

# OFFICIAL SPBGMA INTERNATIONAL BAND CHAMPIONSHIP GENERAL RULES AND REGULATIONS

(LAST REVISION 2024) ®

1. Any bluegrass band wishing to enter the SPBGMA IBC may do so regardless of past or present status, with the exception of groups that have previously won the SPBGMA IBC (band name permanently retired) or any other band consisting of more than two individual IBC past winners.

2. Only acoustical string instruments will be permitted and absolutely no direct amplification of instruments nor the use of amplifiers other than the house system (used by all participants) will be permitted.

3. The only instruments that will be permitted are as follows: Five-string Banjo, Flat-top Guitar, Mandolin, Fiddle, Dobro, and Bassfiddle. Below are the combinations and the ONLY combinations that will be recognized by the SPBGMA judging officials:

#### 4 MEMBER MANDATORY REQUIREMENT

- A-Five-string banjo
- B-Flat-top guitar
- C-Mandolin
- D-Bassfiddle

#### 5 MEMBERS

(4 Member Mandatory Requirement, + ONE of the following:)

- A-Fiddle
- B-Guitar
- C-Mandolin
- D-Dobro
- E-Non-musician vocalist

#### 6 MEMBERS

(4 Member Mandatory Requirement, + ONE of the following combinations:)

- A-Two fiddles
- B-One fiddle and one guitar
- C-One fiddle and one dobro
- D-One fiddle and one mandolin
- E-One guitar and one dobro
- F-One guitar and one mandolin
- G-One dobro and one mandolin

#### UP TO TWO (2) NON-MUSICIAN VOCALIST MAY BE ADDED TO MAKE UP THE 6 MEMBER MAXIMUM

4. SPBGMA has compiled a point system along with the use of 6 Qualified Judges for each round of eliminations. This system will be reviewed and subject to change in the fall of each year by the SPBGMA International Association of Judges. The scores of judges having the lowest and highest totals will be thrown out.

5. Each Bluegrass Band shall perform 2 vocal selections for each preliminary rounds of eliminations and 3 vocals in the final round. There shall be no more than 20 competing bands in the second round and no more than 12 bands in the final round. If total number of entered bands is 15 or less at the start of the contest, all rounds will be 3 songs. There are no restrictions on the choice of material a group wishes to use. Each group performing must display, to some degree, lead solo singing and three or four part harmony, in order to receive points in those categories.

6. Sound system adjustments will be made and remain at the same setting throughout each round of eliminations, with the exception of feedback adjustments by the official sound technician only.

7. Bands **WILL NOT** be permitted to repeat any of their songs used throughout the three rounds of eliminations.

8. Any band entering said contest must be an organized group having performed at previous events and are accepting bookings for the coming season.

9. Bluegrass bands organizing after arriving at contest will not be permitted to enter said competition.

10. No individual shall be a member of more than one of the competing bands.

11. Performing booked band scheduled for the Fri., Sat., or Sun. program will not be permitted to enter said competition.

12. After we have received the initial registration, SPBGMA must be notified in advance of any personnel changes. Failure to comply may result in disqualification and forfeiture of entry fee. Once contest has started, no member substitutions can be made.

13. In the final contest, bluegrass bands compete for first through tenth place. Selection of place of each bluegrass bands shall be by the rating computed from the combined scores in the quarter-finals, semi-finals, and final contest. The net result of the above system of judging is that the bluegrass bands are not competing against each other but against a possible perfect score.

14. It is absolutely impossible for the audience listener to predict with any degree of accuracy who the winner will be. Even the judges have no way of knowing until the Secretary of Judges and his or her assistant have computed the scores at the end of the contest. It sometimes happens that a band which is particularly uninhabited has tremendous audience appeal but falls down badly on the finer techniques of bluegrass music and therefore loses out to a less colorful group. The judges will call them as they hear them during the contest, disregarding past performance status of known capabilities.