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# HISTORY OF SPEBSQSA/BHS CONTEST & JUDGING

PART 11 – 2016-2020 AND BEYOND

## **KEVIN KELLER**

SPEBSQSA/BHS MEMBER SINCE 1978  
BHS CERTIFIED MUS JUDGE, 1998-PRESENT  
MUS BOARD OF REVIEW, 2001-2007  
MUS CATEGORY SPECIALIST, 2008-2010  
CHAIRMAN, CONTEST & JUDGING 2012-2015  
PAST CHAIR, CONTEST & JUDGING 2016-2019  
C&J HISTORIAN  
2020 BHS HALL OF FAME



# CATCHING UP

## Specific Penalties in 2014



| RULE           | Description                                  | S 1 | S 2 |
|----------------|--|-----|-----|
| Article IX.A.1 | Lack of Consonant Chords                     |     |     |
| Article IX.A.1 | Not Predominantly Homophonic                 |     |     |
| Article IX.A.1 | Melody Not Predominantly in the Lead         |     |     |
| Article IX.A.1 | Excessive Passages Less Than 4 Parts         |     |     |
| Article IX.A.2 | Instrumental Accompaniment                   |     |     |
| Article IX.A.3 | Chorus Singing Unit Not Brief or Appropriate |     |     |
| Article V.A.2  | Repeating Substantial Portions of a Song     |     |     |
| MUS CD II.A    | Melodic Alterations                          |     |     |
| MUS CD II.B    | Lyrics                                       |     |     |
| MUS CD II.C.2  | Chord Vocabulary                             |     |     |
| MUS CD II.C.3  | Harmony (33%)                                |     |     |
| MUS CD II.C.6  | Circle of Fifths/Secondary Dominants         |     |     |
| MUS CD II.E    | Extremely Complicated Rhythms                |     |     |
| MUS CD II.F    | Construction and Form                        |     |     |
| MUS CD II.G    | Degree of Embellishment                      |     |     |

To record forfeiture, enter a zero in the net song score box and a zero (or an X) in applicable rule box.

| RULE           | Description                                    | S 1 | S 2 |
|----------------|--|-----|-----|
| Article IX.A.1 | Taste Within a Song                            |     |     |
| Article IX.A.1 | Patriotic Issues                               |     |     |
| Article IX.A.1 | Religious Issues                               |     |     |
| Article X      | Electronic Amplification or Use of Recordings  |     |     |
| Article XI.A.1 | Non-Members Performing on Stage                |     |     |
| Article XI.A.2 | Taste Regarding Gestures, Staging, etc.        |     |     |
| Article XII    | Excessive Speaking (Before, In Between, After) |     |     |

To record forfeiture, enter a zero in the net song score box and a zero (or an X) in applicable rule box.



| RULE           | Description                              | S 1 | S 2 |
|----------------|--|-----|-----|
| Article IX.A.2 | Instrumental Accompaniment               |     |     |
| Article V.A.2  | Repeating Substantial Portions of a Song |     |     |

To record forfeiture, enter a zero in the net song score box and a zero (or an X) in applicable rule box.



| RULE           | Description                     | S 1 | S 2 |
|----------------|---------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Article IX.A.1 | Patriotic Issues                |     |     |
| Article IX.A.1 | Religious Issues                |     |     |
| Article XI.A.1 | Non-Members Performing on Stage |     |     |

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| RULE        | Description                               | S 1 | S 2 |
|-------------|---|-----|-----|
| Article X.B | Sound equipment or Electronic Enhancement |     |     |

To record forfeiture, enter a zero in the net song score box and a zero (or an X) in applicable rule box.

# CATCHING UP

- Songs must be sung in English is removed in the change in Categories in 1993
  - Lyrics must be easily understandable



## WHERE DID WE LEAVE OFF?

- Improving the transparency of C&J
- Drove penalties into “rules”
- Variance program implemented, allowing judges to change scores when scores are far apart
- Implemented rules at International on staging and time



## SOCIETY TRENDS IN THE LATE 2010'S

- Implementation of Barberscore 2000 as the replacement for the previous version of contest software
- Implementation of varied types of evaluations based upon competitor wishes
- Discussions increase on songs with potentially divisive lyrics and/or backgrounds



# 2016

- Performance Category is implemented to replace Presentation
  - Guest panel utilized for new judges to judge PER
- Tiered certification plan developed for those wanting assessment against BHS Judging criteria
- Overlap papers will be scrubbed
- Video Library for Judging videos begins to accelerate
- Begin to develop Barberscore



# 2017

- Coaching moratorium for International judges reduced from 60 days to 30 days
- Flood outside the theatre at International threatens the Quartet Finals
- PER judges from the back of the lower section because there is no room up front
- Everyone in Harmony announced
  - Even though we have judged mixed and women's groups in the past, future unclear about as part of regular contests
    - Position paper will be developed to explain intent behind multiple choruses within a chapter
  - Diversity/Inclusion platform accelerates discussions about potentially divisive songs
- Who owns the C&J Handbook? Changes in delegation finally occur



# 2018

- New Evaluation format to be piloted
  - Allows flexibility on time / category or categories / specific judge
  - Judges “vote” on who a group should visit if they have a single category
  - Schedule developed based upon ranking in contest
  - “Don’t stay within your category”!
- As Affiliate quartets get better and better, a bit of consternation over the rules about qualification increase
- Barberscore will be piloted live and continue into 2019
- Definition of Style Change
  - “Predominantly Homophonic” to “Primarily Homorhythmic”





# 2019

- In Salt Lake City, Barberscore is officially used
  - BBScores was back-up – error in BBSTIX found its way into the public domain
- No scores below 40 except penalties (40, 1, 0)
- For concurrent contests, no separate OSS – winners will be announced and if you need to find out other placements, viewer will have to do that work
- SCJC Admin added to official committee
- C&J history formally archived in central location and procedures for update systematically



# 2019

## MUS Penalties revisited

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|----------------|--|-----|-----|
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| Article IX.A.1 | Melody Not Predominantly in the Lead         |     |     |
| Article IX.A.1 | Excessive Passages Less Than 4 Parts         |     |     |
| Article IX.A.2 | Instrumental Accompaniment                   |     |     |
| Article IX.A.3 | Chorus Singing Unit Not Brief or Appropriate |     |     |
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2007

Modified in 2010

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To record forfeiture, enter a zero in the net song score box and a zero (or an X) in applicable rule box.

| RULE           | Description                              | S 1 | S 2 |
|----------------|--|-----|-----|
| Article IX.A.2 | Instrumental Accompaniment               |     |     |
| Article V.A.2  | Repeating Substantial Portions of a Song |     |     |

To record forfeiture, enter a zero in the net song score box and a zero (or an X) in applicable rule box.

| RULE             | Description                                     | S 1 | S 2 |
|------------------|---|-----|-----|
| Article V.A.2    | Repeating Substantial Portions of a Song        |     |     |
| Article IX.A.2.a | Instrumental Accompaniment                      |     |     |
| Article IX.A.2.b | Chorus Musical Texture Exceeds Four Parts       |     |     |
| Article IX.A.2.c | Melody Not Predominantly in an Inner Voice      |     |     |
| Article IX.A.2.d | Lack of Characteristic Chord Progressions       |     |     |
| Article IX.A.2.e | Excessive Passages without Lyrics in Four Parts |     |     |

2014  
cut 1

2014  
cut 2

2019

# 2019

- Category School 2019
  - First category school where there were no tests; all testing done prior to school
  - Women were officially certified as BHS Judges



# 2020

- After the Midwinter convention, a global pandemic strikes and cancels all contests indefinitely
- Typically the year after Category School, Candidate School is held
  - Applicants had been approved already in January
  - A virtual candidate school was held in July
- Judging community offers “free” evaluation to any quartet/chorus wishing to participate in the Fall 2020
- Plans for video qualifications as well as live qualifications in the works for 2021



# PROBLEMATIC SONGS

- Because our style lends itself very well to songs from Tin Pan Alley and societal standards were different then, many songs we have sung have themes and/or histories that today may be divisive to a significant segment of our audience
  - Take advantage of women / misogyny
  - Make fun of people (weight, stuttering, etc)
  - Racism / Antebellum South
- The prevailing attitude within C&J is to educate the performer and judge the way it is presented



# EPILOGUE

- It took only a year from the start of our society to have its first contest
- Since that time, contests have driven the growth of the style and how people perform barbershop
  - At the core of judging is defining the style and then adjudicating against that
  - Barbershop is defined by each individual as when they joined barbershop
  - We have made mistakes in the past as defining barbershop as contest barbershop



# EPILOGUE

- Many of the early constructs of the judging system led to paradigms that have been difficult to shake off
  - Time Penalties
  - Category Judging
  - Category Independence
  - “Contest” barbershop
  - Other
- People made the best decisions with the best information they had
  - Never at any point in our history should we state “What were they thinking?”





# MY CRYSTAL BALL

- Future of Category Judging
- Impact of Everyone in Harmony on C&J
- Style Evolution
  - Shared responsibility of Performers, Arrangers, Audience as well as C&J





## PARTING THOUGHTS

Barbershop is an exploratory & extemporaneous style. It has always been and will always be our heritage to push the boundaries of what the style will allow. Therefore, to be truly “preserving the barbershop style” accepts the consequences that musicians will continuously explore new ways the barbershop style can function.

Kevin Keller (2021)

*The fact that the above are Guides only must be stressed. They are not presented as rules. Any attempt to lay down unchangeable rules would limit the expansion into new and untried harmony fields. That can't happen here. Not in this Society.*

Maurice “Molly” Reagan

Harmonizer – Vol 3, No. 1 (Sept 1943)

# THANK YOU FOR WATCHING

- Video Series is “free”
  - Donations in the name of this series are gladly accepted to <https://give.barbershop.org/preserve>
- Any new information you may have, please contact me at [kkbari@charter.net](mailto:kkbari@charter.net)

