

DRUM CORPS INTERNATIONAL
RULES PROPOSAL FORM

This form must be filled out thoroughly and succinctly. All critical information should be included to maximize the understanding of the rule and its consequences by all involved in the rule adoption process. This form should stand on its own as a summary of your proposal. Incomplete forms will be returned. If you wish to attach further supporting information you may enclose attachments.

TITLE OF PROPOSED CHANGE: Amplification is limited to front ensemble percussion instruments. (2009 Implementation)

DESCRIPTION:

If a corps uses amplification equipment, this equipment may only be used to amplify percussion instruments used in the front ensemble. Sounds created by members themselves (i.e., voice, narration, whistling, breathing, sound effects, etc.) are expressly prohibited. Intentional amplification of the human voice will result in a 15 point penalty at the discretion of the contest coordinator. If none is available, the chief judge may grant the penalty.

PURPOSE: (Why make this change-what are the benefits?)

Since the introduction of amplification in 2004, amplified human voice and narration has been one of the more controversial aspects of the activity. After three years of use of narration, multiple equipment failures marring performances, and general confusion on how narration is judged, I believe it is appropriate for the activity to re-evaluate its' use.

It is not clear how narration is judged. Unlike the music and visual captions that have clear definitions of the performance elements corps are measured against (i.e., tone quality, intonation, attacks, releases, clarity, etc.), it is not clear how narration is or should be judged. How do you judge the quality and characteristics of the human voice? How do you judge diction and pronunciation? How do you judge the effectiveness of the content itself? These considerations are simply not included in the current judging system, which makes it difficult to understand how scores are derived. Additionally, when there are problems with the equipment used to amplify human voice (i.e., equipment failure, weather related issues, power issues at the stadium, etc.), or performance issues with the narration itself (i.e., lack of clarity in speech, distortion, phrases starting late or being cut off, etc.) it is not apparent that these problems are taken into consideration at all in the judging (e.g., the corps scores do not appear to suffer at all). It is difficult for many in the audience to understand how a critical design element can be ignored in judging, or how it can be rewarded. Additionally, it is not clear how a corps can achieve music or visual GE scores if the music or visual effect the corps is trying to convey cannot be achieved without narration.

When amplified voice is used in domed stadiums, it is almost incomprehensible. The acoustics of a domed stadium are not compatible with the combination of amplified human voice and the acoustic brass and percussion musical instruments used by the corps. DCI World Championships are scheduled to be held in Indianapolis, IN for nine of the next ten years. The stadium in Indianapolis, IN has a retractable roof, and it is quite possible that the roof will in fact be closed during these performances. These acoustic issues should not be an issue that the judges or the fans have to contend with at DCI World Championships.

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT: (How does this benefit the students educationally?)

The educational aspects of the activity should not be impacted at all by this proposal.

CREATIVE IMPACT: (How does this affect the creative aspects of the activity? How does this affect designers/instructors?)

Designers and instructors had to deal with prohibitions on amplified human voice and narration until 2004, and most corps have not used narration in their programs. Designers should be able to continue to design and teach programs that do not rely on amplified human voice and narration with minimal impact from a creative standpoint.

FISCAL IMPACT: (How does this financially affect individual corps and the DCI organization?)

This proposal should not have any direct impact whatsoever of corps that have not historically relied on amplified human voice and narration. For corps that have relied on amplified voice and narration, these corps will no longer have a need to own the equipment necessary to amplify the human voice. Given that most corps sell their equipment after a season or two of use, corps that utilized equipment for narration or amplification of the human voice have probably planned the sale of this equipment already. As a result, this proposal would not have a direct financial impact on these corps, and their future operating costs should be lowered given there would be no need to replace this equipment.

There is no fiscal impact on the DCI organization resulting from this proposal.

AUDIENCE IMPACT: (How will this affect our audience and their perceptions of the activity?)

I would expect the majority of the audience would view this proposal very favorably. Since its introduction, amplified voice and narration has been very controversial. I believe that the audience has a very difficult time understanding exactly how amplified human voice is judged, particularly when the amplification equipment fails and interferes with the narration. The highly negative response that several of these corps have received at shows all over the country illustrate just how many fans are opposed to the use of amplified voice and narration and the lengths that they will take to voice their displeasure with the use of narration and amplified voice. While I am not privy to all of the actual paid attendance figures, my personal observation is that attendance at the regional competitions has declined over the past three years. My observations pertain to five regionals in addition to Championships each of the past three years. I believe that the introduction of amplified human voice and narration play at least some role in this trend.

SHOW PROMOTER IMPACT: (How will this affect the show promoters-financially and logistically as it relates to contest production?)

There is no impact on the show promoters at all resulting from this proposal.

LOGISTICS IMPACT: (How will this impact the operations of the individual drum corps and the DCI organization?)

This proposal should not have any impact on the logistics of the operations of any individual corps or the DCI organization.

JUDGING IMPACT: (How does this impact the adjudication process and individual judge?)

There should not be any impact on the adjudication process or any individual judges as a result of this proposal. It was not clear how amplified voice was incorporated into the existing judging sheets. Additionally, it was not clear how corps were able to obtain general effect scores if their programs needed amplified voice and narration to explain their shows. By prohibiting the use of amplified voice, and thus narration, this confusion is removed from the judging system.

Representing:

Submitted by: Timothy Kviz

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Corps: <u>Blue Stars</u>
<u>Brad Furlano</u>
Director's Signature

Judge Caption Head Signature