

CONTEST RULES



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Barbershop Harmony Society

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Society Board of Directors, CEO, and SCJC through 3 September 2026.

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FOREWORD

These rules apply to all official quartet and chorus contests at the division, district and international levels in the Society.

Bracketed notation after a subsection indicates primary responsibility for rule review and revision among Society Board of Directors [SBOD], Society executive director [CEO] and Society Contest & Judging Committee [SCJC].

SBOD has ultimate responsibility for, and general oversight of, the BHS Contest Rules. It has direct responsibility for issues related to barbershop style or image/character concerns, any fundamental or structural changes to contests (such as removal or modification of an international contest) or penalties. [SBOD] - any modification should involve CEO and SCJC input and recommendations; fundamental and substantive changes to contests/championships require SBOD approval. Two weeks advance notice of revisions will be given the SBOD and, absent any disapproval, the changes are approved

CEO has operational supervision and handles rankings and awards, operational requirements, such as membership or other logistical issues. Changes of responsibility between SCJC and CEO can be made upon mutual agreement or as directed by the SBOD. Other responsibility changes require SBOD approval. [CEO] - any modification should involve SCJC input and recommendations. Two weeks advance notice of revisions will be given the SBOD and, absent any disapproval, the changes are approved.

SCJC - SCJC handles details within the boundaries of the contest or issues that could affect ability to score. [SCJC] - any modification can be made by the SCJC without SBOD approval; CEO will be consulted prior to any change. Two weeks advance notice of revisions will be given the SBOD and, absent any disapproval, the changes are approved.

In matters not specifically covered by these rules, the districts may exercise reasonable latitude and prerogative provided that the established ethics and policies of the Society are closely observed.

DEFINITIONS

Ensemble Classifications

❖ Gender Identity

Ensembles are classified by the individual members' self-identification in the Society Member Center database.¹

❖ Quartet

- *Men's*: consists only of members who identify as male.
- *Women's*: consists only of members who identify as female.
- *Mixed Harmony (All Voices)*: consists of members who identify as a combination of gender identities that are not all-male or all-female.

❖ Chorus

- *Men's*: all singers identify as male. The gender identity of the director is not relevant to chorus classification.
- *Women's*: all singers identify as female. The gender identity of the director is not relevant to chorus classification.
- *Mixed Harmony (All Voices)*: any chorus in which all singers identify as a combination of gender identities that are not all-male or all-female. [CEO]

Target and Minimum Scores for International Qualification

The *target* score to automatically qualify for International is adopted by the Society executive director prior to the first qualifying preliminary contest for the international contest in question, after considering the target score recommended by the Society Contest and Judging Committee. The target score adopted by the Society executive director shall remain in effect until changed by subsequent action by the Society executive director.

Similarly, all quartets and choruses qualifying for summer International contests must have earned a *minimum* score, which is adopted by the Society executive director after considering the score recommended by the Society Contest and Judging Committee. The minimum score adopted by the Society executive director shall remain in effect until changed by subsequent action by the Society executive director. [CEO]

CONTEST	TARGET SCORE	MINIMUM SCORE
International Quartet (Article II.C.1)	81.0%	76.0%
International Chorus (Article II.G.1)	81.0%	74.0%
International Seniors Quartet (Article II.D.1)	None	65.0%
International Seniors Chorus (Article II.H.1)	None	63.0%
Next Generation Varsity Quartet (Article II.E.1)	None	None

¹ Individuals self-describe how they gender identify and that description is stored as part of their member record. The Barbershop Harmony Society strives to treat all individuals equitably and with a presumption of good character and integrity in accurately maintaining their own member records.

ARTICLE I: ELIGIBILITY²

A. Quartets

1. Membership and Quartet Registration Requirements

- a. *Society and Participation Membership*: All members of Society competing quartets must be members of the Society and one or more Society districts.³ A member of the Society is defined as one with Society dues and any other dues/fees owed as a part of Society Participation Membership are fully paid and who is not under suspension by a chapter or the Society Board of Directors. [CEO]
- b. *District*: At least one member of a Society quartet must be a member of a chapter in the district in which the quartet elects to compete ([Article I.A.4.](#)) This includes the district's Frank H Thorne chapter. [CEO]
- c. *Quartet Registration*: To be eligible for competition, a Society quartet must be registered with the Society Headquarters (Customer Service) and such registration must include the same personnel that enter the contest. The registration must be at a level which permits participation in a BHS contest, which currently is a standard quartet package, i.e., a basic package is not eligible. Any changes to quartet membership must be completed at least 7 days prior to the start of a contest, except for changes that are approved by the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair. [CEO]
- d. *Global Alliance quartets*: Membership eligibility of a competing quartet from a Global Alliance organization shall be in accordance with the memorandum of understanding between that organization and the Society. [CEO]

2. Seniors Quartet

Each member of a quartet competing in any seniors quartet contest must be age 55 or older and the sum of the accumulated ages of the quartet must equal or exceed 240 years. These requirements must be met based on birthdays reached on or before the day of the International Seniors Quartet Contest scheduled at the next Mid-Winter convention after the contest in which a quartet is competing.⁴[CEO]

3. Next Generation [NextGen] Varsity Quartet

Each member of a quartet competing in the Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contest must be age 25 or younger. This requirement must be met based on birthdays reached on or before the day of the International Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contest scheduled at the annual convention. There is no restriction regarding membership in the Society or any Global Alliance organization.⁵ [CEO]

² Any requests for exception to any of the rules on eligibility must be made to the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its chair.

³ Participation membership in Society and any district, without a specific chapter subscription, is equivalent to Frank H Thorne chapter requirement.

⁴ While the seniors quartet definition is Society-wide, super seniors quartet eligibility is a matter for district definition.

⁵ The lack of restriction applies to international. Districts may conduct youth contests that are open or with membership requirements. The former is encouraged.

4. Selection of Home District

If members of a quartet collectively hold memberships in more than one district, on its initial registration the quartet must notify the Society Headquarters (Customer Service) of the district it chooses to represent and in which it will compete. Should it wish to change its home district, the quartet must notify the Society Headquarters (Customer Service) prior to September 1 each year of the district it chooses to represent and in which it will compete. Such selection will be binding for a full year (September-August), and the quartet may not compete in any contest in any other district during that year except as provided below. [SCJC]

5. Out-of-District Competition

- a. *Request:* Under normal circumstances a quartet is expected to compete in its selected home district. However, a quartet may request to compete in a district other than its home district. [SCJC]
- b. *Action:* Such requests by a quartet to compete in a district other than its home district are subject to approval by the District Representative for Contest and Judging (DRCJ) of the requested contest district. Districts are not required to allow every quartet guaranteed "open" access to their preliminary quartet contest if they feel they need to control the size. [SCJC]

As a matter of good practice and courtesy a quartet requesting approval to compete out of district should advise its home district's DRCJ of the request. [SCJC]

- c. *Deadline:* Requests must be submitted at least 10 days prior to the official entry deadline of the out-of-district contest for which entry is desired. [SCJC]

6. Competing in Multiple Quartets or Two International Preliminary Contests

- a. *International contests:* In international contests, including seniors quartet contests, a quartet member may compete with no more than one quartet, regardless of the number of quartets or districts to which the member belongs. Any requests for exceptions to this rule must be made to the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair. [SCJC]
- b. *International preliminary contests:* In international preliminary contests, including seniors quartet contests, a member may compete with more than one quartet. If a member is competing in two or more quartets, each of those quartets must be comprised of no more than two of the same members. Should more than one of the quartets in which the member is competing qualify for international they must make a choice in accordance with [Article I.A.6.a](#) above. [SCJC]
- c. *Two preliminary contests:* A quartet is permitted to compete in two international preliminary or international seniors preliminary contests. The higher score of the two contests will be used for qualification. An attempt at a home-district preliminary contest will be used for district representative selection. Where applicable when a district conducts two preliminary contests, the higher score in either home-district preliminary contest will be used. This rule will not be construed to disqualify a group as a district representative. [SCJC]

7. Championship Quartets

- a. *Not Eligible to Compete:* Except in division contests, championship quartets of prior years, regardless of district or ensemble classification, will not be eligible to compete again for the same international or type of district-level championship that it earned previously. [CEO]

- b. Forming a New Quartet:* This rule will not be construed to prohibit the organization and entry of a new quartet of not more than two members of the same championship quartet, provided entry is made under a different name. [CEO]

8. Convention Registration

Each competing quartet member shall hold a full competitor registration for the convention at which the contest is held. [CEO]

B. Choruses

1. Membership Requirements

- a. Society and Chapter:* All members of competing Society choruses, including director, must be members of the Society and of each chapter they choose to represent in competition. If not permitted to be a chapter member by that chapter's bylaws (single gender), a director must be a Society member and a member of the district in which the chorus is competing. Chapters represented in Society chorus contests must be in good standing with the Society and their districts. [CEO]
- b. Global Alliance Choruses:* Membership eligibility of a competing chorus from a Global Alliance organization shall be in accordance with the memorandum of understanding between that organization and the Society. [CEO]

2. Minimum Size

A competing chorus must be composed of 9 or more participants on stage, including the director. [SCJC]

3. Seniors Choruses

Except for the director, each member of a chorus competing in any seniors chorus contest must be age 55 or older and a member of the chapter the chorus represents, including a district's Frank H. Thorne chapter-at-large. If under the age of 55 the director is not permitted to sing. Except for alliance choruses and special choruses authorized by the Society executive director, the chapter membership requirement must be met on the date of participation in the seniors chorus preliminary or the International Seniors Chorus championship, as appropriate. The age requirement must be met based on birthdays reached on or before the day of the International Seniors Chorus championship for which the chorus is qualifying or in which it is competing. [CEO]

4. Competing in Multiple Choruses

A member may participate, either as director or singer, with more than one chorus in any contest, including the International Seniors Chorus championship. [SCJC]

5. Distinctly Separate Choruses

While individual members are permitted to compete in two or more choruses, it is policy that only distinctly separate ensembles are allowed to compete for the same award or championship. Choruses may not be comprised of more than 75% of the same members on stage as another chorus competing for the same contest award or in the same preliminary cycle.⁶ The percentage threshold is calculated against the smaller chorus. (See "Position Paper X. Distinctly Separate Chorus" in Chapter 9 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook* for

⁶ The intent of this rule is fairness; as an example, a men's chorus cannot simply add a few females voices to become a mixed chorus in the same preliminary chorus cycle, not just the same chorus session.

details.) Any questions or requests for waivers should be addressed to the SCJC through its Chair². [SCJC]

6. Out-of-District Competition

- a. Request:* Under normal circumstances a chorus is expected to compete in its home district. However, a chorus may request to compete in a district other than its home district. [SCJC]
- b. Action:* Such requests to compete in a district other than its home district are subject to approval by the District Representative for Contest and Judging (DRCJ) of the requested contest district. Districts are not required to allow every chorus a guaranteed "open" access to their prelim event if they feel they need to control the size. [SCJC]

As a matter of good practice and courtesy, a chorus requesting approval to compete out of district should advise its home DRCJ of the request. [SCJC]

- c. Deadline:* Requests must be submitted at least 10 days prior to the official entry deadline of the out-of-district contest for which entry is desired. [SCJC]

7. Layout after Championship

- a.* International chorus champions are not eligible to compete for the International Chorus Championship to be awarded for the two contest cycles (two years absent an unusual case such as a pandemic) following the year in which the chorus won the International Chorus Championship. This applies to distinctly different choruses as defined in [Article I.B.5](#) and does not preclude a chapter from sending a different chorus or choruses after a championship. [CEO]
- b.* International Seniors Chorus champions are not eligible to compete for the International Seniors Chorus Championship to be awarded for the next contest cycle (one year absent an unusual case such as a pandemic) following the year in which the chorus won the International Seniors Chorus Championship. [CEO]

8. Convention Registration

Prior to a performance every member of a competing chorus, including the director, shall hold a full paid competitor registration for the convention at which the contest is held. [CEO]

C. Violations

1. Reporting Violation

Suspected violations of [Article I](#) shall be reported to the DRCJ for contests other than international contests or to the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair for international contests. This must be done within 10 days after the discovery of the suspected violation and, in any event, no later than 30 days after the contest conclusion. All such reports should include all available documentation to assist with the investigation and decision. [SCJC]

2. Format

All notices and rulings with respect to [Article I](#) violations must be in writing (which includes electronic transmissions) and shall be deemed to have been given

- (1) upon personal delivery, or
- (2) three business days after being mailed, or

(3) if given by electronic transmission, when received and acknowledged by the party receiving an electronic notice or ruling who shall immediately acknowledge receipt.
[SCJC]

3. Effect of Violation

Quartets and choruses found in violation of [Article I.A](#) or [Article I.B](#), respectively, or related [Article II.E](#), below, are ineligible and disqualified. They will not be included in the final official scoring summary for that contest. A revised scoring summary will be published if necessary ([Article VI.B](#)). [SCJC]

D. Additional Eligibility Restrictions

As a general rule a district may not impose any additional eligibility requirement(s) for contest entry into official contests, e.g., residency or length of membership. Any request for exception to this policy should be submitted to the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair. [SCJC]

ARTICLE II: CONTEST ENTRY PROCEDURES⁷

A. Division Contests

Contest entry procedures for division contests are specified by district policy. However, the entry is made through the Society Member Center. [SCJC]

B. District Contests and International Preliminary Contests

1. Contest Entry

At least 30 days prior to the contest entry deadline, each district, through its specified district official(s), will make contest entry available to each eligible contestant, online through the Society Member Center. The District Representative for Contest and Judging (DRCJ) is responsible for notifying each eligible contestant of the timing and method of entry. [SCJC]

2. Deadline

Completed entries for the contest must be received by the DRCJ by a date specified by district policy, provided that for good cause the DRCJ may accept late entries that are received not later than 7 days prior to the contest date. [SCJC]

C. International Quartet Contests

1. Contestant Qualification

a. *Attainment of Target Score (Automatic Qualification)*: Regardless of ensemble classification, all Society and Global Alliance quartets that meet or exceed the target score ([Article V.D.4](#)) at a preliminary event adjudicated by at least a double panel of scoring judges, appointed per [Articles IV.C](#), [IV.D](#), or [IV.E](#), shall qualify for the International Quartet Contest. **[NOTE: Current target score is an average of 81.0.⁸]**
[CEO]

b. *Second Attempt at Automatic Qualification*: If they choose, and permission of the preliminary host district is received per [Article I.A.5](#) where applicable, contestants will be allowed a second attempt to achieve the target score by competing in a second preliminary event. The higher score in either attempt will be used to determine target score qualification or scoring pool consideration. [SCJC]

c. *District Representative*: In the event that no quartet from a district has attained the target score at the end of the final preliminary quartet contest in May, the district's highest-scoring quartet that competed in its home district's international preliminary quartet contest(s) and met the minimum score (below) shall qualify to represent that district in the International Quartet Contest.^{9 10} [CEO]

d. *Scoring Pool*: If fewer than the minimum number of quartets are qualified by the above methods (target score or district representative), the remaining quartets chosen to fill out

⁷ Contest entry for all Society contests is accomplished online via the Society Member Center.

⁸ All references to average scores pertain to the mean of all category averages. Target and minimum scores are reported as calculated and are not subject to rounding.

⁹ The first attempt in a home-district preliminary contest will be used for district representative selection in most cases. However, should the second attempt in a second home-district preliminary contest be higher it will replace the first home-district attempt.

¹⁰ If no quartet at a home district preliminary contest attains the target score, it will not be possible to announce a district representative until all preliminary contests are completed.

the desired field of quartets will be selected by rank from a pool of all those quartets competing in that year's international preliminary quartet contests. If more than one quartet is ranked at the desired number by score, each quartet achieving that ranking shall qualify for the International Quartet Contest. **[NOTE: The current minimum number of participating quartets is 50.** If more than one quartet is ranked at the minimum number by score, each quartet achieving that ranking shall qualify for the International Quartet Contest.] [CEO]

- e. *Minimum Score:* All Society quartets must have earned a minimum score, which is adopted by the Society executive director after considering the score recommended by the Society Contest and Judging Committee. The minimum score adopted by the Society executive director shall remain in effect until changed by subsequent action by the Society executive director. **[NOTE: Current minimum score is average of 76.0.]** [CEO]
- f. *Global Alliance Quartet Invitations:* In accordance with its agreement between itself and the Society, if no quartet meets or exceeds the target score at its own or another Global Alliance contest ([Article II.C.1.a](#)), a Global Alliance organization is eligible to nominate one and only one quartet from its own or another Global Alliance contest as its representative to the International Quartet Contest. This quartet may be invited by the Society executive director on behalf of the Society Board of Directors. All other invitations will be at the discretion of the Society executive director based on recommendations by the Society Contest and Judging Committee with the same minimum score required of Society quartets ([Article II.C.1.e](#)). [CEO]
- g. *BinG! World Mixed Quartet Champion Invitation:* In addition to the Society quartets and any agreement between a Global Alliance organization and the Society, the winner of the *BinG! World Mixed Quartet Championship*, unless otherwise ineligible, will be invited by the Society executive director on behalf of the Society Board of Directors. If the winner is ineligible the next highest scoring quartet from that contest will be invited. [CEO]

2. Qualifying Quartet Replacement

- a. *Replacement of Quartet:* If, prior to the International Quartet Contest, a quartet that qualified by attainment of the target score or by scoring pool as defined above becomes ineligible or unavailable, that quartet will not be replaced, except where the loss of that quartet brings the total of Society quartets qualifying for the contest below 50. [CEO]
- b. *Replacement of District Representative:* If, prior to the International Quartet Contest, a quartet becomes either ineligible or otherwise unavailable to compete and, if as a result, that district would not be represented in the International Quartet Contest, then the next highest-ranking quartet that is available from the same district and that competed in its home district preliminary quartet contest will replace the quartet that has become ineligible or unavailable, provided that said next highest-ranking quartet has earned the minimum score as defined in [Article II.C.1.e](#). [CEO]

3. Contest Entry and Deadline

Contest entry for the contest is done online through the Society Member Center. It must be received by no later than June 15 prior to the contest, provided that for good cause shown and with the concurrence of the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair, late entries may be accepted. [CEO]

D. International Seniors Quartet Contests

1. Contest Qualification

- a. *District Representative:* The highest-scoring seniors quartet from each district that competed in its home district International Preliminary Seniors Quartet Contest(s) and met the minimum score (below) shall qualify to represent that district in the International Seniors Quartet contest. The highest score in a home district preliminary contest will be used for district representative selection in most cases. Where applicable when a district conducts two preliminary seniors quartet contests, the higher score in either contest will be used. [CEO]
- b. *Second Attempt at Qualification:* If they choose, seniors quartets will be allowed a second attempt to qualify by competing in a second preliminary event. The higher score of the two attempts will be used in determining the district representative, if from two home district preliminary contests, or by scoring pool ranking. [SCJC]
- c. *Scoring Pool:* The remaining quartets to fill out the field of Society quartets, up to a number determined by the Society executive director, will be selected by rank from a pool of all those quartets competing in one or two of that year's International Preliminary Seniors Quartet Contests. **[NOTE: Current desired number of Society quartets is 25.]** If more than one seniors quartet is ranked at the desired number by score, each seniors quartet achieving that ranking shall qualify for the International Seniors Quartet Contest. [CEO]
- d. *Global Alliance Seniors Quartets:* In addition to the Society quartets, seniors quartets from Global Alliance organizations may be invited by the Society executive director on behalf of the Society Board of Directors. [CEO]
- e. *Minimum Score:* To be eligible to compete in the International Seniors Quartet Contest, all seniors quartets must have earned a minimum score that is adopted by the Society executive director after considering the score recommended by the Society Contest and Judging Committee. The minimum score adopted by the Society executive director shall remain in effect until changed by subsequent action by the Society executive director. **[NOTE: Current minimum score is average of 65.0.]** [CEO]
- f. *Other Seniors Quartet Contests:* Districts are free to stage other seniors quartet contests for local awards. [SCJC]

2. Notification and Indication of Intent

All district and Global Alliance representatives and selected at-large quartets will be notified in early November preceding the contest date. Each quartet must advise the Society Headquarters of its intention to compete by November 15. Failure of any quartet to do so by the date specified shall constitute withdrawal of the quartet's invitation. [CEO]

3. Qualifying Quartet Replacement

- a. *District Representative:* If a district representative withdraws or otherwise becomes unavailable, and, as a result, that district would not be represented in the International Seniors Quartet Contest, then the next highest-ranking quartet that is available from the same district will replace the quartet that has withdrawn or become unavailable, provided that said next highest-ranking quartet has earned the minimum score as defined in [Article II.D.1.e.](#) [CEO]
- b. *Scoring Pool:* In the event any at-large quartets withdraw or otherwise become unavailable prior to the first working day of January, replacements shall be added from

the scoring pool in order to not fall below the desired number of Society quartets ([Article II.D.1.c](#)). [CEO]

- c. *Cut-Off Date*: No replacements will be made after the first working day in January, whether or not a district would be left unrepresented and regardless of the number of remaining entries. [CEO]

4. Contest Entry and Deadline

Contest entry for the contest is done online through the Society Member Center. It must be received by the Society Headquarters no later than December 15 prior to the contest, provided that for good cause shown and with the concurrence of the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair, late entries may be accepted. [CEO]

E. Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contests

1. Contest Qualification

- a. *Qualification*: Up to a desired number of participants, Next Generation Varsity quartets will be invited by rank from a pool of all those quartets participating with video submissions in the corresponding international Next Generation Varsity Quartet Preliminary Quartet Contest. An individual can compete in only one Next Generation Varsity Quartet at a time **[NOTE: Current desired number of varsity quartets is 20.]** [CEO]
- b. *Quartets with members under 18*: A quartet may have up to three members under the age of 18, as long as a parent or guardian accompanies the quartet at the convention and accepts responsibility for the minors on the Youth Participation Form. [CEO]
- c. *Choice of Varsity or Junior Qualification*: Next Generation quartets that are eligible to participate in both Varsity and Junior Varsity quartet contests may enter only one contest occurring within the same year. [CEO]
- d. *Competing in both Next Generation Varsity Quartet and International Quartet Contests*: An individual may compete in both the open BHS International Quartet Contest and the finals of the Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contest in the same year. Any singer competing in the International Quartet Contest is ineligible for any level of Varsity scholarship assistance including a free international convention registration. [CEO]

2. Notification and Indication of Intent

All qualified Next Generation Varsity quartets will be notified in early February preceding the contest date. Each quartet must advise the Society Headquarters of its intention to compete by March 15. Failure of any quartet to do so by the date specified shall constitute withdrawal of the quartet's invitation. [CEO]

3. Contest Entry and Deadline

Contest entry for the contest is done online through the Society Member Center. It must be received by no later than June 15 prior to the contest, provided that for good cause shown and with the concurrence of the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair, late entries may be accepted. [CEO]

F. Personnel Change in Quartets

1. Change during Contest Not Permitted

No quartet member may be replaced during a contest. Replacement of one or more quartet members who began the first song of the contest will result in the quartet being declared ineligible and disqualified. [SCJC]

2. Personnel Change in Qualifying Quartets

- a. *International Quartet, Seniors Quartet and Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contests*
After qualifying for an International Quartet Contest at an International Preliminary Quartet Contest, an International Preliminary Seniors Quartet Contest or the Next Generation Varsity Quartet Preliminary video contest, a quartet may replace up to one member and still be eligible to compete at the international contest, i.e., at least three members who sang in the qualifying contest must sing in the corresponding international contest for that quartet to remain eligible to compete. [SCJC]
- b. *District and Division Contests*
Policy on replacement of any quartet personnel between qualification at a division contest and a district contest is specified by each district. [SCJC]

G. International Chorus Contests

1. Contest Qualification

- a. *Attainment of Target Score (Automatic Qualification)*: Regardless of ensemble classification, all Society and Global Alliance choruses that meet or exceed the target score ([Article V.J.3](#)) at a preliminary event adjudicated by at least a double-panel of scoring judges, appointed per [Article IV.C](#), [Article IV.D](#), or [Article IV.E](#), shall qualify for the International Chorus Contest.¹¹ **[NOTE: Current target score is an average of 81.¹²]** [CEO]
- b. *Second Attempt at Automatic Qualification*: If they choose, choruses will be allowed a second attempt to achieve the target score by competing in a second preliminary event. The higher score of either of the two attempts will be used in determining attainment of the target score. [SCJC]
- c. *District Representative*: Regardless of ensemble classification, the highest-scoring chorus from each district competing in its home district's preliminary chorus contest(s) that achieved at least the minimum score ([Article II.G.1.f](#)) shall be declared the district's representative and shall qualify to represent that district in the International Chorus Contest. [CEO]
- d. *Scoring Pool*: If fewer than the minimum number of Society choruses are qualified by the above methods (target score or district representative), the remaining choruses to fill out the desired field of Society choruses will be selected by rank from a pool of all those choruses competing in that year's international preliminary chorus contests. **[NOTE: Current minimum number of Society choruses is 30.]** [CEO]
- e. *Scoring Pool Ties*: If there is a tie between two or more choruses for the last scoring pool qualifier, the Society executive director will review the schedule to determine if all

¹¹ A Society chapter may be represented by more than one chorus at the International Chorus Contest.

¹² The target score for 2027 International is an average of 81%. All references to average scores pertain to the mean of all category averages. Target and minimum scores are reported as calculated and are not subject to rounding.

the tied choruses can be accommodated in the draw. If not, then the tie situation will be resolved using the standard tie-break formula, i.e., a tie will be broken by ranking the choruses according to their overall scores in the Singing category or, only if that does not break the tie, according to their overall scores in the Performance category. If a tie still exists, the tie will be broken by random draw and the chorus name drawn will be awarded the last qualification. [CEO]

- f. Minimum Score:* To be eligible to compete in the International Chorus Contest, all Society choruses, including district representatives and those qualifying by scoring pool ranking, must have earned a minimum score, which is adopted by the Society executive director after considering the score recommended by the Society Contest and Judging Committee. The minimum score adopted by the Society executive director shall remain in effect until changed by subsequent action by the Society executive director. **[NOTE: Current minimum score is an average of 74.0.]** [CEO]
- g. Global Alliance and Special Choruses:* In addition to the Society choruses and in accordance with any agreement between a Global Alliance organization and the Society, choruses from Global Alliance organizations may be invited by the Society executive director on behalf of the Society Board of Directors. The Society executive director also may authorize and invite special Society chorus(es) to permit participation of members who might not otherwise have the opportunity to compete on the international stage. [CEO]
- h. BinG! World Mixed Chorus Champion Invitation:* In addition to the Society choruses and any agreement between a Global Alliance organization and the Society, the winner of the *BinG! World Mixed Chorus Championship*, unless otherwise ineligible, will be invited by the Society executive director on behalf of the Society Board of Directors. If the winner is ineligible the next highest scoring chorus from that contest will be invited. [CEO]

2. Replacement

- a. District Representative:* If a qualifying chorus withdraws or otherwise becomes unavailable and, as a result, that district will not be represented in the International Chorus Contest, then the next highest-ranking chorus that is available from the same district will be invited to replace the qualifying chorus, provided it earned the minimum score as defined in [Article II.G.1.f](#). [CEO]
- b. Other Qualified Chorus:* If a qualifying chorus that is not a district representative withdraws from the International Chorus Contest or otherwise becomes unavailable, the next highest-scoring and eligible chorus in the Society not yet qualified will be invited to replace the withdrawn chorus, provided that said next highest-scoring chorus has earned the minimum score as defined in [Article II.G.1.f](#). If there is a tie for the next highest-scoring eligible chorus position, it will be resolved according to [Article II.G.1.e](#). [CEO]
- c. Replacement OOA:* If the order of appearance has been determined, the replacement chorus will fill the position of the withdrawn chorus in the contest order of appearance. [SCJC]
- d. Acceptance and Replacement Cut-off Date:* Invited replacement choruses will have seven days to respond to the invitation. The process for replacing withdrawals will end by April 1 prior to the date of the International Chorus Contest. [CEO]

3. Contest Entry and Deadline

Contest entry for the contest is done online through the Society Member Center and must be received by the Society Headquarters no later than June 15 prior to the date of the International Chorus Contest, provided that for good cause shown and with the concurrence of the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair, late entries may be accepted. [CEO]

4. Roster and Certification Submission

- a. *Roster Submission:* Each chorus competing in the International Chorus Contest must submit a roster to the Society Headquarters (Customer Service) no later than June 15, indicating all members who will be participating on stage with that chorus, including the director. The roster must include the full name and Society member number of each member who will be competing, and an indication that the member has a convention registration. [CEO]
- b. *Certification Statement:* The roster must also include the following statement and be signed by the chapter president and chapter secretary:
“We hereby certify that this roster is accurate and that all names submitted are Society, district, and chapter members in good standing, that each member has, or will have, a convention registration, and that we have complied with all eligibility requirements outlined in [Article I.B.](#)” [CEO]
- c. *Validation:* The Society membership department will validate each roster list submitted and notify the chapter that (1) the validated list has been forwarded to the Panel Chair for the international chorus contest, or (2) return the list to the chapter with notations reflecting members not in compliance with the rule. If the latter, the chorus has five calendar days to get all members submitted in compliance or remove their noncompliant names from the list. [CEO]
- d. *Eligibility Confirmation:* The roster list and other documentation may be used by the Panel Chair, additional Administrative Judges, convention officials, or Society staff to confirm eligibility at the contest site. [CEO]
- e. *Effect of Noncompliance:* Failure to comply with this requirement will result in declaring the chorus ineligible as specified in [Article I.C.3.](#) [CEO]

H. International Seniors Chorus

1. Contest Qualification

- a. *Qualification:* Up to the desired number of participants, Society choruses will be invited by rank from a pool of all those choruses competing in International Preliminary Seniors Chorus Contests related to a midwinter championship. Each qualification can result in only one invitation and acceptance. Should the desired number of participants not be reached in initial qualification there is provision for late qualification per [Article V.L.1.](#) **[NOTE: Current desired number of seniors choruses is 10.]** [CEO]
- b. *Second Attempt at Qualification:* If they choose, seniors choruses will be allowed a second attempt to qualify by competing in a second preliminary event. The higher score of the two attempts will be used in determining the rank for consideration of an invitation to the International Seniors Chorus Contest. [SCJC]

- c. *Qualification Ties*: If there is a tie between two or more choruses for the last ranking qualifier, the Society executive director will review the schedule to determine if all the tied choruses can be accommodated in the draw. If not, then the tie situation will be resolved using the standard tie-break formula, i.e., a tie will be broken by ranking the choruses according to their overall scores in the Singing category or, only if that does not break the tie, according to their overall scores in the Performance category. If a tie still exists, the tie will be broken by random draw and the chorus name drawn will be awarded the last qualification. [CEO]
- d. *Minimum Score*: To be eligible to compete in the International Seniors Chorus Contest, all choruses must have earned a minimum score, which is adopted by the Society executive director after considering the score recommended by the Society Contest and Judging Committee. The minimum score adopted by the Society executive director shall remain in effect until changed by subsequent action by the Society executive director. **[NOTE: Current minimum score is an average of 63.0.]** [CEO]
- e. *Global Alliance and Special Choruses*: In addition to Society choruses representing chapters, seniors choruses from Global Alliance organizations may be invited by the Society executive director on behalf of the Society Board of Directors. The Society executive director also may authorize and invite special Society choruses to permit participation of members who might not otherwise have an opportunity to compete on the international stage. [CEO]
- f. *Other Seniors Chorus Contests*: Districts are free to stage other seniors chorus contests for local awards. [SCJC]

2. Contest Invitation Acceptance

Choruses will be invited within two weeks after the final International Preliminary Seniors Chorus contest of the Spring cycle (about May 25). Invited choruses will have ten days to reply to the invitation. In any event acceptance of an invitation must be received by June 15.

3. Contest Entry and Deadline

Contest entry for the contest is done online through the Society Member Center and must be received by November 30 prior to midwinter. [CEO]

I. Copyright Clearance and Contestant Repertory

1. Observance of Copyright Laws

All contestants are required to observe the copyright laws in the acquisition, arranging, learning, and performance of songs and arrangements. [CEO]

2. Contest Songs and Entry Certification

Consistent with this Society policy, contestants are required to include any songs to be performed in their repertory list and to certify copyright compliance regarding those songs. Further information on cleared music can be found in the *Contest and Judging Handbook* section, “Providing Proof of Copyright Clearance for Competition” (Chapter 15.) [CEO]

3. Multiple Song Entry

If a contestant is not sure which songs they may perform in contest it can, and should, list all the possibilities in its repertory. [SCJC]

4. Use of Song Not Listed in Repertory

If it wishes to perform a song not listed in its Member Center repertory a contestant must add the song to its repertory prior to performing it in a contest. Should it perform a song in contest not in its repertory the contestant will be consulted immediately on site as to clearance of song and reason it was not listed in repertory. If this cannot be resolved on-site¹³, any further investigation will be the responsibility of the district representative for contest and judging (DRCJ) (at any contest other than international) or by the contest Chair (at international contests.) Such investigation shall conclude within 7 days after the start of the contest. If an investigation finds that the song was sung without clearance at the time of performance as noted above, this information will be reported to the SCJC through its chair who will authorize disqualification. The contestant will be declared ineligible and disqualified by the Panel Chair. [SCJC]

5. Effect of Noncompliance

In addition to disqualification listed above, noncompliance with this rule by performing a song in contest for which copyright clearance has not been obtained or by failing to provide documentation of cleared music at any time upon request are subject to additional post-contest action deemed appropriate by the Society executive director. See also [Article IX.B.](#) [CEO]

¹³ Resolution should include contestant certification of song title & arranger, clearance prior to performance and reason for absence of song from its repertory.

ARTICLE III: SCORING CATEGORIES

Each scoring judge awards a score from 1 to 100 for each song. All contestants will be judged in the three scoring categories:

A. Musicality

The Musicality Judge evaluates the degree to which performances demonstrate musicality in the barbershop style. The category assesses the musicianship demonstrated in bringing the song and arrangement to life. Further, the category assesses the ensemble's skill in accurately and artistically delivering music in the barbershop style. The Musicality category assesses the marriage of technical elements, such as precise execution of harmony and rhythm, and artistic elements, such as shape, inflection, destination within a phrase, and overall arc and development of the music. Performances exhibiting high levels of musicality feature a purposeful performer, informed by the composer, lyricist and arranger, effectively integrating and skillfully delivering these core concepts. Furthermore, the Musicality category judges are advocates for the barbershop style: a) 4-part a cappella, b) featured consonant harmony via strongly voiced chords in the barbershop vocabulary, c) melody primarily in an inside voice, d) harmonic variety and richness featuring characteristic chord progressions, and e) primarily lyrical, homorhythmic textures (although additional textures are used for contrast and development.) [SCJC]

B. Performance

The Performance Judge evaluates how effectively a performer brings the song to life; that is, the believability of the theme in its musical and visual setting. The judge responds to both the vocal and visual aspects of the performance, but the judge principally evaluates the interaction of those aspects as they work together to create the image of the song. The judge adjudicates the quality and appropriateness of the overall effect. The Performance Judge evaluates everything about the performance that contributes to emotional impact upon the audience. [SCJC]

C. Singing

The Singing Judge evaluates the degree to which the performer achieves artistic singing in the barbershop style. Artistic singing is accomplished through precise intonation, a high degree of vocal skill and appropriate vocal expression, and 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. [SCJC]

ARTICLE IV: CONTEST JUDGES

A. Certification

Through its Chair, the Society Contest and Judging Committee certifies scoring and Administrative Judges in their respective categories in accordance with their qualifications to judge one of the three scoring categories or to serve as a Panel Chair or additional Administrative Judge. It is the duty of the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair to provide an official roster of certified and candidate judges. (See Chapter 12 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook* for administration policies and additional information on certification.) [CEO]

B. Appointment of International Panels

1. Appointment

The judges for international contests are appointed from the *Barbershop Harmony Society Contest and Judging Roster* by the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair. [CEO]

2. International Contests with Triple-Panel Minimum

A minimum of three judges per scoring category shall be used in the Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contest, the International Seniors Quartet Contest and the International Seniors Chorus Contest. In addition, the panel shall have a Panel Chair and at least one additional Administrative Judge. [CEO]

3. International Contests with Quadruple Panel

A minimum of four judges per scoring category shall be used in the International Quartet and Chorus contests. In addition, international panels shall have the Contest Chair, a Panel Chair and one additional Administrative Judge. [CEO]

4. Contest Chair for International Contests

The Society Contest and Judging Committee Chair shall serve as Contest Chair for International Quartet and Chorus contests, unless unavailable for any reason, in which case, the committee Immediate Past Chair or another past Chair designated by the Committee Chair shall serve as Contest Chair for any rounds(s) in which the Committee Chair is unavailable. The Contest Chair will be the final authority for all decisions outlined in [Article XIV](#) (Operation of Contest.) [CEO]

C. Appointment of Division, District, and International Preliminary Panels

1. Appointment

The Panel Chair, additional Administrative Judges and scoring judges for division, district, and international preliminary contests are appointed from the *Barbershop Harmony Society Contest and Judging Roster* by the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair. An experienced candidate judge may be appointed to the panel upon approval of their Category Specialist. [SCJC]

2. Contests with Double-Panel Minimum

- a. *Normal Panel Composition:* At least a double panel, typically defined as two judges per scoring category, shall be assigned for international preliminary contests to automatically qualify for International by attaining the target score. In addition,

those panels shall have one Panel Chair and at least one other Administrative Judge. [SCJC]

- b. *Single Missing Judge*: If there are at least five scoring judges present (two judges in two of the categories and one in the other) the panel will be considered a valid double panel for purposes of automatic qualification on score for an international contest regardless of the reason for the missing judge (health or travel issues for an assigned judge or by DRCJ request). The contestant's scores will be determined following the Unbalanced Panel procedure described in [Article IV.D](#). [SCJC]
- c. *District Representative Only Qualification*: If an international preliminary contest has only three or four scoring judges present (either by plan or due to travel or health issues), the scores may be used to determine a District representative as described in [Article II.C](#), but the scores cannot be used for automatic qualification by attaining the target score. The scores will be determined following the Unbalanced Panel procedure described in [Article IV.D](#). If there are contestants that are at or close to the automatic qualifying score, the DRCJ may submit a video of those contest performances to the SCJC for review, and SCJC will make a recommendation to the Society executive director as to whether an invitation should be extended. [SCJC]
- d. *Global Alliance Panel Composition*: For a Global Alliance quartet or chorus to automatically qualify for International by attaining the target score, the preliminary event must be adjudicated by a double panel of certified judges, at least 50% (and at least one per scoring category) of which must be BHS judges. [SCJC]

3. District and Division Contests

The number of judges for district and division contests, other than those involving an international preliminary contest, is determined by the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair in consideration of the number of contestants and the efficient use of judges' time in conducting feedback sessions. (See Chapter 14 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook* for guidelines and policies on the use of judges.) With the approval of the Society and Judging Committee through its Chair, a District may opt to have an Unbalanced Panel as described in [Article IV.D](#). [SCJC]

D. Unbalanced Panel

A contest that is adjudicated with a different number of judges per scoring category shall be considered an *Unbalanced Panel*. An Unbalanced Panel may occur due to health or travel issues for assigned judges or by DRCJ request to ensure efficient use of judges' time in conducting feedback sessions. An Unbalanced Panel is valid if there is at least one scoring judge per category and no category has more than one fewer judge than any other category.

The Administrative Judges will record scores as if this were a "balanced" panel, for example:

- A panel of 4 judges will be treated as a "normal" balanced double panel (6 judges) with one judge "missing" in each of 2 categories.
- A panel of 5 judges will be treated as a "normal" balanced double panel (6 judges) with one judge "missing" in 1 category.
- A panel of 7 judges will be treated as a "normal" balanced triple panel (9 judges) with one judge "missing" in each of 2 categories.
- A panel of 8 judges will be treated as a "normal" balanced triple panel (9 judges) with one judge "missing" in 1 category.

For the categories with “missing” judges, the score for the missing judge in each category is entered as:

- The score of the remaining judge in that category for a double panel.
 - The average of the scores of the two remaining judges in that category for a triple panel.
- [SCJC]

E. Appointment from Other Organizations

A judge for division, district, and international preliminary contests may be appointed from a Society Global Alliance barbershop organization or from Harmony Incorporated. This might occur when a judge from the *Barbershop Harmony Society Contest and Judging Roster* is not available or must be replaced after being appointed. This also might occur when a certified judge may have indicated availability for a contest initially, but time constraints, financial considerations or other mitigating circumstances prevail. All such appointments are subject to approval by the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair. [SCJC]

F. Panel Expense Allowance

An expense allowance for each judge will be determined by using the “Guidelines and Limitations on the use and Travel of Judges for Society Contests” contained in the *Contest and Judging Handbook* (Chapter 14.V through 14.VIII). [SCJC]

ARTICLE V: CONTEST PROVISIONS AND TYPES

A. General Provisions for All Contests

1. Sections (parts of Round or former Session)

If there are more than 25 contestants in a round (session), that round shall be divided into two or more sections, scheduled as separate events. In unusual circumstances, an exception to this rule in the International Quartet and Chorus contests may be made by the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair and an exception in contests other than international may be made by the District Representative for Contest and Judging (DRCJ) in consultation with the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair. [SCJC]

2. Convention Registrations

All contestants shall hold full competitor registrations for the convention at which the contest is held. [CEO]

3. Contest Entry

Each group must be entered into the contest(s) the group is competing for prior to the start of a contest. Contest entries may be altered by the DRCJ or the Panel Chair based on eligibility rules (such as plateaus based on number of competitors on stage). [SCJC]

4. District Discretion on Categories of Contests

Districts are permitted to create categories of division and district contests based on ensemble classification as maintained in Society records (men's, women's, and mixed harmony/all voices.) Districts may also create open contests without regard to group classification. [SCJC]

B. Division Contests and District Chorus Contests

Contestants are judged on two different songs in one appearance or, if dictated by district policy, are judged on four different songs with two songs in each of two appearances. [SCJC]

C. District Quartet Contests

1. Adjudication

Quartets may be judged on four different songs with two songs in each of two appearances or, if dictated by district policy, on two different songs in one appearance. [SCJC]

2. Elimination Round and Number in Finals

If quartets are judged on four different songs in two appearances and there are more than ten contestants, the first appearance is an elimination round to reduce the number of quartets competing in the second, or final, appearance to ten or fewer. Districts may exercise latitude in the number of finalist quartets. [SCJC]

D. International Preliminary Quartet Contests

1. Timing, Oversight and Supervision

International preliminary quartet contests may be held in each district each year under the general supervision of the Society executive director.¹⁴ Contests will be held between August of the preceding year through the first weekend in May of the year of the International Quartet Contest for which quartets are qualifying, unless otherwise directed with prior approval of the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair. The international preliminary quartet contest may coincide with the district quartet contest. [CEO]

2. Adjudication

Quartets are judged on four different songs with two songs in each of two appearances unless the first appearance is an elimination round to reduce the number of quartets competing in the second, or final, appearance to the number as specified in [Article V.D.3](#). Only those quartets advancing to the final round are eligible to qualify for the International Quartet Contest. [SCJC]

3. Number of Finalist Quartets

Districts may exercise latitude in the number of finalist quartets, but the Panel Chair will increase the number of quartets competing in the finals if more quartets are within three percentage points of achieving the target score, which is the score allowing eligibility for the international contest adopted by the Society executive director prior to the first qualifying preliminary contest for the international contest in question, after considering the target score recommended by the Society Contest and Judging Committee. [SCJC]

4. Target Score for Automatic Qualification

The target score adopted by the Society executive director shall remain in effect until changed by subsequent action by the Society executive director. [See [Article II.C.1.a](#)] [CEO]

E. International Quartet Contests

1. Timing, Oversight and Supervision

The annual International Quartet Contest will be held in conjunction with the Society's annual convention, at a time and place determined by the Society executive director, and under the general supervision of the Society executive director. [CEO]

2. Contestants

The contestants will be those Society quartets that have qualified by their scores or placements in the international preliminary quartet contests and those additional quartets from Global Alliance organizations that have qualified by their scores or have been invited to participate by the Society executive director on behalf of the Society Board of Directors. [CEO]

3. Quarterfinals Adjudication

Each contestant is judged on two different songs in a round known as the International Quarterfinals. [CEO]

¹⁴ A district has the option to not hold preliminary contests or to hold multiple contests. Contact the SCJC Chair to discuss and determine a schedule and course of action.

4. Semifinals Adjudication

The twenty highest-scoring quartets plus ties in the International Quarterfinals will compete in the International Semifinals. Each contestant will be judged on two more songs. [CEO]

5. Finals Adjudication

The ten highest-scoring quartets plus ties from the International Semifinals will compete in the International Finals. Selection of quartets will be by ranking, computed from the combined scores obtained in the quarterfinal and semifinal rounds. Every contestant in the finals will be judged on two more songs. [CEO]

6. Ranking and Awards

After the International Finals round, ranking of quartets will be computed from the combined scores obtained in the quarterfinal, semifinal, and final rounds. The first-place quartet will be declared the International Quartet Champion. Four additional places will be designated as International Medalist Quartets. Non-medalist quartets placing in the final round will be recognized as International Finalists. Special recognition shall be given to the highest-scoring new quartet. (See detailed criteria specified in Chapter 18 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook*.) [CEO]

F. International Preliminary Seniors Quartet Contests

1. Timing, Oversight and Supervision

International Preliminary Seniors Quartet Contests may be held in each district each year under the general supervision of the Society executive director. Each contest will be held during the calendar year preceding the year of the International Seniors Quartet Contest for which the quartets are qualifying. [CEO]

2. Semifinal Round of another Contest

The International Preliminary Seniors Quartet Contest may be held in conjunction with the semifinal round of the District Quartet Contest or International Preliminary Quartet Contest, whether or not a contestant is also entered in the other contest. [SCJC]

3. Adjudication

Each quartet is judged on two different songs in one appearance. [SCJC]

G. International Seniors Quartet Contests

1. Timing, Oversight and Supervision

The annual International Seniors Quartet Contest shall be held in conjunction with the Society's annual midwinter convention at a time and place determined by the Society executive director, under the general supervision of the Society executive director. [CEO]

2. Contestants

The contestants will be those Society quartets that have qualified by their scores or placements in the International Preliminary Seniors Quartet contests, and those quartets from Global Alliance organizations that may be invited to participate by the Society executive director on behalf of the Society Board of Directors. [CEO]

3. Adjudication

Each quartet is judged on two different songs in one appearance. [CEO]

4. Ranking and Awards

Awards shall be presented to the top five quartets. The first-place quartet shall be declared the International Seniors Quartet Champion. Winners of the second through fifth places will be designated as International Seniors Quartet Medalists. Special recognition shall be given to the competing quartet with the greatest number of cumulative years of age and to the oldest individual participant. [CEO]

H. International Preliminary Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contests

1. Timing, Oversight and Supervision

An International Preliminary Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contest will be held by video submission during a specified period preceding the year of the International Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contest for which the quartets are qualifying. The period usually is August through November and is under the general supervision of the Society executive director. [CEO]

2. Video Requirements

The qualification video must be recorded in front of a live audience without any edits or production enhancements. The live audience may be at a public or private event or performance. The audience should be present audibly and/or visibly. The video should capture the quartet from head to toe and ensure that the quartet is close enough so judges can clearly see the performance. Video and/or scores cannot be used from prior international or midwinter contests. [CEO]

3. Adjudication

Each quartet is judged on two songs in one appearance. The two songs performed must be consecutive and not from two separate performances. Videos recorded at events with a live Society certified panel of judges may be used but the scores from the live contest will be the official scores for the video qualification. Performances such as these will not be re-scored. [SCJC]

I. International Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contests

1. Timing, Oversight and Supervision

The annual International Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contest will be held each year in conjunction with the Society's annual convention, at a time and place determined by the Society executive director and under the general supervision of the Society executive director. [CEO]

2. Contestants

The contestants will be those quartets that have qualified by their score or placements in the International Preliminary Next Generation Varsity Quartet Contest. [CEO]

3. Adjudication

Quartets are judged on two different songs in one appearance. [SCJC]

4. Ranking and Awards

The first-place quartet will be declared the International Next Generation Varsity Quartet Champion. Four additional places will be designated as International Next Generation Varsity Medalist Quartets. Special recognition shall be given to the highest scoring "new to

barbershop” quartet. (See detailed criteria specified in Chapter 18 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook*.) [CEO]

J. International Preliminary Chorus Contests

1. Timing, Oversight and Supervision

International Preliminary Chorus Contests may be held in each district each year under the general supervision of the Society executive director.¹⁵ Each contest will be held during the calendar year preceding the year of the International Chorus Contest for which the choruses are qualifying. The International Preliminary Chorus Contest may also be the district chorus contest, if dictated by district policy. [CEO]

2. Adjudication

Choruses are judged on two different songs in one appearance. [SCJC]

3. Target Score for Automatic Qualification

The target score adopted by the Society executive director shall remain in effect until changed by subsequent action by the Society executive director. [See [Article II.G.1.a.](#)] [CEO]

K. International Chorus Contests

1. Timing, Oversight and Supervision

The annual International Chorus Contest will be held each year in conjunction with the Society’s annual convention, at a time and place determined by the Society executive director and under the general supervision of the Society executive director. [CEO]

2. Contestants

The contestants will be those Society choruses that are qualified by their scores in the International Preliminary Chorus Contests, and those choruses from Global Alliance organizations that qualify by their scores or are invited to participate by the Society executive director on behalf of the Society Board of Directors. [CEO]

3. Adjudication

Choruses are judged on two different songs in one appearance. [CEO]

4. Ranking and Awards

The first-place chorus will be declared the International Chorus Champion. Four additional places will be designated as International Chorus Medalists. [CEO]

L. International Preliminary Seniors Chorus Contests

1. Timing, Oversight and Supervision

International Preliminary Seniors Chorus Contests may be held in each district each year under the general supervision of the Society executive director. Each contest will be held during the spring of the calendar year preceding the International Seniors Chorus Contest for which the choruses are qualifying or during the fall cycle prior to that spring (e.g., qualification for the 2027 midwinter contest will be in Fall 2025 and Spring 2026).

¹⁵ A district has the option not to hold preliminary contests. It should contact BHS HQ and SCJC Chair to discuss and determine a plan of action.

Should the desired number of participants (currently 10) for the next midwinter contest not be reached ([Article II.H.1.a](#)), Society choruses may attempt to qualify in the Fall contest season immediately before midwinter provided there are open slots. Seniors choruses who compete during the Fall contest season immediately before midwinter can choose (after the Fall contest season completes) to qualify for either the upcoming midwinter or the following year's midwinter contest. The previously qualified and invited choruses that accepted remain in the contest regardless what these Fall choruses score or in which contest they choose to compete. Any remaining open slots will be filled with these entrants, starting with the highest score, until all slots are filled. [CEO]

2. Finals Round of another Contest

The International Preliminary Seniors Chorus Contest may be held in conjunction with the first round of the district chorus contest or another district chorus contest, whether a contestant is also entered in the other contest. [SCJC]

3. Adjudication

Each chorus is judged on two different songs in one appearance. [SCJC]

M. International Seniors Chorus Contests

1. Timing, Oversight and Supervision

The annual International Seniors Chorus Contest will be held each year in conjunction with the Society's midwinter convention, at a time and place determined by the Society executive director and under the general supervision of the Society executive director. [CEO]

2. Contestants

The contestants will be those Society choruses that are qualified by their scores in the International Preliminary Seniors Chorus Contests, any special chorus authorized and invited by the Society executive director, and those choruses from Global Alliance organizations that are invited to participate by the Society executive director on behalf of the Society Board of Directors. [CEO]

3. Adjudication

Choruses are judged on two different songs in one appearance. [CEO]

4. Ranking and Awards

The first-place chorus will be declared the International Seniors Chorus Champion. Two additional places will be designated as International Seniors Chorus Medalists. [CEO]

ARTICLE VI: OFFICIAL RESULTS

A. Official Scoring Summary

1. Items included in the Official Scoring Summary

An official scoring summary will show the district, and division if appropriate, the contest date and location, the average score for each category for each song for each eligible contestant, the total score for each performance, the names of the songs, and the names of the official panel members. [SCJC]

2. International Quartet Contests

For international quartet contests an official scoring summary will be published by the Panel Chair immediately after the Quarterfinal and Semifinal rounds, showing all the scores of the eliminated quartets, and after the Final rounds, showing all the scores of the finalist quartets. Publication of the official scoring summary will not be made until announcements for that round have been completed. [SCJC]

3. Contests Other Than International Quartet Contests

For all contests other than International Quartet Contests an official scoring summary will be published by the Panel Chair immediately following the announcement of winners and/or qualifiers. A scoring summary for eliminated quartets may be published by the Panel Chair following the conclusion of a Semifinal round. [SCJC]

B. Revised Official Scoring Summary

Should an administrative or typographical error be found in a published official scoring summary, a revised official scoring summary will be issued within 5 days after discovery of the error and, in any event, no later than 30 days after the contest's conclusion. [SCJC]

ARTICLE VII: RANKING OF CONTESTANTS

A. Ranking

1. All Contests

Contestants in international contests will be ranked in accordance with the cumulative total scores awarded by the panel of judges with ties broken as indicated below. [SCJC]

B. Scores

1. Reporting After Performance

The judges will report their scores to the Panel Chair immediately following each contestant's performance. [SCJC]

2. Statistical Variances

During each contest round the Panel Chair will notify each category if any statistical variances exist. The judges in that category will review their notes and all scores provided by the panel for either song in the performance. At that time, the judges in that category can change their scores for either song or let them stand unchanged. The Panel Chair will make any changes indicated and thereafter the scores are official. (See "Position Paper VIII. Statistical Variances" in Chapter 9 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook* for more details.) [SCJC]

C. Ties

1. Ties Broken

A tie for any place will be broken by ranking the contestants according to their overall scores in the Singing category and, only if that does not break the tie, according to their overall scores in the Performance category. If a tie still exists, the tie will stand. [SCJC]

2. Medals

Should a tie situation still occur in a medalist position following the above calculations, any medal(s) specified in [Article V](#) that immediately follow(s) the tie ranking will not be awarded. E.g.: With a tie for 3rd medals are awarded to 1, 2, 3, 3, and 5. [SCJC]

D. Ineligibility/Disqualification

1. Reranking

In the event a contestant is declared ineligible and disqualified for any rule violation after the results are announced or published, its listing will be removed and its rank order (where applicable) shall be filled by the next ranked contestant, and a revised official scoring summary will be published accordingly. All remaining contestants will have their order adjusted accordingly. [SCJC]

2. Return and Redistribution of Medals and Awards

If the ineligible and disqualified contestant was given a medal or other award as one of the top-ranked contestants in a contest, all members of the disqualified quartet or chorus must return the awards to the Society or district for award to the appropriate contestant. [CEO]

ARTICLE VIII: ORDER OF APPEARANCE

A. Contestants' Order of Appearance (OOA)

1. Draw for Singing Order; Excused Absence

Contestants will sing in the order in which their names are selected. The order of appearance will be assigned by random draw. The order also may be assigned by a predetermined objective seeding method. However, owing to circumstances beyond the control of the contestant, the Panel Chair or the District Representative for Contest and Judging (prior to a contest for other than an international contest) may excuse an appearance other than in assigned order. [SCJC]

- a. During contest:* The Panel Chair will determine whether to give an excused contestant the opportunity to appear after all other contestants in that contest round, or if the round consists of multiple sections, after all other contestants in that section of the contest round. [SCJC]
- b. Prior to a contest:* For other than an international contest the District Representative for Contest and Judging (DRCJ) may equitably determine a modification to the order of appearance for reasons beyond the control of the contestants. For international contests the Society Contest and Judging Committee, through its Chair, may equitably determine a modification to the order of appearance for reasons beyond the control of the contestants. [SCJC]

B. Unexcused Absence

Any contestant, not excused, that fails to perform in its assigned order of appearance will be penalized. The Panel Chair will assess a penalty of five points per scoring judge. A penalized contestant will have the opportunity to appear after all other contestants in that contest round. [SCJC]

C. Order of Appearance in Case of Absences by Multiple Contestants

If there are two or more excused or penalized contestants, their order of appearance will be determined by the Panel Chair. [SCJC]

D. Failure to Appear During Round

Any contestant that fails to appear in any round will not be eligible to compete in any subsequent round in that contest. [SCJC]

E. Request to Sing First in a Contest

1. Written Request Prior to Draw

- a. International contests:* Prior to the date of the official draw for singing order, a chorus or quartet participating in an international contest may request in writing to the Society Contest and Judging Committee through its Chair that it be permitted to sing at the beginning of the contest. [SCJC]
- b. District contests:* Prior to the date of the official draw for singing order, a chorus or quartet participating in a district or division contest may request in writing to the hosting district's DRCJ that it be permitted to sing at the beginning of the contest, subject to district policy. [SCJC]

2. Multiple Requests

If more than one group requests to sing at the beginning of a contest, a drawing prior to the official order draw will be held among those contestants to determine the order in which they will sing at the beginning of the contest. [SCJC]

ARTICLE IX: SONGS AND ARRANGEMENTS

A. Songs

1. Barbershop Style

All songs performed in contest must be arranged in the barbershop style. (See style definition in Chapter 2 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook*.) A song performed in contest should have melody and harmony consistent with the barbershop style, must be neither primarily patriotic nor primarily religious in intent and must align with the Society's Statement of Acceptable Taste. [SBOD]

2. Musicality Category Elements: In a contest certain musical elements are so significant to the style that deficiencies must be noted explicitly to provide sufficient information on the basis for the scoring and for performer feedback.

- a. *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 Musicality Judge(s). [SBOD]
- b. *Four-part Texture*: In chorus contest performances of songs, selected use of a soloist, duet, trio or quartet is acceptable if it is brief and appropriate. However, at no time should the musical texture exceed four parts. Violation of this provision will result in penalties up to and including forfeiture by the Musicality Judge(s). The spoken word, brief and appropriate, is not considered an additional "part" in this context. [SBOD]
- c. *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 Musicality Judge(s). [SBOD]
- d. *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 Musicality Judge(s). [SBOD]
- e. *Other Issues*: Songs not consistent with the barbershop style for any other musical reason (including characteristic chord progressions featuring dominant seventh and ninth chords resolving around the circle of fifths, harmonic richness, chord vocabulary or lack of predominantly homorhythmic texture) will be adjudicated in terms of the quality of the performance by the Musicality Judge(s). Songs lacking these stylistic characteristics will score lower holistically. [SCJC]

3. Performance Category Elements

- a. *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). (See the Performance Category Description in the *Contest and Judging Handbook* for levels of penalties.) [SBOD]
- b. *Taste*: A contestant's songs, actions, or attire that are not in acceptable taste will result in penalties up to and including forfeiture by the Performance Judge(s). (See "Position Paper II. Taste" in Chapter 9 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook* for details.) [SBOD]

4. Repetition of Song

- a. Substantial Part Repeated:* Within all rounds of a specific contest, a contestant may not repeat a song or a substantial part of any song. In the context of these rules, the term song may refer to a single song or a medley in which major portions of two or more songs are used. A parody of a song previously sung would be considered repeating a song. [SCJC]
- b. Actions by Musicality Judge(s):* A Musicality Judge shall record a score of zero if a contestant repeats a song or a substantial portion from one of its songs in another song. If there are two or more Musicality Judges and they all agree on the forfeiture, then only in that case shall the Panel Chair record as zero the contestant's entire score in all categories for the repeated rendition of the song(s). Absent unanimous agreement, the Panel Chair records the scores provided by the individual judges. [SCJC]

B. Copyright Compliance

Contestants must comply with the copyright law in the acquisition, arranging, learning, and performance of songs for contest. Violations of this article relating to copyright law compliance are subject to post-contest action deemed appropriate by the Society executive director. See also [Article II.I.](#) [CEO]

ARTICLE X: SOUND EQUIPMENT AND STAGE SETTING

A. Equipment

1. Provision and Operation; Monitor Speakers Permitted

The best possible sound equipment will be provided, if needed, by hosts of convention/contests. Monitor speakers are permitted and encouraged. Sound equipment should be operated by a competent operator. [SCJC]

2. Testing and Approval

The stage setting will be set up sufficiently in advance of the starting time of the contest so that the sound equipment and lighting may be tested under the supervision of the Panel Chair. The contest will not start until the Panel Chair has given indicated approval of the stage, lighting, and sound setup. [SCJC]

B. Restrictions and Exception

1. Offstage Use of House System

Contestants may not make offstage use of the house sound system. [SCJC]

2. Recorded Music or Spoken Word

The use of recorded music (vocal or instrumental) and/or recordings of the spoken word is not permitted. A brief chime or flourish is not considered as music for the purpose of this rule, nor is a quick word considered speech, and both will be considered under [Article X.B.4](#) below. [SCJC]

3. Artificial Enhancement

Contestants may not use their own equipment to amplify or alter their voices while singing, electronically or otherwise. The use of any other technology to enhance the singing voice is not permitted. (See “Position Paper XI. Electronic Enhancement, Sound Effects and Recorded Sound” in Chapter 9 of the *Contest and Judging Handbook* for more details.) [SCJC]

4. Electronic Pitch; Sound Effects

Contestants may use electronic means independent of the house system to take pitch or to provide limited sound effects. Sound effects, electronic or otherwise, deemed to be excessive or detrimental to the performance shall be adjudicated in terms of the quality of the performance by the Performance Judge(s) or even be considered a violation of [Article X.B.2](#). In order to avoid surprise and potential delay for inquiry, contestants should communicate planned use of loud or unusual sound effects to the Panel Chair prior to the performance. [SCJC]

C. Jurisdiction and Penalties

Violations of [Article X.B.1](#), [X.B.2](#) and [X.B.3](#) are subject to penalties up to and including forfeiture by the Singing Judge(s.) [Article X.B.4](#) is judged holistically by the Performance Judge(s.) [SCJC]

ARTICLE XI: STAGING

A. Restrictions

1. Non-Members and the “Stage”

Persons who are not members of the competing chorus or quartet may not appear on stage during the performance. Violation of this rule in contest will result in the performance being declared ineligible and disqualified. The stage is defined by the performer / performance and thus may on occasion extend past traditional boundaries set forth by the performance venue. While this may allow for choruses and quartets to build rapport with, or generate response from the audience, the song(s) must be performed solely by members of the competing chorus or quartet. In the event this comes into question, the Panel Chair, with assistance from the Performance Judge(s), will decide if a non-member violation has occurred. [SCJC]

2. Taste

Barbershop performances should not contain vulgar, suggestive or otherwise distasteful actions, lyrics, or attire. In addition to adjudication with penalties up to and including forfeiture by the Performance Judge(s), the performance may be stopped by the Performance Judges per [Article XIV.A.3](#). In consultation with the Performance Judge(s) the Panel Chair will determine if the performance may be rescheduled or adjudicated up to the point of stoppage. [CEO]

C. International Contest Staging

1. Chorus Loading

- a. *Time expectation:* Choruses are expected to get on stage in a prompt manner as to ensure the contest flows smoothly. Development of additional staging detracts from the flow of the contest. From the time the chorus is given approval to assemble on the stage to the moment the chorus indicates it is ready to perform, it is reasonable that a chorus of fewer than 50 will be onstage and ready within 4 minutes, 50-100 will be ready within 5 minutes, and more than 100 onstage within 6 minutes. [CEO]
- b. *Penalty:* Exceeding this time frame will result in a penalty of five points per song per scoring judge. The stage crew will keep the official time and the Panel Chair (or designated representative) will be present for the loading process to ensure fairness and will provide exceptions for issues beyond the chorus' control. Nothing in this rule is intended to discourage an individual or individuals from entering or exiting at a time that is different from the bulk of the chorus or an indication of readiness. Warnings will be given at 1 minute and at 30 seconds. At no time are contestants allowed behind the risers (between the back of the risers and any logical dividers, such as a backdrop curtain or other partition as part of the performing space on stage, with exception of the area behind such logical dividers designed to allow for safe passage backstage). [CEO]

2. Props

- a. *Restrictions:* If props and/or stage enhancements are to be used, they must be simple enough that at most two people can carry and set them up, and they must be freestanding.
 - Nothing can be attached to or leaned against the riser (back) safety rails.
 - No extensions to the end risers are permitted.

- At no time are contestants allowed behind the risers.
 - No props or stage enhancements can be used that may contravene local fire and safety codes (open flame, fireworks, open water other than in a glass or pitcher, etc.) [CEO]
- b. Penalty:* Violations of the preceding will result in a penalty of five points per song per scoring judge. The International Contest Chair, after recommendation of the stage manager, will make this determination. [CEO]
- c. Financial liability*
- 1) Any use of props and/or stage enhancements that damages microphones and/or lights will result in the chorus or quartet being held financially responsible to BHS for the replacement in kind of damaged equipment. [CEO]
 - 2) Any use of props and/or stage enhancements that results in alteration to the condition of the stage and/or house and requires additional labor to rectify the stage and/or house to its pre-performance condition will result in the chorus or quartet being held financially responsible to BHS for the total cost of the labor incurred. [CEO]

3. Cleanup

- a. Restrictions:* Confetti and similar small material that requires extensive cleanup are banned from use in both chorus and quartet contests. Other materials that are difficult to clean up (requiring mops, brooms, vacuum cleaners, etc.) are strongly discouraged from the stage. [CEO]
- b. Penalty:* Any clean-up longer than 60 seconds will result in a penalty of five points per song per scoring judge. This does not include the pick-up of coats, tables, vests, etc., that do not require further cleaning. Time will begin from the start of the clean-up effort and kept by the stage manager and stage crew. Determination to apply the penalty will be made by the International Contest Chair. At no time are contestants allowed behind the risers during cleanup. [CEO]

ARTICLE XII: NON-SINGING COMMENT/DIALOGUE

A. Spoken comments

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. [SCJC]

B. Adjudication

Spoken words deemed to be excessive or detrimental to the performance shall be adjudicated by the Performance Judge(s) in terms of the quality of the performance. [SCJC]

ARTICLE XIII: PENALTIES AND FORFEITURES

TITLE	ARTICLE	RESPONSIBILITY	VIOLATION	PENALTY
Quartet Eligibility	I.A & II.F	DRCJ, PC	Ineligible member sings in a registered quartet, quartet not registered or fails to hold registration(s), incorrect seniors quartet certification, member change during contest	Ineligible – remove from OSS
Chorus Eligibility	I.B.1 & I.B.8	DRCJ, PC	Ineligible member or director competes with chorus, or they compete without all holding convention registration(s)	Ineligible – remove from OSS
	I.B.2	DRCJ, PC	Chorus competes with fewer than 9 members	Ineligible – remove from OSS
Order of Appearance	VIII.B	PC	Contestant fails to provide justification for missing assigned order of appearance	Penalty of 5 points per scoring judge
Songs and Arrangements	IX.A.2.a-d	MUS	Instruments/musical accompaniment/ exceeding four-part texture/melody not in inner part/lyrics not primarily in 4 parts	Up to and including forfeiture by one or more judges
Songs, Arrangements and Taste Issues	IX.A.2 & IX.A.3	PER	Primarily patriotic or religious intent / taste issues	Up to and including forfeiture by one or more judges
Song Repetition	IX.A.4	MUS – Identifies PC – Applies	Repeating song or substantial part of song in any round of same contest	Unanimous = Forfeit all scores of all judges that song Not unanimous = 0 for citing MUS judge(s)

Copyright	IX.B & II.I	Executive Director	Noncompliance with copyright rules	Post-contest action up to ineligibility and disqualification - remove from OSS
Sound Equipment	X.B.1-3	SNG	Electronic enhancement, recorded music/word & sound equipment	Up to and including forfeiture by one or more judges
Non-member on stage	XI.A.1	PER	Non-member of quartet or chorus on stage during performance	Disqualify and ineligibility – remove from OSS.
International staging	XI.C	Panel chair / stage crew – Identifies PC – applies	Noncompliance with rules for international staging, loading, props or cleanup	Penalty of 5 points per song per scoring judge (120 points total)

A. Forfeiture

A scoring judge indicates forfeiture by awarding a score of zero. Forfeiture of all panel scores with scores of zero is indicated after unanimous action of the Musicality Judge(s) under [Article IX.A.4](#). Forfeiture or any penalty is appropriate only when specifically provided for in these rules. [SCJC]

B. Inclusion in Official Scoring Summary

Penalties and forfeitures will be published as part of the official scoring summary, with citation of the rule that was violated, if appropriate. [SCJC]

C. No Public Announcement

There will be no public announcement of any penalty or forfeiture. [SCJC]

ARTICLE XIV: OPERATION OF CONTEST

A. Panel Chair Responsibility and Authority

1. Authority for Contest Operation

Once the contest begins, and until the contest results are determined, the Panel Chair is completely in charge of the operation of the contest, subject to the final authority of the contest Chair for International Quartet and Chorus Contests ([Article IV.B.4.](#)) [SCJC]

2. Contest Environment

The Panel Chair is responsible for ensuring that the contest environment is as fair and consistent as possible for all contestants subject to the final authority of the Contest Chair for International Quartet and Chorus Contests ([Article IV.B.4.](#)) Action on environmental issues will consider contestants, audience, and panel, in that order of priority. [SCJC]

3. Stopping Performance and Rescheduling

- a. Sole Authority:* Other than a Performance judge stopping a performance over issues of bad taste or staging ([Article XI.A.2](#)), the Panel Chair has the sole authority to stop the performance and judging and may reschedule the entire performance later in the contest if appropriate. [SCJC]
- b. Repeat Performance:* At the discretion of the Panel Chair, a contestant may be allowed to repeat an entire performance later in the contest. [SCJC]
- c. Cancellation and Rescheduling:* If the Panel Chair, in consultation with others, must cancel a round or an entire contest, that round and/or contest will be rescheduled by the Panel Chair in conjunction with the appropriate administrative body supervising the contest. In making these decisions, the Panel Chair will consult with scoring judges as appropriate. [SCJC]

B. Announcements

Announcement of the results of the contest will be the responsibility of the contest Chair for international contests and the responsibility of the respective districts for all other contests. [SCJC]

OFFICIAL BHS CONTEST RULES: Revision history

6/29/1993	Adopted Revised 1/28/94; 7/5/94; 7/4/95; 2/2/96; 4/19/97; 11/1/97; 4/4/98; 10/31/98; 1/31/99; 1/31/00;
1/25/2002	Amended II.C.1 to include affiliate quartets and set standards for their qualifying scores; Updated II.D.1 on seniors contest entry; Revised II.D.6 on seniors competing out-of-district.
4/15/2002	Corrected typo in II.D.5
1/24/2003	Amended I.A.1 quartet membership in the competing district; Amended V.F.3 to extend seniors quartet contest awards to fourth and fifth place medalists.
7/01/2003	Amended II.C.2 which sets minimum number (40) of quartets at international quartet contest; Replaced Article XII in its entirety to describe non-singing dialogue.
1/30/2004	Amended I.B.5.c to assign DRCJ or the SCJC chair (as the case may be) as arbiter of exceptions or interpretations of eligibility; Revised I.B.6 to include three subsections to describe controlling authority of eligibility of members to compete in chorus contests; Revised I.B.9 to include three subsections on violations; Amended VII to sort printed order of ties on score sheet by tie-breaking formula; Cleaned up administrative oversight on V.E 2 and 3 to include “plus ties.”
11/06/2004	Amended II.C.1 to set minimum number of 45 Society quartets at international contest.
1/28/2005	Amended IX.D to include category responsibility for adjudicating penalties.
7/05/2005	Amended I.A.3 to clarify when a quartet can change its district designation; Moved V.D.2 to I.A.4 and clarifies when a quartet must get approval to compete out of district for the international quartet preliminary contest; Amended Article VII to clarify medal distribution when a tie situation occurs; Updated IX.A and IX.D to clarify harmony consistent with barbershop style as performed vice implied.
1/25/2006	Final formatting and editing {CLB} 1/26/07 amends X.B on use of sound technology.
11/04/2006	Added IV.D on use of certified judges from Harmony Incorporated or affiliated organizations; Former IV.D renamed IV.E
3/30/2007	Amended I.A and I.B to clarify registration as condition of eligibility; Expanded and reorders violations procedures (now I.C.) to include quartets, set time limits for reports, require signed reports, and anticipate revised scoring summary; Moved II.D.6 to I.A.4 for consistent statement on out-of-district permission; Amended II.C and II.D to specify entry dates and standard wording; Added II.E on international chorus entry to specify entry date, clarify eligibility certification, and add roster submission; Added II.F to clarify existing policy and procedure on copyright clearance; Clarified in V.A. that term song includes a medley; Cleaned up V.F.1 as registration requirement, is now in I.A.7 and V.A.3; Clarifies V.F.3 on international seniors medalists; Amended V.G to add minimum score for international wildcard choruses;

	Amended V.H. to define procedure for replacing wildcard chorus; Updated V.G.3 and V.H.2 then relocate to II.E.1 & 2 as entry policies; Format and spelling corrections.
7/02/2007	Clarified V.D.1 on quartet prelims being held in spring; Relocated some II.D.1 language to V.F on seniors quartet preliminaries.
11/03/07	Amended IX.B to permit brief subunits in chorus performances; Added I.B.10 on out-of-district chorus contests; Revised I.E.1 and I.E.2 to accommodate potential out-of-district chorus.
1/25/2008	Amended II.F on copyright compliance regarding documentation and performance; Added VII.D on ranking and awards after disqualification; Rearranged I.B.7-10 to more closely parallel I.A. sections; Headings and subheadings provided for clarity and readability; Added table of contents.
3/30/2008	Amended II.B on district contest entry deadline and entry form availability to permit district policy on timing; Added V.A.4 to clarify that districts may hold qualifying rounds for selection of their international contest representatives; Amended VIII.A to permit DRCJ to amend OOA for good cause; Amended VIII.E on the process for international chorus contestant requesting to sing at beginning of contest; Amended IX.D.3 to put copyright law compliance under executive director jurisdiction; Clarified wording of I.A.3 on quartet holding memberships in more than one district.
11/01/2008	Amended I.B.1 on membership/associate status of competing chorus directors; Clarified that lack of contest registration is enforceable eligibility issue and that director is part of competing chorus.
1/29/2009	Amended I.B and I.C. to eliminate contest cycle concept and permit simpler eligibility test (chapter membership at contest); Subsections of I.B and I.C renumbered; Added II.E.1.c to address international chorus contest scoring pool ties; Amended IV.D on appointment of judges from other organizations; Amended IV.B and IV.C to permit SCJC to use candidate judges in district contests when appropriate; Amended V.A.2 to clarify song repetition rule; Combined affiliate seniors quartet invitation language in II.D.1.c and V.G.2; Amended IX.D to place penalties for barbershop style violations with the Music category.
4/24/2009	Amended II.D.1.b to address ties for 25th in the international seniors quartet scoring pool; Amended II.E.1.b to provide that the number of international scoring pool (wild card) choruses is determined and publicized by executive director; Amended V.D.3 to provide that the target score for international quartet qualifying, rather than being set each year, remains as established until changed; Amended II.D.1.d, V.E.2, V.G.2, and V.I.2 to specify that affiliate invitations are made by executive director on behalf of the Society board.
6/28/2010	Amended V.E.6 to permanently add special recognition to highest ranking new quartet in international quartet contest.

1/27/2011	Amended IV.B.3 to codify Panel Chair for international quartet and chorus contests; Amended XIV.A to indicate final authority of international Panel Chair and to clarify priority of parties in resolving environmental issues at contests.
3/31/2012	Amended I.A.1.a & c to provide that all quartets competing in the international quartet contest must be members of the Barbershop Harmony Society.
7/03/2012	Amended I.A.4.c to provide for quartets requesting to compete out of district for other than a preliminary contest and clarifies timing of all requests; Amended IV.C.2 to remove requirement for double panel at district contests that are not international preliminary contests also, and amends IV.C.3 to include district contests.
1/10/2013	Amended III.C to address confusion on ‘artistry’ element by inclusion of ‘appropriate vocal expression’ to clarify the actual skills that are evaluated by the singing category.
3/17/2013	Amended I.A.3 to change date of selection of home district (due to new beginning of prelims season); Amended I.A.4 and I.B.6 to allow for newly registered quartets and newly chartered chapter choruses; Amended II.C.1 to limit district quartet representative to those declared prior to home district contest; Amended V.A.4, V.D.1, V.F.1&2, V.H.1, to remove impediments requiring two preliminary conventions per year. [This change is effective for preliminary contests selecting representatives for international contests in 2014. In coordination with the SCJC, districts may hold international preliminary contests in either spring or fall starting in fall 2013.]
8/11/2013	Amended II.C to permit qualifying quartet for international contest to replace one member and remain eligible to compete, resulting in new II.E and re-lettering of II. F & G; Amended II.F.4 to remove hard copy requirement and align clearance documentation with current practice; Amended V.D to clarify that first weekend in May is end of preliminary quartet period; Amended VII.B at add statistical variance process in reviewing scores before they become final.
8/24/2014	Amended I.A.4.b & c to permit new quartets registered after their home district prelims entry deadline to compete OOD without home district approval, only information copy to DRCJ.
1/08/2015	Amended Foreword and I.A.5 to permit exception on multiple quartet eligibility as delegated to SCJC; Amended VII.B.2 to expand variance process to both songs of a set should either have a variance; Amended IX to limit penalties and adjudicate issues with quality of performance scoring; Amended IX.A.3 to clarify that the spoken word is not additional part for chorus; Amended X to include future electronic technology and transfers jurisdiction from PRS to SNG; Amended XI.B on adjudication and penalties for staging; Added a new XI.C section on international staging for choruses; Amended XII to include spoken word adjudication within quality of performance;

	Amended XIII.A to limit penalties to explicit rules provisions.
2/22/2015	Changed minimum international quartet qualifying score in II.C.1.d to 70 for 2016 (Nashville) and includes provision that quartet competing OOD must achieve at least qualifying score in order to be district representative.
4/26/2015	Amended I.A.1.a & c to remove requirement that quartets from affiliates competing in the international quartet contest had to also be members of the Barbershop Harmony Society.
1/28/2016	Amended II.B.1 to modernize how entry form is made available and place responsibility with DRCJ; Amended II.D.1 to remove obsolete language requiring DRCJ to report name of representative quartet and members; Amended II.D.4 to change entry deadline for international seniors quartet contest to 15 Dec to account for holiday closure and early midwinter conventions; Amended II.G.4 to reflect current practice for songs sung but not submitted on entry form; Amended III to change Presentation category to Performance category; Amended various sections to implement that category change; Amended IV.A to permit SCJC to certify best qualified judges regardless of gender; Amended IV.C.1 for clarity; Amended IV.D to remove requirement for certificate of completion for appointment; Amended V.D.3 on timing of target score change to reflect current annual contest cycle; Amended VIII.A.1 to permit SCJC to modify international contest OOA; Amended VIII.E to allow request to sing first even after draw.
1/19/2017	Amended V.D.3 to delegate setting of quartet target score to the executive director
7/4/2017	Updated Society Contest & Judging office references to Society Headquarters (Customer Service) to reflect current practice; Deleted I.B.5 as unnecessary; Removed I.C.1 signature requirement; Updated II on entry procedures to reflect use of online entry vice paper forms; Clarified X.B.4 to avoid confusion re improper use of house system; Clarified X.C. regarding penalties; Clarified XI.A.2 action by CA; Corrected grammar in XI.C.3.a.
5/15/2018	(Edits made to implement board's desire to place operational matters with executive director and SCJC) Amended II.C.1.c to provide that the number of international quartets and scoring pool (wild card) is determined by the executive director; Amended II.C.1.d to delegate setting of quartet minimum score to the executive director; Amended II.D.1.b to provide for executive director to set number of international seniors quartet entrants; Amended II.F.1.b to delegate setting of chorus minimum score to the executive director; Amended II.F.4.b to reflect optional nature of M&P VP; Amended V.D.1, V.E.1, V.F.1, V.G.1, V.H.1 and V.I.1 to provide operational supervision by the executive director; Amended XI.A.1 to clarify definition of stage.

8/19/2018	Amended the foreword to clarify applicability of contest eligibility rules to male groups; Amended I.A.5 to provide limit on essentially same quartet competing under multiple names; Amended I.B.1 to provide that female directors must be Society members; Amended II.C.1 on affiliate quartet qualification and to increase minimum number of Society quartets from 45 to 50; Amended II.D.1 and II.F.1 to provide minimum score for international seniors quartet and international chorus contestants; Clarified in II.E that quartet member replacement not permitted during contest; Amended V.G.2 to remove the limit of one quartet per affiliate; Amended VII.C to provide for tie breaking for all places with tie breakers being SNG and PER, in that order; Amended VIII to permit requests to sing first at any level for both quartet and chorus; Amended IX.A.3 to provide penalty for chorus exceeding four-part texture; Amended XIV.A.3 to provide for rescheduling entire performance only; Corrected several typos.
1/09/2019	Specified in Foreword that all international and international preliminary contest references are limited to men's quartets and choruses at present; Clarified membership requirement in I.A.1.a since FHT is no longer explicit chapter in Member Center; Provided equity in I.B.1.a for all directors by addressing female director membership when not permitted by appropriate chapter bylaws; Clarified II.E.1 member replacement after start of first song; Added V.A.5 to permit districts to create gender-specific contests; Clarified V.F.4.a to include director in chorus roster.
2/04/2019	Clarified I.B.2 on chorus per chapter per contest; Edited II.F.4.b to remove optional M&P VP as signatory.
7/04/2019	Amended chairman to chair for consistency with other C&J documents; Clarified I.C.3 as including II.E and X.A.1 disqualification; Clarified name of <i>Official Register of Certified Judges</i> in IV; Specified in IV.C.3 that SCJC determines panel size for district contests; Amended V title to include general provisions in V.A; Amended VII.A to remove ranking for other than international contests; Clarified XI.A.2 action on stoppage of performance for bad taste.
8/20/2019	Amended I.B to permit distinctly different choruses from same chapter or conjoined chapters to compete for same award; Reordered I.B.2-4 for better logical arrangement; Amended II.1.c to reduce the minimum number of BHS quartets from 50 to 40. However, it also now requires the total number of invited quartets to be at least 50, including alliance quartets; Amended V.D.3 to reflect the increase of the automatic qualifying target score from 76 to 78; Amended various sections to reflect change of terminology from affiliate organization to alliance organization as BHS has changed alliance agreements.
10/25/2019	Amended footnote on first page to indicate upcoming changes for 2021 international contests and related prelims; Added footnotes to I.A re prospective amendments after Spring 2019 prelims cycle;

	Amended I.B to remove requirement for out-of-district permission; Added footnote to II.C.1 re minimum score and minimum number of Society quartets after 2020 international; Amended II.F.1 to include a chorus target score for prelims; Amended II.F.1 to remove references to competing in home district contest; Amended II.F.1.d to increase minimum chorus score to 74; Added footnotes to V preliminary contest section to change preliminary contests to optional starting Fall 2020
1/06/2020	Amended foreword and first page footnote to reflect changes for 2021 international contests and related prelims; Added definitions for ensemble classifications; Simplified eligibility article for Global Alliance ensembles by reference to respective MOU; Added new quartet package categories to eligibility rules; Amended I.A.5 to permit member to compete in multiple ensemble classifications; Amended I.A.6 to limit prior champions from repeating; Amended I.B.5 re layout of all classifications of international champion choruses; Added I.D to restrict extra eligibility conditions; Amended II.C.1.d to indicate 2021 change in minimum quartet score; Amended II.E.2 to clarify that member replacement may not result in classification change; Amended II.D.1.e to permit district option on local seniors contests; Amended V.F to allow for all quartet classifications in 2021; Deleted V.A.4 since a single prelims is not required in each district; Amended V.F.6 to provide medal options for all classifications; Amended V.E.6 and V.I.4 to provide international champion within a classification and up to four additional medalist in each classification with number to be determined by the executive director; Added VI.B to address timing of revised OSS; Amended IX.3.b and XI.A.2 to provide penalties related to taste in a performance.
6/25/2020	Revised foreword and remove footnotes related to LA 2020 international contests; Amended I.A.2 to clarify seniors quartets limited to males; Amended I.A.4 to limit out-of-district approval only to requested district DRCJ with information to home district DRCJ; Reduced time requirement for OOD requests from 30 to 10 days since only DRCJ approval required; Amended I.B.4 re distinctly separate choruses in prelims; Amended I.B.6 to clarify two cycle layout; Amended II.C.1 to indicate target score qualification is primary with district representative selection only when no district quartet qualifies by score; Amended II.C.1.d on minimum Society quartets to return to prior number (45); Amended II.C.1.e on minimum quartet score; Added subsections II.C.1.f & II.F.1.g re change of ensemble classification after qualification; Amended III.A on MUS category.
5/25/2022	Added All Voices as alternative term to Mixed Harmony; Added note re primary review responsibility for rules; Revised I.A.2 to remove men only from seniors definition;

	Clarified that seniors quartet definition is universally based on midwinter date in order to provide equity throughout Society districts; Added clarifying footnote that super seniors definition is a district definition; Revised I.A.6 to clarify intent of not repeating championship; Amended Article II to specify all contest entry through Member Center; Amended II.C.1 to provide for judges other than certified Society judges for preliminaries when approved by SCJC; Removed reference to men's seniors quartets from II.D.1.e; Deleted II.C.1.h & II.F.1.i since there is no advantage in changing classification after international qualifying; Amended footnote 7 to contest entry through Member Center vice Barberscore.com; Implemented SBOD decision on open international quartet championship; Rearranged subsections of II.F.1 to better explain chorus qualification options; Revised IV to replace non-existent <i>Official Register of Certified Judges</i> with <i>Barbershop Harmony Society Contest and Judging Roster</i>; Modified numerous sections to change contest administrator to Administrative Judge and designate a Panel Chair assigned to every contest; Amended IV.B.2 to match actual practice for years; Revised IV.B.3 and XIV.A.1 re international contests chair; Simplified language of V.A.2 as to action on repeat song; Modified references in V.D-I of operational supervision to general supervision by executive director; Amended X.C.2.b and X.C.3.b to clarify that penalty is imposed by international contests chair and not by stage crew; Confirmed 2022 target scores for international quartet and chorus are 76 and 78, respectively; Added responsibility brackets to all subsections.
7/14/2022	Restored traditional I.A.5 rule to not permit a singer to compete in multiple quartets at international since there are not separate category awards and all groups competing in same contest; Revised I.B.4 to remove reference to mixed harmony chorus; Revised II.C.1.a and II.F.1.a to change target score to 77 and 80 for quartets and choruses, respectively; Added subsections to II.C.1 and II.F.1 to provide invitation of BinG! World Harmony quartet and chorus champions to international mixed harmony contests; Increased minimum Society choruses from 27 to 30 in II.F.1.d.
4/26/2023	Replaced international contests chair with contest chair in IV.B.3 and XIV.A.1; Replaced session with round to match new term in Barberscore software; Eliminated extraneous words for candidates in IV.C.1
8/25/2023	Revised I.B.2 for chorus minimum size from 12 to 9; Revised II.C.1.a to change target score to 78 for quartets; Replaced evaluations with feedback sessions; Amended III.A with new Musicality description; Updated Music category references to Musicality category; Rewrote IX.A for Musicality elements;
11/13/2023	Added eligibility for seniors chorus as I.B.3;

	Revised II.F.1.g and II.G.1.e for executive director to create special choruses for international participation; Removed duplicate language in II.G.4-5; Added sections II.G and V.J-K for seniors chorus prelims and international seniors chorus championship contest; Copyright compliance redesignated as II.H
1/15/2024	Clarified I.B.7 on chapter chorus(es) after international championship; Revised Art.X.B.2-4 to clarify sound effects and artificial enhancement
9/19/2024	Edited Foreword to clarify SBOD responsibility for rules; The word ‘normally’ is replaced in most places for sake of clarity; Amended Art. I.A.6.c, II.C.1.b, II.D.1.a, II.G.1.b and II.H.1.b to use higher of two prelims attempts vice the second one; Added NextGen varsity quartet provisions in Art. I, II and V; Amended I.B.5 to clarify rule application to awards and championships but not prelims; Added II.D.1.b for second prelim option for seniors quartets; Revised II.G.3 and V.J.1 to permit final seniors chorus qualification should the desired number of choruses not be achieved during regular qualification period; Clarified II.C.1a that target score applies to Society quartets, not alliance; Revised II.I to reflect use of repertory with online entry and to clarify that clearance required at time of performance; Revised IV.B.3 to change international panel from quintuple to quadruple, reduce additional Administrative Judge from two to one and add NextGen varsity quartet contest as triple panel; Removed SCJC approval for non-international sections greater than 25; Amended II.C.1.e to raise international quartet minimum score to 76.0 for Denver 2025; Footnotes added for minimum scores being increased in future; Fixed several typos and format issues. {CLB final}
2/8/2025	Split this Rules document out of the C&J Handbook into a separate document. Moved Penalties and Forfeitures table from the C&J Handbook into this document under Article XIII. Modified “good taste” references in the table to “taste issues”. Added a section D, “Historical Notes” under Article XIII. Added some cross reference links (add’l work in progress). Minor grammatical updates (in progress). Modified additional “good taste” references to “acceptable taste” and refer to the Society’s Statement of Acceptable Taste (Articles IX.A.3.b, IX.A.1, IX.A.2). Modified revision history for 1/6/20 (above) to change “good taste” reference to “taste”.
2/12/2025	Added/corrected additional cross references, made miscellaneous grammatical fixes throughout. Merged the cover page file into the beginning of the Rules file to create a single source document. Updated table of contents.
3/4/2025	Corrected Article XIII chorus eligibility penalty regarding the minimum size of a chorus from 12 to 9 singers.
7/21/2025	Clarified Article I.A.1.c regarding changes to quartet membership 7 days before a contest.

	Clarified Article I.B.3 regarding the minimum number of scoring judges per category. Clarified Article I.C.2 regarding one Panel Chair and at least one ADM judge on a panel. Moved Article V.A.2 to Article IX.A.4. Added new section V.A.3 regarding contest entry prior to the start of the contest. Clarified in several places that contestants must hold a fully paid competitor registration. Clarified Article V.D.2 regarding elimination rounds and only those advancing to the final round can qualify for International. Added a new Article V.D.3, “Panel Size” regarding International qualification using an “uneven” judging panel with a minimum of 5 judges. Clarified Article V.L.1 regarding seniors choruses choosing to qualify for either the upcoming midwinter contest or the following year’s midwinter contest. Clarified Article VI.A.1 regarding what is displayed on the official scoring summary. Other minor updates made in various places.
8/10/2025	Updated some minimum and target scores for international qualification. Added more info about Unbalanced Panels. Other minor updates made in various places.
2/28/2026	Under Definitions, added table summarizing Target and Minimum scores for International qualification. Updated Article II.C.1.d to remove references to <i>Society</i> quartets. Clarified Article II.C.1.f regarding inviting Global Alliance quartets if none achieve the target score. Clarified Article II.G.1.a for choruses to match wording in Article II.C.1.a for quartets. Updated Article II.H.1.b regarding a seniors chorus being invited to international based on rank instead of achieving a target score.
8/29/2026	In several places, replaced reference to Article V.A.2 with Article IX.A.4 (per previous change as of 7/21/2025, above). Removed references to the 2026 target score for International Chorus contests. Increased the minimum score for International Seniors Quartet qualification from 63.0% to 65.0%. Revised wording in I.A.1.c to clarify language about quartet membership changes requiring SCJC approval. Clarified I.A.6.c regarding quartets competing in two preliminary contests. Removed I.A.6.d (same as I.A.1.b) Reformatted I.B.7 to I.B.7.a and added I.B.7.b to define layout after championship for international seniors chorus champions. Added IV.C.2.d regarding Global Alliance automatic qualification. Corrected IX.A.2.e from “lack of homorhythmic texture” to “predominantly homorhythmic texture” Amended XI.A.2 and XIV.A.3.a to note that PER judges can stop a performance for taste issues. Removed XI.B. Amended IX.C.1.a to reduce chorus loading times by 2 minutes in all cases. Clarified IX.C.1.b to further define “behind the risers”

	Amended table in XIII to correct several article references, clarify PER ownership of penalizing non-members on stage, and the total points penalty for International staging (150 to 120 points) Removed XIII.D (Historical Notes) Several minor updates to correct font inconsistencies. Reformatted this Revision History into a table for better readability.
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