considered an additional “part” in this context. In chorus contest performances of songs, selected use of a soloist, duet, trio or quartet is acceptable as long as it is brief and appropriate. Violation of this provision will result in penalties up to and including forfeiture by the Music judge(s).

4.1.3 **MELODY:** The melody should be present and distinguishable and is most consistently sung by the lead, with the tenor harmonizing above the melody, the bass singing the lowest harmonizing notes and the baritone completing the chord. Excessive passages with the melody not in an inside voice will result in penalties up to and including forfeiture by the Music judge(s) only.

4.1.4 **CHARACTERISTIC CHORD PROGRESSIONS:** The song’s harmony must feature the natural occurrence of dominant seventh (and ninth) chords based on a variety of roots. Chord progressions in the barbershop style are based on the harmonic practice of dominant seventh (and ninth) chords resolving around the circle of fifths, while also making use of the other resolutions. Songs lacking these characteristic chord progressions will result in penalties up to and including forfeiture by the Music judge(s) only.

4.1.5 **LYRICS:** Lyrics should be sung by all four parts through most of the song’s duration. Excessive passages without words in all four parts will result in penalties up to and including forfeiture by the Music judge(s) only.

4.1.6 **OTHER ISSUES:** Songs not consistent with the barbershop style for any other musical reason (including chord vocabulary or lack of homorhythmic texture) will be adjudicated in terms of the quality of the performance by the Music judge(s).

4.2 PENALTIES IN THE PERFORMANCE CATEGORY

4.2.1 **PATRIOTIC OR RELIGIOUS INTENT:** Songs primarily patriotic or primarily religious in intent will result in penalties up to and including forfeiture by the Performance judge(s)

4.2.2 **GOOD TASTE:** Actions by any contestant that are not in good taste will be adjudicated in terms of the quality of the performance by the Performance judge(s).

4.3 PENALTIES IN THE SINGING CATEGORY

4.3.1 **USE OF SOUND EQUIPMENT OR ELECTRONIC ENHANCEMENT:** Contestants may not use their own equipment to electronically amplify or alter their voices. The use of any other technology to enhance the singing voice is not permitted.

ARTICLE 5

CONTEST SCORING

5.1 Contestants shall be judged in the three scoring categories – music, singing and performance.

5.2 Contestants shall be ranked with the cumulative total scores of points awarded by the panel of judges.

5.3 Ties – if two or more contestants are awarded the same total score, ties will only be broken for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places. The method used for breaking ties will be:

- (a) 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.
- (b) 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.
- (c) In the event where a tie cannot be broken for 1st, 2nd or 3rd place, joint medallist status will be awarded.

5.4 SPOKEN COMMENTS

5.4.1 **Non-singing** dialogue is generally not a part of a contest performance. However, brief comments made with supporting visual communications may be permitted more clearly to establish mood/theme, to assist the transition of packaged songs, or to add to the effect of closure of mood/theme.

5.4.2 **Adjudication** -Spoken words deemed to be excessive or detrimental to the performance shall be adjudicated in terms of the quality of the performance by the Performance judges.

ARTICLE 6

TYPES OF CONTESTS

GENERAL

Contestants will be judged on two different songs in one appearance.

All contestants shall hold full registrations for the convention at which the contest is held.

6.1 NATIONAL CONTESTS

The National Quartet and Chorus contests shall be held in conjunction with the IABS Convention and shall be under the general supervision of the IABS Board of Directors and its sub-committee, The Convention Team.

6.2 QUARTETS

6.2.1 DEFINITION OF A QUARTET

A quartet is a group of four singers, singing a cappella in the barbershop style with each voice taking lead, bass, baritone and tenor parts.

6.2.2 DEFINITION OF A NOVICE QUARTET

A novice quartet is defined as a quartet, as 5.2.1, which has no more than two members who have competed together in a quartet at an IABS Quartet competition.

6.2.3 At the IABS Convention, quartets will be judged in a contest which will be known as the National Quartets Final contest.

6.2.4 At such a contest there may be a further category, the International Quartets. The National Gold Medal Quartets, having won the Gold Medal at the previous year's Convention, may compete in the International Quartets Contest.

6.2.5 At the end of the Quartets Contest the placing of the quartets shall be awarded by the scores obtained in the Contest. Contestants placed first, second and third will be awarded medals providing they achieve an average score of 55 per cent (55%).

6.3 CHORUSES

6.3.1 DEFINITIONS

6.3.2 A chorus is defined as a group of singers who sing together a cappella in the barbershop style, in four-part harmony of lead, bass, baritone and tenor sections, with no less than 12 singers including Director.

6.3.3 A small chorus is defined as a chorus where the maximum number of people on stage is 20 including the Director.

6.3.4 At the IABS Convention, choruses will be judged in a contest which will be known as the National Chorus Final contest.

6.3.5 At such a contest there may be a further category, The International Choruses. National Gold Medal choruses, having won the Gold Medal at the previous year's convention, may compete in the International Chorus Contest.

6.3.6 At the end of the Chorus Finals Contest the placing of the choruses shall be awarded by the scores obtained in the contest. Contestants placed first, second and third will be awarded medals, provided they achieve an average score of 55 per cent.

6.4 OPEN YOUTH CONTEST

6.4.1 An Open Contest is for youth quartets, ensembles (less than 11 singers) and choruses (more than 11 singers), and shall be held in conjunction with the IABS Convention.

6.4.2 Entry qualification is open to young people by age, under 26 years of age on the day of the contest.

6.4.3 Contestants / choruses should hold a membership of IABS Youth or of their

country's Association.

- 6.4.4 Contestants must register to compete in the Convention and must abide by the Rules and Regulations pertaining to an IABS Convention.

ARTICLE 7

OPERATION OF THE CONTEST

- 7.1 Once the contest begins, and until the contest results are determined, the Chair of Judges is completely in charge of the operation of the contest.
- 7.2 Disturbances during Contests – should any event occur which, in the opinion of the Chair 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.
- 7.3 PROPS
- 7.3.1 Contestants may use props with prior notification to the IABS Convention Team at iabsconventionteam@gmail.com
- 7.3.2 Props should be limited to those which can be easily carried on and off stage by one person.
- 7.3.3 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.
- 7.3.4 Anything that can be quickly cleared by a stagehand is acceptable. Confetti, glitter or any other similar small material that requires extensive cleanup is banned from use in both chorus and quartet contests.

ARTICLE 8

AWARDS AT IABS CONVENTIONS

8.1 National Chorus and National Quartet Contests

8.1.1 In each contest gold, silver and bronze will be awarded as referenced in Article 5.

8.1.2 The gold medal winners of both contests will not compete in the National contests the following year.

8.1.3 Gold medal winners may enter the International contest the following year if they wish.

8.2 An award for Most improved National Chorus will be drawn from the National Chorus competition and the All-Ireland Choruses.

8.3 An award for best Small Chorus will be awarded for the highest scoring Small Chorus, as described in Article 5.

8.4 An award for the Most Improved Quartet will be drawn from the National Quartet competition.

8.5 The Award of Highest scoring Novice Quartet will be drawn from the National Quartet Competition in accordance with Article 5.

8.6 An Award of Supreme Champion. This will be judged across all competitions including Youth competitions and will be awarded to the highest scoring quartet or chorus at Convention.

8.7 There will be an award for a National Chorus or an All-Ireland Chorus who had the most number of new members registered at the time of Convention in the respective year.

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