

## Judging 101 – Demystifying the Judging Process

Competence Fosters Confidence

Nerves are the result of uncertainty – excitement can be channeled into performance

How Scoring Works in Southern California

The total number of points possible is 100. The band is judged in three areas or captions: Music (450), General Effect (350), and Visual (200). Judging focuses on the “what” and “how” – what we are doing with regard to program design, and how we demonstrate achievement of the high standard of excellence consistent with the best bands in Southern California. Points are assigned in five categories or “boxes.” Each box represents a range of points assigned using a criteria reference or scoring rubric. Box 1 represents a Superior performance, while Box 5 indicates some major work needed. For instance, a score reflecting the lowest Box 1 score possible in every caption, will result in a total band score of 90.4. A total scores reflecting a low Box 2 adds up to a 75.3.

The **Music Performance** caption carries the highest assignment of points. Musical performance is to be evaluated based on aural impression. What we hear – not what we want to hear. Even though the group is evaluated in total, comments about any facet of performance, including individual contribution, is completely appropriate and will affect the resultant score of the entire group.

The **General Effect** caption is an appraisal of the total product, including all areas of program design, coordination, and execution. The ensemble’s presentation should generate a reaction to the expression of emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic efforts. Since judges reward achievement, it is important to remember that the construction, or content of a program, in combination with the level of performance, results in an overall impression.

The **Visual** caption assesses the depth and quality of visual performance technique, and the expression of excellence, while considering the composition and coordination of all elements of the visual performance. From overall movement ability, to control of the visual pulse, the visual caption looks specifically at individual skills, relative to the level of training received.

Judges aren’t usually wrong!

For parents -- what to look for – the “what” and “how” (Check out the marching band dictionary for an explanation of terms)

Musically

- Does it sound good?
- Is it polished – does the music seem mastered by the performers? Does anything “stick out” – either individuals or “unusual” sounds? Is it in tune – does it hurt you?
- Is it together?
- Do the instruments sound characteristically like they’re supposed to? Does the music sound “weak” and unsupported?
- Do we convey the message or intent of the tune? Is it entertaining?
- Is the ensemble providing any kind of dynamic contrast?
- Do the percussion parts seem to enhance what’s happening in the wind group? Does the group demonstrate the endurance to effectively perform the entire show?

## Visually

- Are the forms (drill moves) “readable?”
- Does the performance appear visually confident? Are the feet moving in time with the music?
- Is your eye drawn to inconsistency or lack of uniformity? Are the upper body orientations the same – uniform?
- Is spacing between performers consistent and equal? Are the flags moving in time?
- Does the color guard choreography enhance what’s happening in the music? Does the drill enhance what’s happening in the music?
- Is there a confidence displayed by every performer? Does the performance look even and polished?
- Are the color choices reflective of the mood of the music? Are the color choices effective against the band “backdrop?”

## Things that don’t count...

- How cool the truck is (even though it’s way cool)!!
- Whether they like us or not?
- What color uniforms we have?
- Anything to do with reputation.