



**NABBA**  
North American Brass Band Association

**North American Brass Band Championships**  
**Official Rules Handbook**  
**Revised: Aug 2022**

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# Philosophical Statement on Brass Band Contesting in North America

In the spirit of promoting the growth and development of brass bands in North America, it is our hope that competing bands will make decisions pertaining to their contest participation – and their entire season – in accordance with that spirit.

Specifically, NABBA bands strive to:

1. Promote awareness of brass bands and brass banding by being highly visible in frequent performances in their home region. The best way we can further music education and advance the public's appreciation of brass bands is for people to see and hear them in their local community throughout the year.
2. Do their best to recruit, train, and develop players for their roster from within their region. The ideal is for each band to sustain a full player roster without the need to share players with other NABBA bands. Despite all the growth North American brass bands have enjoyed, it still can be challenging to accumulate a contest roster entirely of local brass band musicians. Moreover, some musicians enjoy the challenge of playing in more than one group. Nevertheless, our best opportunity to grow as a movement is to convince more musicians to try playing in brass bands.
3. Keep contesting an amateur activity. Paying players for their services, either directly in wages or indirectly through subsidized expense remuneration, undermines the long and admirable tradition of brass bands creating incredible musical performances with a roster of players who are not paid to perform.
4. Support other individual NABBA musicians and member bands enthusiastically. The great thing about the brass band community in North America is that we are comprised of a diverse set of talented individuals and ensembles, all of whom share their passion for the brass band movement freely. While players and bands may espouse different missions or methods, we all share a common goal of developing a passion for brass bands here and abroad. We are proud of the mutually supportive camaraderie, friendship, and appreciation displayed for fellow competitors on an annual basis.

# Band Competition

## Adjudication, Points, and Awards

1. Adjudicators will assess bands on technical and artistic achievement and assign point scores using the adjudication rubric (example found later in this document).
2. Point scores for each band will be assembled from each adjudicator. Tabulations, resulting in a final contest score for each band, will be calculated according to the contest tabulation formula.
  - 2.1. Band point scores will be weighted as follows:
    - 2.1.1. 60% for the required test piece
    - 2.1.2. 40% for the own-choice program.
3. Final band scores will be out of 100 points. (The raw scores will be scaled down to a 100 point scale.)
4. Adjudicators will provide audio comments recorded in real-time during each performance.
5. Awards will be presented for first place through third place where applicable.
6. In the event of a tie:
  - 6.1. The band with the highest combined point total in the test piece will be declared the winner.
  - 6.2. In the event that the test piece scores are also tied, the band rated higher on the test piece by two of the three adjudicators shall be declared the winner.

## Band Rules and Regulations

1. The Contest Committee Chair, in consultation with the Contest Committee, is the authority in hosting and running the NABBC.
2. All rules interpretations and rules decisions will be determined by the Contest Committee Chair in consultation with members of the Contest Committee.
3. Entry into the NABBC Band Competition is limited to bands from North America, and must be registered as Full Member Bands with NABBA.
  - 3.1. Brass sections in bands competing in Championship, First, Second, Third, Youth Championship, and Youth First sections may only contain the following instruments: E-flat Soprano Cornet, B-flat Cornet, B-flat Flugelhorn, E-flat Tenor Horn, B-flat Baritone Horn, Tenor Trombone, Bass Trombone, B-flat Euphonium, and Tuba.
    - 3.1.1. E-flat and B-flat bass parts may be played on tubas of any key.
  - 3.2. Brass sections in bands competing in Open and Youth Open sections may include any brass instrument.
4. Conductors and players in competing bands must be individual members of NABBA.
  - 4.1. Players in competing bands must be residents of a country in North America.
  - 4.2. Conductors are not required to be residents of North America.
5. Bands will be limited in the number of players on stage. A conductor is not allowed to play any instrument with the band they are conducting, unless necessitated by the score. Any violation in the number of players will result in disqualification.

- 5.1. Entries in the Championship, First, Second, and Third Sections are limited to 28 brass players, up to 5 percussion players (as required by the score) plus the conductor on the competition stage at any time.
- 5.2. Entries in the Youth Championship and Youth First Sections are limited to 40 brass players, percussion players as needed, plus the conductor on the competition stage at any time.
- 5.3. Entries in the Open and Youth Open Sections are limited to 50 players on the stage at any time, plus the conductor.
6. Members of bands in the Youth Section must be:
  - 6.1. 17 years of age or younger, or
  - 6.2. Enrolled in a primary or secondary school (K-12) on the day of performance. Any violation in qualification of youth players will result in disqualification.
  - 6.3. Youth Section performers are not required to be individual NABBA members.
7. No band member is allowed to play more than one brass instrument per piece unless necessitated by the score. It is permissible for a brass player to also play a percussion instrument. Any violation will result in disqualification. This information must be disclosed on the submitted contest roster.
8. Players in competing bands at the NABBA Championships may perform with only one band, with the exception of youth members, who will be permitted to play in one youth band and one adult band, so long as no more than three brass and two percussion players are shared. No scheduling accommodations will be made.
9. A Contest Program will consist of a required test piece (*which must be performed first*) and an own-choice program.
  - 9.1. The own-choice program will be timed from the first note to the last note of the own-choice program; this includes all pause intervals, percussion changes, and applause/bows between pieces.
  - 9.2. Any timing penalties will be assessed at a rate of a 1 point deduction from the final score (out of 100) per ½ minute overtime or part thereof.
    - 9.2.1. (1-30 sec = 1pt)
    - 9.2.2. (31-60 sec = 2pts)
    - 9.2.3. etc.
  - 9.3. Minimum and maximum own-choice program times (from first note through last note of the own-choice program) are as follows:
    - 9.3.1. Championship Section: 13-21 minutes.
    - 9.3.2. First Section: 12-18 minutes.
    - 9.3.3. Second Section: 10-16 minutes.
    - 9.3.4. Third Section and Youth Championship Section: 8-14 minutes.
    - 9.3.5. Youth First Section: 7-13 minutes.
    - 9.3.6. Open and Youth Open Sections: 12-18 minutes. (For Open Section bands, because there is no required test piece, this time is measured from the first note to the last note of their entire program.)
10. All penalties will be assessed by the Contest Committee Chair, in consultation with the Contest Committee, after the adjudicator's scores have been turned in.

## Registration

1. Registration must be completed via the online process. Registration will be posted on November 15th and due by the Close of Business on January 15th.
2. A band may enter only one of the following categories: Championship Section, First Section, Second Section, Third Section, Open Section, Youth Championship Section, Youth First Section, Youth Open Section.
3. NABBA band registration fees, band membership fees, and individual membership fees (all listed on the website) are non-refundable and non-transferable.
4. A completed performance roster must be submitted four weeks prior to the contest (as per the instructions online).
  - 4.1. Contest chair, in consultation with the contest committee, will verify the NABBA band roster. Any discrepancies between band members performing on stage and the names on the roster will result in disqualification.
5. Three (3) scores for each piece of the **own-choice** program must be postmarked by January 15 (registration deadline).
  - 5.1. Scores must be originals, and measures must be numbered.
  - 5.2. For unpublished works, verified permission must be provided.
  - 5.3. Late submission of scores will be subject to additional penalties (payment of penalty fees must be included with late scores):
    - 5.3.1. Scores postmarked January 16-21 will be subject to an additional \$100 fee.
    - 5.3.2. Scores postmarked January 22-26 will be subject to an additional \$250 fee. .
    - 5.3.3. Scores postmarked January 27-31 will be subject to an additional \$500 fee.
    - 5.3.4. Scores postmarked February 1 or later will be returned to sender, the band will be disqualified, **and no contest entry fees will be refunded.**
6. When a band has drawn the first position in the previous year's contest, that band will be withheld from the draw for the first pick provided they enter the same section. After the first pick is made their name is resubmitted into the draw pool. This includes two separate draws for the Championship, First and Second Section Test Piece and Own-Choice Piece.
7. After the date of closure no further registrations will be accepted and incomplete registrations will be rejected.
8. Final payment amount and payment instructions will be provided upon completion of the online registration.

## Contest Flow

1. Stages will be pre-set in a standard brass band configuration with the percussion instruments furnished by NABBC.
  - 1.1. A list of provided percussion and a diagram of standard brass band configuration will be posted at [www.nabba.org](http://www.nabba.org).
  - 1.2. Additional percussion equipment may be requested from the Contest Percussion Coordinator, on or before January 15th. Supplemental equipment is not guaranteed to be provided.
2. Championship, First and Second section will perform their required test piece and own-choice program on separate days (Friday and Saturday).
3. Stand-by bands should assemble in the designated area of the performance at the appointed time in the schedule.
4. Guides will be assigned to assist you from location to location.
5. Stand-by bands will proceed to a secure room to open and store cases until the conclusion of their competition. Roster verification will happen at this time. All Band personnel must be present (including percussion)
6. Stand-by bands will then be escorted to a warm-up room.
7. Bands should remain in their warm-up area until directed to move to the stage area. As the performing band on stage is concluding their performance, the stage manager and contest logistics guides will notify the stand-by band to travel to the stage.
8. Once the final brass player of the previous performing band has exited the stage, the stand-by band will be permitted to enter the contest stage, arrange percussion and chairs, and be seated.
9. Players may play during this set-up period.
10. After a signal from the stage manager (noting the adjudicators are ready) and a signal from the conductor, contest personnel will introduce the new performing band and announce its program. The band will then perform its contest program.
11. Bands in contest sections that perform both their required test piece and own-choice programs in a single performance are required to perform the required test piece first, followed by their own-choice program. Each band should familiarize themselves with timing considerations in the Rules and Regulations.
12. After the conclusion of each performing band's performance, bands must immediately exit the stage and will be offered guidance to the photo area. Pictures may be taken at this point at the discretion of the individual band.

# Solo Competition

## Adjudication

1. There will be one adjudicator.
2. Total scores will be out of 100 points.
3. Adjudicators will only provide written comments during each performance.
4. There will be no ties.

## Solo Rules and Regulations

1. The Contest Controller in consultation with the Contest Committee is the authority in hosting and running the NABBC.
2. All rules interpretations and rules decisions will be determined by the Contest Controller(s) in consultation with members of the Contest Committee
3. Soloists will have a maximum time limit of 7 minutes.
  - 3.1. Timing will begin on the first note played after the announcer's introduction.
  - 3.2. Timing will conclude upon completion of the last note played (timing will not pause between movements).
  - 3.3. Any soloist exceeding the 7-minute playing limit will have 3 points deducted from their final score for the first half minute and 6 points total for the next half minute.
  - 3.4. If a soloist exceeds 8 minutes, the performer will be disqualified.
4. An original (no photocopy) of the solo part to be performed must be provided at the time of the performance.
  - 4.1. The music must be unannotated, except for the addition of measure numbers which must be written in and any cuts must be marked.
  - 4.2. Failure to number the adjudicator's copy of the soloist part as prescribed above will result in a 5 (five) point deduction.
  - 4.3. Soloists may have a second copy (which may be a photocopy) of the music to perform from.
  - 4.4. If a score is not provided, the performer is disqualified from competition and may perform for comments only.
5. All penalties will be assessed after the adjudicator's scores have been turned in.

## Registration

1. Performers entering the NABBC Solo Competition must be individual members of NABBA.
  - 1.1. Performers must be residents of a country in North America.
2. Soloists must perform on cornet, flugelhorn, tenor horn, baritone, tenor or bass trombone, euphonium, tuba or percussion instruments.
  - 2.1. Youth soloists may perform on trumpet or French horn *only if they play those instruments in their competing band.*
3. Soloists in the Senior categories must be
  - 3.1. 62 years of age or over on the day of the performance.
4. Soloists in the Youth categories must be
  - 4.1. 17 years of age or younger, or
  - 4.2. Enrolled in a primary or secondary school (K-12) on the day of performance.
  - 4.3. Any violation in qualification of youth players will result in disqualification.
5. Soloists may only compete in one solo category; however, a soloist may also perform in one ensemble as well.
6. Soloists will be responsible for securing their own accompanist (should they choose to have one). *If an accompanist is not listed on the registration form, NO scheduling accommodations will be made after the registration date to avoid accompanist scheduling conflicts.*
7. Players may enter in one of the following categories:
  - 7.1. Cornet Technical
  - 7.2. Cornet Slow Melody
  - 7.3. Flugel/Tenor Horn Technical
  - 7.4. Flugel/Tenor Horn Slow Melody
  - 7.5. Baritone/Euphonium Technical
  - 7.6. Baritone/ Euphonium Slow Melody
  - 7.7. Trombone Technical
  - 7.8. Trombone Slow Melody
  - 7.9. Tuba Technical
  - 7.10. Tuba Slow Melody
  - 7.11. Senior High Brass Technical (cornet, flugel, horn)
  - 7.12. Senior High Brass Slow Melody (cornet, flugel, horn)
  - 7.13. Senior Low Brass Technical (baritone, trombone, euphonium, tuba)
  - 7.14. Senior Low Brass Slow Melody (baritone, trombone, euphonium, tuba)
  - 7.15. Youth High Brass Technical (cornet, flugel, horn)
  - 7.16. Youth High Brass Slow Melody (cornet, flugel, horn)
  - 7.17. Youth Low Brass Technical (baritone, trombone, euphonium, tuba)
  - 7.18. Youth Low Brass Slow Melody (baritone, trombone, euphonium, tuba)
  - 7.19. Percussion Solo
  - 7.20. Youth Percussion Solo



8. Registrations for the limited number of spots in the solo contest will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.
9. Registration for the solo contest will open on January 22 (after the band contest draw and schedules have been announced). Solo contest registration will close on February 10.
  - 9.1. After the solo contest registration has closed and the solo contest schedules have been announced, soloists may engage an accompanist that is available for their time slot.
10. Solo contest registration fees and NABBA memberships are non-refundable and non-transferable.

## Contest Flow

1. Soloists may store their cases in the designated storage area to open and store cases until the conclusion of their competition.
2. Performance flow:
  - 2.1. Soloists are to assemble either inside their assigned performance space or immediately outside the door of their assigned performance space 15 minutes prior to their assigned time.
  - 2.2. During the interval before their performance event, the soloist should hand off the adjudicator's score to the room monitor and confirm their name, title of work, and composer information.
  - 2.3. When the adjudicator and soloist are ready, the room monitor will introduce the soloist and announce the title and composer of the work.
  - 2.4. The soloist will begin their performance and the timing will start.
  - 2.5. After the conclusion of the performance, timing will stop and the soloist will clear the performance space as quickly as possible.
  - 2.6. The soloist should wait by the room entrance to collect their music from the room monitor.

# Ensemble Competition

## Adjudication

1. There will be one adjudicator.
2. Total scores will be out of 100 points.
3. Adjudicators will only provide written comments during each performance.
4. There will be no ties.

## Ensemble Rules and Regulations

1. Contest Committee chair, in consultation with the contest committee is the authority in hosting and running the NABBC.
2. All rules interpretations and rules decisions will be determined by the Contest Committee chair, in consultation with the contest committee
3. Ensembles will have a maximum time limit of 10 minutes.
  - 3.1. Timing will begin on the first note played after the announcer's introduction.
  - 3.2. Timing will conclude upon completion of the last note played (timing will not pause between movements).
  - 3.3. Any ensemble exceeding the 10-minute playing limit will have 3 points deducted from their final score for the first half minute and 6 points total for the next half minute.
  - 3.4. If an ensemble exceeds 11 minutes the ensemble will be disqualified.
4. An original (no photocopy) of the score to be performed must be provided at the time of the performance.
  - 4.1. The music must be unannotated, except for the addition of measure numbers which must be written in and any cuts must be marked.
  - 4.2. Failure to number the adjudicator's copy of the score as prescribed above will result in a 5 (five) point deduction.
  - 4.3. If there is no score provided, the ensemble will be disqualified and perform for comments only.
5. All penalties will be assessed after the adjudicator's scores have been turned in.
6. No individual may play in more than one ensemble. If a player performs with more than one ensemble, both ensembles will be disqualified and may play for comments only.
  - 6.1. Exception: If a band uses a 10-piece entry in place of a full band entry, members of this 10-piece are still allowed to participate in one other ensemble
7. No more than 2 Brass Ensembles and no more than 1 Percussion Ensemble may be entered from any one competing band. If entries exceed these numbers, bands will have to select which ensembles will represent them to fit within these constraints and entry fees will not be returned.

## Registration

1. Performers in ensembles entering the NABBC Ensemble Competition must be individual members of NABBA.
  - 1.1. Performers must be residents of a country in North America.
2. Members must perform on cornet, flugelhorn, tenor horn, baritone, tenor or bass trombone, euphonium, tuba or percussion instruments.
  - 2.1. Youth members may perform on trumpet or French horn *only if they play those instruments in their competing band.*
3. Number of players:
  - 3.1. Ten-Piece ensembles must consist of ten brass players (both high and low brass must be represented), with an optional conductor and/or 1-2 optional percussionist(s).
  - 3.2. All ensembles other than Ten-Piece ensembles must have a minimum of 3 members.
4. All Members of ensembles in the Youth categories must be
  - 4.1. 17 years of age or younger, or
  - 4.2. Enrolled in a primary or secondary school (K-12) on the day of performance.
  - 4.3. Any violation in qualification of youth players will result in disqualification.
5. Ensembles may enter in one of the following categories:
  - 5.1. Ten-Piece Ensemble
  - 5.2. Brass Ensemble (maximum 9 performers)
  - 5.3. Percussion Ensemble (maximum 10 performers)
  - 5.4. Youth Brass Ensemble (maximum 9 performers)
  - 5.5. Youth Percussion Ensemble (maximum 10 performers)
6. A completed registration and payment must be completed via the online process, by the posted deadline in order to participate.
7. Registrations for the limited number of spots in the ensemble contest will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.
8. Registration for the ensemble contest will open on January 22 (after the band contest draw and schedule have been announced). Ensemble contest registration will close on February 10.
9. Ensemble contest registration fees and NABBA memberships are non-refundable and non-transferable.

## Contest Flow

1. Ensemble performers may store their cases in the designated storage area to open and store cases until the conclusion of their competition.
2. Performance Flow:
  - 2.1. Ensemble members are to assemble either inside their assigned performance space or immediately outside the door of their assigned performance space 20 minutes prior to their assigned time.
  - 2.2. During the interval before their performance event, a member of the ensemble should hand off the adjudicator's score to the room monitor and confirm the ensemble name, title of work, and composer information.
  - 2.3. When the adjudicator and ensemble are ready, the room monitor will introduce the ensemble and announce the title and composer of the work.
  - 2.4. The ensemble will begin their performance and the timing will start.
  - 2.5. After the conclusion of the performance, timing will stop and the ensemble members will clear the performance space as quickly as possible.
  - 2.6. A member of the ensemble should wait by the room entrance to collect their music from the room monitor.