

Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania (BSCP) International Blues Challenge (IBC) Regional Competition Official Info & Rules

WHAT IS THIS?

This competition is a 'battle of the bands' to determine who our regional entrants will be for the 25th International Blues Challenge world finals February 4-7, 2009 in Memphis, TN, hosted by The Blues Foundation (<http://www.blues.org>). The Memphis event is the world's largest gathering of Blues acts, and represents an international search by The Blues Foundation and its Affiliated Organizations for the Blues Band and Solo/Duo Blues Act ready to take their act to the international stage. In 2008, 100 bands and 60 solo/duo acts entered, filling the clubs up and down Beale Street for the semi-finals on Thursday and Friday and the finals at the Orpheum Theater on Saturday.

The finals in Memphis are a HUGE event, in fact rated by many as better than most blues festivals. The prizes are huge also - the winners typically receive cash and prizes such as professional consultations and assistance, gigs at some of the country's best festivals, interviews in the world's leading blues publications, free website design and hosting, and a gig on the "Legendary Blues Cruise." This is a launch pad to 'making it' as a full-time blues musician.

But -- to get there, you have to go through us, your local Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania. The band that wins will be given a cash prize award of \$1,000 and the solo/duo act given \$300 to be used for traveling expenses. This will be presented right before leaving for Memphis/IBC 2009. We will also pay for the band to play at a BSCP sponsored show - our Christmas party. An outside panel of judges will judge the contest. The scoring criteria recommended by the Blues Foundation and used in Memphis will be utilized. There will be no "popularity" vote. The BSCP contest will follow the recommendations regarding format, etc. of the Blues Foundation, since that is what has to be followed when we are represented in Memphis.

WHEN AND WHERE?

The competition will be held on Saturday September 6th (solo/duo) and Sunday September 7th (band) 2008 from 1-6pm at the Steelton, PA VFW hall. There are slots for 8 entrants each day. Should the BSCP receive more than 8 applications for either day, the BSCP IBC committee will put in place a screening process to decide which 8 entrants will participate.

HOW DO WE SIGN UP?

By August 15, 2008, we must receive the application information (shown at the end of this document). It can be emailed to Elaine Herlt at bluesmembership@comcast.net or print, fill out and snail mail in the application to: Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania PO Box 453 Steelton, PA 17113 (888) 771-2727. We also require that each band submit a demo CD (does not have to be production quality) with at least four songs, at least one of them an original. Alternatively, we will accept full song downloads from an Internet site.

WHO CAN ENTER?

While the Challenge cannot be considered a purely "amateur" contest, the goal of the Challenge is to seek out the best-undiscovered Blues band and the best-undiscovered solo/duo Blues performer in the United States and beyond. Winning the BSCP local challenge is the first step on the road to Memphis. To maintain this focus, IBC includes entry restrictions designed to afford the opportunity for discovery to musicians that are truly unknown and unsigned. Below are the IBC Official Rules that have been modified to suit our regional competition. Before entering, competitors should read both these regional rules as well as the official IBC rules for Memphis at <http://www.blues.org/ibc/rules.php4> to ensure that they are willing to comply at both stages of the competition, should they be fortunate enough to go on to Memphis.

THE INTERNATIONAL BLUES CHALLENGE IS RESTRICTED TO ACTS REPRESENTING AN AFFILIATED ORGANIZATION OF THE BLUES FOUNDATION, such as the BSCP. For a complete list of Blues Foundation affiliates, visit [Affiliate Organizations](#).

The IBC adheres to the following criteria for what constitutes a band and what constitutes a solo/duo act.

Band- any act with three or more musicians. Vocalists are counted as musicians for the purpose of this competition. Both electric and acoustic instruments are allowed.

Solo/Duo- any act with one or two musicians. Vocalists are counted as musicians for the purpose of this competition. Both electric and acoustic instruments are allowed.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA - Restrictions

--All competitors must be members of the BSCP. If you are unsure of your membership status, contact Elaine Herlt, Secretary, at bluesmembership@comcast.net

--Any artist whose name has appeared on a final Handy/Blues Music Award ballot is ineligible. All other musicians who have had peripheral and/or professional contact through performance with a Handy/Blues Music Award nominee, including but not limited to touring band members and studio musicians, are deemed eligible for the IBC

--An individual may compete in *one* act in *one* category in any capacity. If you are in a band in the band competition, you may not be in any other band in the band competition. Likewise for solo/duo. You may not compete in both the band and solo/duo competition.

--Competitors should be established acts – no pick-up bands. Winners are required to compete in Memphis with the band members who are present for our competition. Any substitutions must be under unusual or extreme circumstances and must be approved by the BSCP or the band will be disqualified.

--We do not allow three-time consecutive winners. In other words, if you have won our competition two years in a row, you must sit out the next year, and can then re-apply the following year.

No other entry restrictions apply. This means that management contracts, booking agent contracts, recording contracts, performance contracts (even those that include regular television or radio broadcast) and nationally distributed recordings have no bearing on eligibility.

Scoring Criteria

The Blues Foundation recommends that all Affiliated Organizations in their competition use our established scoring criteria. Categories include Talent, 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 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. Talent: This category is self-explanatory--the act's vocal and/or instrumental skills.

3. 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.

4. 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 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 110.

Penalty Points

At the discretion of the BSCP, a Band is penalized five points from its Total Weighted Score (see below) for each minute that it runs overtime. There is no penalty for using less than the allotted time. The penalties are more severe in Memphis. At the discretion of the BSCP, a penalty for excessive time loading-in and out can also be applied.

***** In the event that a band scheduled to play in a specific slot is not able to perform for whatever reason, the BSCP will have the authority to deduct a point from the band's overall weighted score. The next band scheduled to play will be asked to step into that slot. Should that band, for whatever reason, not be able to perform when asked, the BSCP has the authority to deduct a point from that band, and so on. With that in mind, the BSCP strongly suggests that after a band has met at the venue for their required check-in, that they stay in the venue and are available to perform at the BSCP 's direction, regardless of which slot they are scheduled to play. Bands that have missed their designated slot will be allowed to perform later in the night but will still suffer the loss of a point on the weighted score.**

SCORING SYSTEM FOR JUDGES

Here is the scoring procedure.

1. All categories and weightings are as previously stated.
2. Each judge will indicate his or her Raw Score (a whole number between 1 and 10) in each category and turn that information over to the scorekeeper.
3. The scorekeeper will multiply the Raw Score in each category by the established multiplier to get each judge's Weighted Score in each category for each act.
4. The Weighted Scores from each category for an act are added together to determine the acts' Total Weighted Score for each judge.
5. Any penalty points will then be deducted to obtain the act's Net Weighted Score for each judge.
6. After all acts have been judged and each act's Net Weighted Score for each judge calculated, each act will then be ranked for each judge based on that judge's order of scores, with the act receiving the judge's highest Net Weighted Score being given a ranking of 1, and so on for that judge. So, in a competition with five acts, for example, each judge ends up with the acts ranked 1 - 5 based on each judge's personal scoring habits. This results in the acts' Final Ranking Number for each judge.

7. Next, the scorer totals the Final Ranking Number from all judges for each act to determine the Gross Final Ranking. That figure is averaged (divided by the total number of judges) to Achieve the Aggregate Act Ranking and this will determine the final ranking.

8. In the case of a tie, the scorer shall calculate the sum of all Total Weighted Scores from all judges for the tied acts. The band with the higher sum of Total Weighted Scores wins.

Notes for Competitors

Check-in time will be 12:30 pm at the date of the competition, at the designated venue for the competition. All competitors are expected to check in at this time.

Solo/Duo and Band competition format -

The competition will be a one-day event for each category. Winners will be announced at the end of the competition, as soon as the judge's scores have been tabulated.

Sets will be 20 minutes long, with ten minutes to set up. The BSCP reserves the right to change this format depending on the number of bands and number of venues participating. This is similar to the time allocated for the finals in Memphis. Each act is assigned to a timeslot by a scientific process known as "drawing slips of paper with band names on them out of a hat."

Staging and Equipment

The BSCP will provide backline and sound. The setup on stage will include a drum kit with snare drum, amps, and mics. Drummers may bring their own cymbals and kick pedals and harmonica players may bring their own harp amp. Keyboard players may bring their own keyboards and keyboard amps, and stands will be provided. Effects racks and other auxiliary equipment are permitted. Musicians must include on the application any additional or special equipment needed.

Competitors are prohibited from bringing their own amplifiers (harp amps and keyboard amps being the only exceptions) Please bring a DI (if you use one). Every effort will be made to provide suitable equipment. Exceptions to this prohibition may only be granted pursuant to a formal request to the BSCP Rules Committee no less than two weeks prior to the competition. Include a request in the act's registration. With the number of bands participating, it is impossible for us to allow every player to bring an amp – space considerations prohibit it. Thus, any petition for an equipment waiver must include a compelling reason for exclusion.

The BSCP reserves the right to approve or restrict any and all equipment an entrant wishes to bring on stage.

Hospitality: Refreshments will be sold at the events.

Other Points Of Consideration

The BSCP reserves the right to use any contestant's name, voices, pictures, visages and other likeness for the purpose of advertising, publishing and promoting the BSCP.

The BSCP reserves the right to videotape or otherwise record all performances.

Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania International Blues Competition Regional Application

Application Deadline: Must be received by August 15, 2008

Name of Band or Solo/Duo Act

Contact Person

Address

Web Site & Email address

Contact Phone #

List all band members who will compete in competition:

Name, Age (if under 21 on 9/6/2008), Instrument, Vocals, Special Gear Requests

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Please list any minors participating (under age 21). BSCP may be required to inform club owners of minors on the premises. Legal guardians may be required to be in attendance, or other restrictions may apply.

I have read and agree to the Blues Society of Central Pennsylvania's rules and regulations.

Signature Name on behalf of Band _____

Printed Name _____ Date _____

We also require that each band submit a demo CD (does not have to be production quality) with at least four songs, at least one of them an original. This may be mailed to the address below. Applications will not be considered until we have received the CD. Alternatively, we will accept full song downloads from an Internet site.

Please mail or email completed application, along with the group bio, photo, and CD to:

Blues Society of Central PA
PO Box 453
Steelton, PA 17113
(888) 771-2727