

BHS International Contest Expansion Draft Proposal

Project Vision: Simplicity in Implementation and Equality in Competition

Frequently Asked Questions

How was the proposal developed?

The BHS Events Team was tasked with the initial draft of the proposal. It was then reviewed and discussed by a number of stakeholders, including Society Contest and Judging leadership, BHS Executive Team and staff, and volunteer advisory groups such as the Impact Alignment Team, Women's Advisory Group, and BHS Convention and Production Teams.

The proposal underwent many revisions based on this specific feedback from a wide variety of viewpoints, resulting in the version presented today -- the fact that it is version 8.2 demonstrates the length of the deliberations and review it has undergone already.

Why wait to expand contest participation until 2021?

The process of qualifying quartets and choruses begins more than 9 months ahead of International, and the preparation even further in advance. In order to give events teams and competing groups ample time to prepare, it was felt what 2021 was the earliest achievable date. With some districts already holding local contests, new-to-BHS quartets and choruses will have time to acclimate to the process before launching into International prep. Additionally, our venue for the convention in Cleveland is just right for this expansion.

District Conventions

Will this minimize the importance of District conventions?

No - District events are a vital component of contest participation! District champions should continue to be celebrated and recognized by their local barbershop community. The goal is to maximize the number of participants at local events - more singing groups will come in and compete at the District level, increasing the impact and excitement at these events.

Districts will have the opportunity to expand their convention offerings and reach. More kinds of contests means more competitors, plus their friends and families... greatly expanding the market and potential reach. Districts can site contests where and when it makes sense for maximum participation and design events to include other convention activities in addition to contests. Districts don't exist for their own glory... they exist to help all groups become their best selves.

What is the intention of the rule to remove automatic District representation?

We don't have automatic district representation today. A minimum score is required, even for a district representative under the current rules. The proposal allows for the best choruses and quartets in the world to be showcased at International, regardless of geography. We will continue to celebrate our winners and participants at the district level as well.

Conduct of Contests and Evaluations

Why mingle men's with women's with mixed groups? Why not separate events?

The order of appearance at International will be mixed among the three classifications during all contests. Simplicity – this is how most of our districts are handling the order of appearance, currently. Equality – an open draw ensures that preferential performance time slots will not be given to a particular classification.

How can judges switch gears between Men's, Women's and Mixed Harmony ensembles?

Our judges are highly trained. And smart. And it's not different -- it's the same rules, approach, and criteria for everyone. Each performer is already unique and all are judged each on their own merits. Adding different classifications of quartets and choruses will not change that -- good barbershop is good barbershop.

Can a chapter be represented in all three classifications at a District event?

Yes, but only one chorus per each classification (maximum of 3) per contest cycle.

Will women's and mixed harmony contests be added Next Generation Varsity events?

Yes - both categories would be incorporated in NextGen Varsity events. Varsity choruses are already being piloted and would expand to include all three classifications.

Both the Next Generation Junior Quartet Competition and Junior Chorus Invitational are currently open to women's, mixed harmony, and men's ensembles.

Can a District limit the number of outside quartets to avoid the necessity of a third judging panel?

In some cases, the increased participation could offset the costs in increasing the size of the panel. In order to expand participation, some Districts have chosen to cap the number of quartets that would receive an onsite evaluation, on a first come, first served basis.

A variety of options around evaluations is being explored by the Society Contest and Judging Committee, particularly focused on addressing the financial and logistical concerns around increased participation.

Qualification Process

When will groups know that they've qualified for International?

QUARTETS: All BHS quartets achieving the qualification score would immediately know that they've qualified. Wildcard invitations (if any) would be issued in May 2021, after all qualifying events have been completed.

CHORUSES: All BHS choruses achieving the qualification score would immediately know that they've qualified. Wildcard invitations (if any) for choruses would be determined and extended in early November 2020.

How are wildcards selected?

For quartets and choruses, the ensemble with the next highest score, regardless of classification, would be invited.

Why raise the qualifying scores for choruses?

We had 31 choruses achieve an 80.0%+ in the 2019 chorus preliminary competitions (men's classification). This change is needed to expand to all classifications and keep our International contest the "best of the best." Typically, the wild-card invitees to an International contest score 81.0% or higher in a given year. This baseline was set using that level.

Can a chorus attempt to qualify a second time?

Yes, both quartets and choruses can make a second attempt at qualification if desired. The time and financial resources required should be carefully considered by chapter and chorus leadership when making this decision, but the option is available.

Can a chorus or quartet participate for evaluation only without counting that as an attempt at qualifying?

Yes! Absolutely. Be sure to complete your entry form correctly to indicate your intentions.

How does this affect Affiliate qualifications?

The scope of this proposal does not affect how any Affiliates qualify for International.

Could an individual member take part in more than one quartet contest at international, if they were to qualify at prelims with both groups?

Yes, if an individual qualifies to compete at international in more than one classification they may compete in both ensembles. For example, if a person qualified in a men's quartet and mixed harmony quartet or a women's quartet and mixed harmony quartet, they could participate in both at

International. An individual may not participate in more than one quartet per classification - Ex: two mixed quartets.

International Contest Process

How is it determined which groups will be in the Semifinals and Finals?

Historically, advancing to the Quartet Semifinals requires a score of 81%+ and a score of 85%+ to advance to the Finals. Based upon the number of competitors scoring these levels at Prelims, the number of quartets in those rounds will be set to match that level.

For example: If 25 competitors exceeded 81%+ in Prelims, the Semifinals round would be set at 25 competitors before the International competition begins. The actual score to advance to the Semifinals could be higher or lower than 81%, but the 25 highest scoring quartets, regardless of numerical score or classification, would advance to the next Semifinals round. Similarly, a number would be set for the Finals based on the preliminary scores and that number of quartets would advance, regardless of numerical score or classification.

What if a classification doesn't make it to the finals?

We will give awards in each classification based on where they finished in the contest regardless of how many rounds they performed in. This is how we currently handle the Dealer's Choice award at International, as well as various awards at the district level.

Will there be an overall champion named?

Men's, women's, and mixed harmony classifications will remain separate for results and awards. When asked, most current and potential competitors did not feel that naming an overall winner was necessary.

Quartet and Chorus Classifications

How does BHS define a Mixed Harmony ensemble?

Definition of eligibility for mixed harmony ensembles, which will be clarified in the official rules: "A quartet or chorus is considered mixed if more than one gender is represented."

What if people misrepresent their gender to manipulate the system and qualify in a different classification?

Gender identity is deeply personal, and not something that people casually switch for convenience. Individuals describe for themselves how they gender identify, and that description is stored as part of the 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.