

IBC Rules

Judging Criteria

The Blues Foundation recommends that all Affiliated Organizations in their competition use our established scoring criteria. Categories include Talent, Vocal, Blues Content, Stage Presence and Originality.

1. Blues Content: Everyone has his or her own interpretation of what is and is not Blues. Thus, any given three-judge panel will include members with varying opinions of Blues, covering the spectrum of Blues whenever possible, from the most traditional to soul blues and rock blues. Bands should pick material carefully. At the Memphis quarterfinals, semi-finals and finals, the judges are Blues professionals, not a bar crowd, and are likely to be unimpressed with song selections that are uninspired. (Call this--with all due respect to Sir Mack Rice and Wilson Pickett--the "no Mustang Sally rule.")
2. Vocals: The act's vocal skills.
3. Talent: The act's instrumental skills.
4. Originality: Original work is encouraged. Cover tunes are allowed but playing the recorded rendition lick by lick is discouraged; will not be looked upon favorably by the judges; and will be reflected in scoring.
5. Stage Presence: Over the years, the quality of talent has risen so dramatically that we no longer consider this an "amateur" competition. Most contestants have performed on stage enough to know that they are not simply playing music, but putting on a show. This category rates how "sellable" a band may be.

To reflect the relative importance of each category in the success of a band, a band's score in each category is weighted. Raw scores for Blues Content is multiplied by four, Talent and Vocals by three and Originality and Stage Presence are multiplied by two. The total in each category represents the weighted score for that category. Total possible weighted score is 140.

The weighted multipliers will be Blues content (4); talent (3); vocals (3); originality (2) and stage presence (2).

Penalty Points

A Band is penalized one point from its total weighted score (see below) for each ten seconds that it runs overtime. There is no penalty for using less than the allotted time. At the venue coordinator's discretion, a penalty for excessive time loading-in and out may also be applied.