

# Michigan Style Guidelines

Here are a few guidelines and reminders that teams need to remember when selecting the categories that they would like to have scored for style.

- Judges are your audience --- they are adults
- Evoke some sort of emotional response from the judges
- Clear beginning --- clear ending
- All team members integrated into the presentation
- Team members need to come across with "pizzazz"
- Original --- innovative --- unpredictable
- Prepare --- rehearse --- integrate all aspects of style
- Style should relate to the Long Term problem
- Interesting humor, music, visuals, etc. should contribute to the presentation with smooth transitions instead of being just "add-ons"
- Quality, design, and construction of costumes, props, scenery, etc.
- Be sure to include all elements of style that the problem requires on the scoring page.

## Completing the Style Form

The style form is a very important part of the team's solution. You should have them consider it carefully and not just throw it together the night before competition. Every team member should have some say in what is included on the style form. In addition, they should all know and understand the categories that the team has selected to appear on the style form as well as those required by the problem in order to answer any questions the judges may ask.

- Be specific on the categories judged (make sure the judge knows what you are talking about).
- List the categories in the order presented by the team.
- Make sure items listed are NOT already being judged in the Long Term problem.
- In the summary,
  - Be brief and to the point.
  - Type it and use large enough type for easy reading.
  - Use understandable English.
  - Remember the style judges only have a few minutes to read the summary.
- The team members must fill out all of their forms on their own with the exception of Division I, where the coach may write for the team **but the team members must dictate what is to be written.**

## How to Improve Your Style Scores

Style scores are very subjective. Often times something you think might deserve a high score does not get one and something that you think does not will get one. This is the nature of subjective judging.

Remember each of the four items is worth ten points. Make sure the team spends an appropriate amount of time working on each of the four items. Don't be afraid to let the team members reexamine ideas for style once they have started working on their solution. Have them generate numerous ideas for style before selecting final style scoring choices.

## Style Forms

Each team must present three or more style forms to the staging area judges. Information included is:

1. The problem and division, membership name and number, city, state and country.
2. The five style categories. ***It is extremely important that a team be very specific.*** For instance, if a team listed 'costumes' as a style category, do they really want ALL the costumes to be judged or is there one in particular that is more noteworthy? If so, the team should then specifically state that costume.
3. General choices tend to lean towards general or average scores. Even though a team may have ALL wonderful items in that category, it runs the risk of a judge or judges that may not think so. Then the team may receive a lower score because the team asked all the items to be judged rather than the best one.
4. Part III is the Summary. The final segment of the style form asks the team to describe briefly how the style presentation related to the long term solution. The wording and description of style should be clear and stated in the simplest form possible. The purpose is to assist the judging effort as well as the comprehension of the overall performance. A style judge has only 2 or 3 minutes to get the form from the staging area judge, review it as carefully as possible, look up and view the performance. If the description is too long, you force a judge to finish reading after the performance is over.

## Integration

Integration of style in the long term solution is: "The ability of a team to develop a long term solution and style simultaneously. As the solution is developed, style can embellish it continuously."

This integration of theme with the long term solution enables certain teams to be more successful than others. A coach's ability to help teams understand this concept and learn to apply it to their problem solution is the reason certain coaches are able to produce successful teams. It also takes a lot of effort, time and work.

After this integration is accomplished, the teams should ask what else they can do to creatively enhance each style category.

## Creativity

Creativity is originality and uniqueness. For example: Providing background scenery is not a creative idea, but how a team transforms the idea can be. They can ask themselves: How can materials be used in a different way? How can the background scenery become multi-dimensional? What can be added to the scenery to make it different? How can color and artistic quality enhance the scenery? These are all ways creativity affects the development of style. Questions like these should be asked of each style category.

Teams who strive for divergent and innovative ideas produce style that takes the ordinary and makes it extraordinary. To accomplish this, OMers bring skill, talent and creative thinking to

the team.

## Scoring Talent

Talent or natural ability like musical, artistic or mechanical can NOT be judged as style. But HOW the team uses this talent to produce the solution can be judged. For example: If a team selects singing ability, the judge needs to ask them to change it. But if they say "use of singing" then the judges can evaluate them on how they utilize their singing to enhance the presentation.

Below are some things that coaches and teams should remember about developing style:

1. Style should be smoothly integrated with the long term solution and come together coherently like the parts of a puzzle.
2. When developing your style, shoot for the unique creation as opposed to one that will just be OK.
3. When writing the style form be careful to be specific and definitive. Avoid being vague or general.
4. While pizzazz is nice, simple often works just as well.
5. Style development should focus on unique and divergent ways to enhance the solution. Creativity is the difference between good and innovative style.
6. They should elaborate as much as possible. Adding details and extending ideas will produce stronger style categories.
7. A well-coached team should spend a great deal of time deciding on the style categories that reflect the team's best efforts to enhance, compliment, and extend the solution.

## Detailing the Solution

### What is Style?

1. Helps to tell the story-----like the exclamation sign at the end of a sentence.
2. Must relate in some nature to the problem or solution.
3. Special effects, paintings, costuming, drama, songs, dances, poems, etc.
4. Natural ability cannot be judged as style.

### Areas of Performance Affected by Style

1. Props-----something you can carry, move, add or subtract, and use as part of the solution. Anything that is not part of the background.
2. Background-----scenery that functions to set the natural or unnatural environmental tone.
3. Costumes-----Material worn by team members.
4. Membership Sign-----Identifies the team:
  - a. Can serve as a prop or background
  - b. May be judged in long-term --- then cannot be judged in style

### Choices for the Style Form

1. Leftover-----select from what is not scored in long---term
2. Pre---designated-----part of the initial solution
3. Creative Ideas

### **How much time should a team spend working on Style?**

1. 14% of the scheduled work time.
2. Enough time to create four style choices.

### **Suggested Style Categories**

Costumes

Script

Music

Use of Technology

Background Dance

Sound Effects

Songs and Lyrics

Membership Sign

Appearance of Character(s)

Dialogue

Narration

Props

Lighting

Original

Poetry

Skits

Playbill

Artwork

An Original Effect

Movements