



BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF BARBERSHOP SINGERS

CONTEST RULES

CONTEST ADMINISTRATION

Contest Rules Version 9.8

Amended July 2017

Applicable from 1st October 2017

Managed by the Guild of Judges on behalf of the BABS Board

Change History

Version 9.8 – July 2017

Article 3(c)	Clarification for quartets wishing to compete outside a BABS contest
Articles 6	Article deleted (Open Quartet Contest)
Article 7(c)	Wording amended to exclude Youth contest winners from competing again.
Article 8(c)	Amended wording. Contest rules only available from Guild web site.
Article 11(a)	Amendment to reflect changes to Performance category
Article 11(b)	New rule to reflect changes to Performance category
Article 11(c)	Renumbered rule 11(b) to reflect changes to Performance category
Articles 11 (c) – (f)	Renumbered following insertion of new rule 11(b)
Article 11(f), (g)	Reworded to reflect score reductions under new Performance category.
Attachment 5	Added
Attachment 6	Added

Version 9.7 – July 2016

Articles 11(b), 13, 16, 18(b)3	References to Presentation Category changed to Performance Category
Article 7(l)	New rule which specifies a minimum of 12 members on stage in a chorus contest.
Articles 7(l) and (m)	Renumbered to reflect previous change.
Article 14(d)	New rule to permit the use of stage microphones during a performance.
Articles 14(d) and (e)	Renumbered to reflect previous change.

Version 9.6 – August 2015

Article 7(m)	Correction to references
Article 14	New rules which ban the use of confetti and require contestants to give advance notice of any effects which create sudden loud noises
Article 19	Removal of wording relating to individual scores

Version 9.5 – September 2013

	Minor changes to correct inconsistencies to rules 8a, 8b, 14b and 15. New rule 11b added.
Article 3	Revised to reflect changes in the process for inviting quartets to compete in BHS contest.
Article 7b	Closing date for Youth Quartets removed
Attachment 3	New rules for determining the Small Chorus Award

Article 1

Scope

- (a) These rules apply to all British Association of Barbershop Singers (BABS) contests
- (b) In general these rules apply to quartet and chorus contests, the word "contestant" being used to denote either a quartet or chorus. Where the word "quartet" or "chorus" is used, that rule shall be specific to that type of contest. Such rules are identified by the letter Q or C, as appropriate.

Paragraphs in italics are for guidance of contestants and do not form part of the Contest Rules.

Article 2

National Contests

The National Quartet and Chorus Contests shall be held each year in conjunction with the BABS Annual Convention and shall be under the general supervision of the BABS Guild of Judges, hereinafter called "The Guild". The following procedures shall be observed unless otherwise ordered by the Guild.

- (a) Preliminary Contests may be held as deemed necessary.
- (b) If necessary, byes may be given in the Preliminary Contests.
- (c) **Q** At the BABS Annual Convention, quartets shall be judged in the first stage of the contest, which will be known as the BABS Quartet Semi-Final.
- (d) **Q** From the Semi-Final, the top six quartets plus ties shall be selected to compete in the Final Contest.
- (e) **Q** At the end of the Final Contest, the placing of quartets shall be computed by the combined scores obtained in the Semi-Final and Final Contests. Contestants placed first, second and third shall be designated Medallists, whilst the remaining contestants appearing in the Final shall be recognised as Finalists.
- (f) **C** Following any Preliminary Contests, choruses shall be judged in only one stage, this being called the Final of the Chorus Contest.

Article 3

International Quartet Qualifying Contest

An International Quartet Qualifying Contest shall be held concurrent with the BABS National Quartet Semi-Final and Final at the BABS Annual Convention.

- (a) **Q** All of the BABS National Competition entrants who qualify from the Prelims will automatically be entered into the International Quartet Qualifying Contest.
- (b) **Q** Past BABS gold medal quartets may enter for the International Qualifying Contest to achieve the qualifying score for the International Contest. Their scores will be used for qualification only and will not appear in the scoring summary for the National Contests.
- (c) **Q** Qualification for International will normally take place at a BABS organised contest. In exceptional circumstances, a BABS registered quartet may request to compete in a contest run by another national barbershop organisation. To be eligible for consideration to represent BABS at International, the quartet must obtain approval from the BABS Board and the other national organisation in advance of the contest being held.

Confirmation of acceptance of any quartet for the International Quartet contest will not normally be received before the end of January immediately preceding the contest.

Article 4

Seniors Quartet Contest

- (a) A contest for BABS senior members shall be held, (normally held in conjunction with the BABS National Quartet Preliminary Contest) as directed by The Guild. The winners shall be known as the "BABS Seniors Quartet Champions".
- (b) Entry qualification is by age: 55 years or over with a minimum aggregate quartet age of 240 years. Seniors Quartets shall be held on a separate register from the National Quartet Register.
- (c) **Q** Following the BABS Seniors Quartet Champion contest, BABS Director of Music Services will send a request to the Society for the winning quartet to compete in the next-but-one Mid-winter Convention, subject to any qualifying score being met.

Article 5

Youth Quartet Contest

- (a) An open contest for youth quartets shall be held, (*normally held in conjunction with the BABS National Quartet Preliminary Contest*) as directed by The Guild. The winners shall be known as the "BABS Youth Quartet Champions".
- (b) Entry qualification is open to young men by age.
(Currently under 26 years of age on the day of the International Collegiate contest the following year. For this contest there is no stipulation regarding BABS Membership)
- (c) **Q** Following the BABS Youth contest, BABS Director of Music Services will send a request to the Society for the champion quartet to compete at International the following year, subject to them meeting any qualifying score. Consideration will be given on an annual basis to request that a second quartet also be subject of a request to compete.

Article 6

British Open Barbershop Quartet Contest

Article deleted.

Article 7

Eligibility

- (a) Everyone on stage will be male. The only exception shall be a lady Chorus Director, who shall not be heard to sing.
- (b) **Q** With the exception of quartets entering the Youth Quartet Contest, every Quartet member shall be a full member of BABS. Quartets entering the National or Seniors Contests, and their individual members, must be registered with the BABS Quartet Registrar at least 28 days before the contest.

Quartet members who are not full members of BABS should check their eligibility to compete with the BABS Director of Administration or BABS Membership Secretary.

- (c) **Q** A quartet winning the National Contest shall not re-compete in that contest. A quartet winning the Seniors Championship/Contest shall not re-compete in that contest. A quartet winning the Youth contest shall not re-compete in that contest. A champion quartet shall be defined as containing more than two members from the original personnel of the quartet that won, regardless of any name change.

- (d) **Q** A member shall be permitted to compete with more than one quartet provided he is a member of each quartet before the Preliminary Contest. Where no Preliminary Contest takes place then the member should be registered with each quartet 28 days prior to the contest
- (e) **Q** A BABS novice quartet shall have never previously competed in a BABS contest with their present personnel and may include not more than one previous Finalist.
- (f) **Q** Professional quartets may not enter.
- (g) **C** Each chorus shall consist of certified members of a fully paid up BABS member club, i.e. all persons on stage including male and female Directors. Certified members shall be registered with the BABS Membership Secretary no less than 28 days before the contest.
- (h) No-one is allowed on stage during a contest performance who is not a member of the competing quartet or chorus.
- (i) **C** Each BABS member club may enter only one chorus.
- (j) **C** Two or more BABS member clubs shall not combine to form one competing chorus.
- (k) **C** A member shall be permitted to compete with more than one club provided he is a member of each club before the Preliminary Contest. Where no Preliminary Contest takes place then the member should be registered with each club 28 days prior to the contest.
- (l) **C** A competing chorus must be composed of 12 or more members on stage, with or without the director.
- (m) **C** A chorus winning the National Championship shall not compete the following year.
- (n) Violation of any of the eligibility articles (7(a) to 7(l)) will be penalised under Article 15.

Article 8

Entry To Contest And Provision Of Contest Rules

- (a) Entry shall be made on the appropriate online form. The completed form must be returned to the relevant Contest Manager to arrive not later than the published closing date.
- (b) Late entries may be accepted in exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the relevant Contest Manager and shall sing in a draw position to be determined by him.
- (c) Copies of the current Contest Rules can be obtained from the Guild web-site.

Article 9

Order Of Appearance On Stage

- (a) Contestants shall sing in the order in which their names are drawn by the Chairman of the Guild or his appointee, except as allowed in Articles 8(b) and 10.
- (b) Violation of Article 9(a) will be penalised under Article 15.

Article 10

Penalties for Tardiness

Any contestant failing to perform in the assigned order of appearance shall, unless there are exceptional circumstances, be penalised. The penalty will be 15 points on a single panel of judges, 30 points on a double panel, 45 points on a triple panel etc. The Chairman of Judges shall have the power to waive the penalty where the situation that has arisen to cause the tardiness is clearly outside the control of the contestant. The Chairman of Judges shall permit such contestant(s) to appear where minimum inconvenience is caused to other contestants.

Article 11

Contest Material

- (a) A song performed in contest must not be primarily patriotic nor primarily religious in intent.

- (b) A song performed in contest must be in good taste and have a melody and implied harmony consistent with the barbershop style. All songs performed in contest must be arranged in the barbershop style, which is an unaccompanied vocal style of music. Songs must be sung without any kind of musical accompaniment and without instrumental introduction, interlude, or conclusion. The latter provision applies to both the entire performance and each individual song.

*Contestants are referred to the BABS Judging Reference Book or to any qualified member of the **Music Category** for a detailed explanation of the Barbershop style and suitability of a song.*

- (c) Gestures or visual presentation by any contestant that are deemed suggestive, vulgar or otherwise not in good taste will not be allowed. The Performance Category judge(s) will be responsible for applying penalties up to and including forfeiture for violation of this rule.
- (d) In chorus contests, selected use of a soloist, duet, trio or quartet is acceptable providing it is brief and appropriate. At no time should the musical texture exceed four parts.
- (e) Songs used in contests should be sung in the English language except for the occasional word or phrase which may occur naturally as part of the song.

Any difficulty in understanding a song (whether due to language or otherwise) reduces a judge's scope for rewarding the performance.

- (f) Disregard of Articles 11(a) may result in points reduction or forfeiture by one or more judges, as explained in the BABS Judging Reference Book.
- (g) Disregard of Articles 11(b) - (e) may result in points reduction by one or more judges, as explained in the BABS Judging Reference Book.
- (h) Contestants must comply with copyright laws in the acquisition, arranging and learning of songs for contest performance.

Article 12

Number of Songs

- (a) At each stage of the contest, including the Preliminary Contest, contestants shall sing two songs, either or both of which may be a medley.
- (b) **Q** Taking the Semi-Final and Final Contests as a whole, no song (including constituent songs of a medley) may be sung more than once.
This rule is not intended to bar the use of musical quotes. Material sung at a Preliminary Contest may be repeated at a later stage.
- (c) **C** No song, including constituent songs of a medley, may be sung more than once.
This rule is not intended to bar the use of musical quotes. Material sung at a Preliminary Contest may be repeated at a later stage.
- (d) The title of every song, including the constituent songs of a medley, shall be recorded. The Chairman of Judges will penalise any violations of Articles 12 (a), (b) or (c) under Article 15.

Article 13

Scoring Categories

Judging of contestants' performance will be carried out in three categories: Music, Performance and Singing. Each category may use up to a maximum of 100 points per song per judge.

For the criteria being judged refer to the current BABS Category Descriptions from the Guild web-site.

Article 14

Sound Equipment and Stage Effects

- (a) Lighting and electronic amplification will be the same for each contestant during a contest. Contestants may not use their own or additional in-house electronic amplification, sound producing equipment or changed lighting.

Establishment of pitch using an electronic pitch pipe is permissible.

- (b) Contestants may use props, but they should be limited to those which can be easily carried on and off stage by one person.

Any queries with regard to props should be referred to the Quartet or Chorus Contest Manager prior to the event.

- (c) Contestants should leave the stage in the same good condition as they would wish to find it for their own performance and props should be chosen accordingly. Anything that can be quickly cleared by a stage hand is acceptable. Confetti and similar small material that requires extensive clean-up is banned from use in both chorus and quartet contests. Other materials which are difficult to clean-up (requiring mops, brooms, vacuum cleaners, etc.) are strongly discouraged from the stage.

Any queries with regard to props should be referred to the Quartet or Chorus Contest Manager prior to the event.

- (d) A chorus may request the use of a provided stage microphone during a performance for an announcer, as provided by Rule 16. Written notice of such requirement must be given to the Contest Manager no less than 30 days before the contest. Such microphones shall be turned off at all other times.

Microphones used for announcements are normally not switched on during a performance.

- (e) Any effects used on stage which make loud or sudden noises must be declared in advance to the appropriate Contest Manager with specific details of where the effect will occur.
- (f) Violation of Article 14 will be penalised under Article 15.

Article 15

Disqualification

The Chairman of Judges shall be responsible for penalising violations of Articles 7, 9, 12 and 14. The penalty is disqualification and such contestants shall receive no score and shall not appear on the official scoring summary, except by way of a note using the wording

"Contestant.....disqualified: Violation of Article....."

Article 16

Verbal Comment

Non singing dialogue is generally not part of a contest performance. However, relevant **brief comment** with supporting visual communication are permitted, to help establish the mood and/or theme, before, in between and at the end of the performance package. Spoken words deemed to be excessive or detrimental to the performance shall be penalised by the Performance Judge(s) up to and including forfeiture.

Article 17

Disturbances during Contests

Should any event occur which, in the opinion of the Chairman of Judges, adversely affects the contestant, such contestant shall be offered the chance to sing again after the last contestant has finished and at least fifteen minutes after the disturbed contestant has left the stage. The contestant shall be given a reasonable period of time to make a decision. If the contestant accepts the offer, the scores from the first performance will be discarded and the contestant will be judged on the second performance.

Article 18

Ranking of Contestants

- (a) Contestants shall be ranked in accordance with the total score of points awarded by the judges.

- (b) If two or more contestants are awarded the same total score, including all previous rounds except Preliminary Contests, ties will only be broken for 1st, 2nd and 3rd places in Finals. The method used for breaking ties will be:
- 1) The highest total score awarded by the Singing Judges will be ranked as the "Tie-break" and that contestant will be ranked above the other(s) in the tie.
 - 2) If a tie still exists the highest total score awarded by the Music Judges will be ranked as the "Tie-break" and that contestant will be ranked above the other(s) in the tie.
 - 3) If the tie is still not broken the following shall apply: The "Tie-break" shall be the highest total score at the Preliminary contest. If the tie continues unbroken the Singing score at the Preliminary contest shall be the "Tie- break" and if still not broken the Performance score at the Preliminary contest shall be used.
 - 4) In the event where a tie cannot be broken for 1st, 2nd or 3rd place, joint medallist status will be awarded
- (c) Total scores for 4th place and below will be ranked as equal placing. At Preliminary contests ties will be ranked as equal placing and if there is a tie at the cut-off for the Semi-Finals or Finals contest, all tied contestants will go through.

Where there have been no qualifying Preliminary rounds, it may be necessary, if the above procedures result in a tie, where only one can go forward to a Society contest, for a draw to be held to determine which group is given first refusal to go to that contest. Such a draw would have no effect on the status of the groups concerned.

Article 19

Publication of Results

At all BABS contests, results shall be made known by the Chairman of Judges or an appointed nominee for each stage, as follows:

- (a) An Official Scoring Summary shall be displayed at the contest site, showing the score per category and per song; details of any penalties or disqualification by the Chairman of Judges, including the Article number violated; details of any ties; and the names of the Judging Panel.
- (b) The scores obtained by the Finalist Quartets in the Semi-Finals shall be held over for publication after the Final.
- (c) There shall be no public announcement at the venue of penalties and disqualifications.
Publication of a full report detailing penalties and forfeitures will be available on the web-site in a suitable time frame after the contest.
- (e) Following the public announcement and publication of results to the satisfaction of the Chairman of Judges, there can be no change to rankings or scores.

Article 20

Trophies

- (a) Quartets

The following quartet medals and trophies shall be awarded at the relevant Quartet Contest:

Quartet Champions 1st Place	Gold Medals	Tyneside Trophy
2nd Place	Silver Medals	Michael Sides Rose Bowl
3rd Place	Bronze Medals	The Ian Stone Trophy
Novice Quartet		The Sheng Pitch Pipe (see Attachment 1)
Most Improved Quartet		The BQC Trophy (See Attachment 2)
Seniors Quartet Champions	Winners' medals	Seniors Champions Trophy

BABS Youth Quartet Champions	Winners' medals	The Steve Hall Trophy.
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(b) Choruses

The following chorus trophies shall be awarded at the National Chorus Contest:

1 st Place Chorus	Gold Medals	Crawley Cup
2 nd Place Chorus	Silver Medals	Bristol Cup
3 rd Place Chorus	Bronze Medals	Wearside Trophy
Individual certificates shall be awarded to the top 3 choruses. Chorus certificates shall be awarded to all competing choruses.		
Chorus Division Winners		Division Winners' Plaques (see Attachment 5)
Small Chorus Award		Jim Carter Trophy (see Attachment 3)
Most Improved Chorus		Cambridge Scroll (see Attachment 4)

End of Contest Rules

Attachment 1

The Sheng Pitch Pipe

The Sheng Pitch Pipe shall be awarded to the highest placed novice quartet in the BABS Quartet Final. If no novice quartets appear in the Finals, it shall be awarded to the highest placed Novice quartet from the Semi-Finals.

A novice quartet consists of any quartet which:

- (a) Contains no more than two members who have previously competed together in a BABS quartet contest (Preliminary or Semi-Final).
- (b) Contains no more than one member who has previously competed in a BABS Quartet Final.

Seniors quartets are not eligible for this award.

Attachment 2

Most Improved Quartet

To be awarded to the quartet showing the "greatest improvement" between two consecutive quartet contest cycles.

The "greatest improvement" is evaluated as:

$$(S2 - S1) / S1 \times 100\%$$

where

S2 is the highest score(%) achieved by the quartet in the current contest cycle.

S1 is the highest score(%) achieved by the quartet in the previous contest cycle.

The "highest score" may be the score from Prelims, the Semi-Final or the Final or any other stage of a contest cycle. It will not necessarily be from the same stage of the contest in both seasons. It is expressed as a percentage to eliminate possible differences in the size of judging panels from contest to contest.

The following rules will apply:

- (a) The results of two consecutive contest seasons will be used unless decreed otherwise by the BABS Contest Manager to accommodate unusual circumstances.
- (b) Except for (c) and (d) below, any quartet competing in any round of a BABS contest is eligible including those competing in the Youth Contest, the Seniors Contest or for a placing at the BHS International Contest.
- (c) A quartet must compete in both seasons to be eligible, unless allowed otherwise under rule (a).
- (d) Any quartet forfeiting all their marks in any one or more categories, in either season, will not be eligible.

Attachment 3

The Small Chorus Award - "The Jim Carter Memorial Trophy"

In order to encourage smaller choruses to enter the BABS Chorus Contests, Reading Barbershop Harmony Club donated in the 1970s a trophy, to be known as The Jim Carter Memorial Trophy, to be presented to the highest placed small chorus competing in the annual chorus contest covering both preliminary and final rounds.

The rules governing the award of this trophy are:

- (a) Only choruses with 25 or less singers will be eligible (excluding the chorus director)
- (b) The highest placed eligible chorus shall be declared the winner
- (c) The winners of the trophy may not win the award more than once in any three year period

Attachment 4

The Most Improved Chorus Award - "The Cambridge Scroll"

To be awarded to the chorus showing the "greatest improvement" between two consecutive chorus contest cycles.

The "greatest improvement" is evaluated as:

$$(S2 - S1) / S1 \times 100\%$$

where

S2 is the highest score(%) achieved by the chorus in the current contest cycle.

S1 is the highest score(%) achieved by the chorus in the previous contest cycle.

The "highest score" may be the score from Prelims, the Semi-Final or the Final or any other stage of a contest cycle. It will not necessarily be from the same stage of the contest in both seasons. It is expressed as a percentage to eliminate possible differences in the size of judging panels from contest to contest.

The following rules will apply:

- (a) The results of two consecutive contest seasons will be used unless decreed otherwise by the BABS Contest Manager to accommodate unusual circumstances.
- (b) Except for (c) and (d) below, any chorus competing in any round of a BABS contest is eligible.
- (c) A chorus must compete in both seasons to be eligible, unless allowed otherwise under rule (a).
- (d) Any chorus forfeiting all their marks in any one or more categories, in either season, will not be eligible.

Attachment 5

Chorus Divisional Awards

To be awarded to the Chorus placing highest in each division. Choruses are placed in divisions based on their last score achieved in a BABS competition, according the boundaries below:

- Division 1: 71% and above
- Division 2: 61% - 70.9%
- Division 3: 55% - 60.9%
- Division 4: Below 55%

Attachment 6

Contest Bursaries and International Contest Contribution

Award winners will receive the following Bursaries:

Chorus Bursaries

- 1st Division Winners: £3,000
- 2nd Division Winners: £500
- 3rd Division Winners: £500
- 4th Division Winners: £500
- Small Chorus Award: £250
- Most Improved Chorus: £250

Quartet Bursaries

- Gold Medal Winners: £1,000
- Seniors Quartet Winners: £500
- Youth Quartet Winners: £500

Mixed Chorus Bursary

- Winner: £500

International Contest Bursaries (On condition of attendance at International)

Applications for funds to be submitted to BABS Finance Director when acceptance for International has been received from BHS.

- Chorus winners: £2,000, plus 50% reduction on subscriptions for one year
- Quartet Gold Medal Winners: £1,000, plus International Convention Registration Fees
- Seniors Quartet Winners: £500 plus Midwinter Convention Registration Fees
- Youth Quartet Winners: £500 plus International Convention Registration Fees

Other qualifying quartets attending International Convention are reminded that they can apply to Harmony Foundation for grants.

End of Attachments