

**Bay Area Bluegrass Association - General rules for all contests**  
**Based on Winfield National Rules (Walnut Valley Festival)**  
**Last Modified: 15-June-2016 by RLH**

(Maximum playing time is five [5] minutes for all contests)

**GENERAL RULES FOR ALL TEXAS STATE CONTESTS – 2016**

Contests are open to Texas residents eligible for the 2016 Winfield National Championships (Walnut Valley Festival) and those who earn 30% or less of their annual income from performing music. Those who have been the first place winner at Winfield within the past five years or a BABA contest within the past three years are not eligible to enter. However, previous winners may enter and win contests which they have not won within these time periods.

Only 15 entrants may compete per contest. This will be the first 15 answering when their names are called from the chronological registration lists one-half hour before the contest begins. For the contests held during The Fire on the Strings Festival, entrants must have a valid festival arm band for the day of the contest.

Contestants must play instruments acoustically into a microphone. An instrument's electrical capability cannot be used. You may retune your instrument between instrumental numbers using a portable electronic tuner. Be aware that time spent retuning your instrument on stage will be included as part of the maximum playing time of 5 minutes.

Contestants may have one rhythm instrument for accompaniment. Contestants will not be allowed to take two instruments on stage. Selection committee reserves the right to eliminate contestants whose style of playing and selection of material are not in keeping with the flavor of the Bay Area Bluegrass Association (BABA).

A medley of tunes is not acceptable

Maximum playing time is five (5) minutes for all contests.

In an effort to judge the contest objectively and equally, the following criteria will be considered by the judges and assigned point value in each area:

40 points: ARRANGEMENT - Contestant's version of the tune selected. Is it appropriate to the tune and instrument? Difficulty and originality will be considered.

40 points: EXECUTION, TUNING - Fingering, picking and dynamics will be considered. Is the instrument in tune?

10 points: SHOW VALUE - The music should be played with life and feeling. It should not appear listless nor should it drag.

10 points: OVERALL IMPRESSION

Specific rules for each contest follow. Entrants may register up until 30 minutes prior to a contest start at the main BABA table. The order of appearance will be determined by drawing numbers one-half hour before the contest begins. Contest start times are as follows:

- Banjo: third Saturday in July at 6pm (cutoff is 5:30pm) – BABA show, League City, TX
- Mandolin: third Saturday in July at 7pm (cutoff is 6:30pm) – BABA show, League City, TX
- Guitar: third Saturday in July at 8pm (cutoff is 7:30pm) – BABA show, League City, TX

If there are five (5) or less registered - contestants will play three (3) tunes in the first round, with a maximum playing time of seven (7) minutes. Judges will place winners without the additional tunes of a second round.

Score cards will NOT be given out.

The judging room only hears the competing instrument and receives no mix or sound coming from accompaniment or rhythm instrument.

**Contestants are not allowed to speak on stage**

#### **TEXAS MANDOLIN CHAMPIONSHIP**

Contestants will be prepared to play four instrumental numbers. Two numbers will be played in the first round of competition and the other two in the final round should the contestant be selected as a finalist. Maximum playing time is five (5) minutes. Contestants must be registered and present at the BABA table 30 minutes prior to contest start to draw for order of appearance and receive final instructions. Winners will be announced and will receive their awards immediately after the contest on the main stage.

#### **TEXAS FLAT PICK GUITAR CHAMPIONSHIP**

Contestants will be prepared to play four instrumental numbers in traditional fiddle tune or bluegrass style. Two numbers will be played in the first round and the other two in the final round should the contestant be selected as a finalist. Maximum playing time is five (5) minutes.

All contestants must play with a FLAT PICK. NO FINGER PICKING WILL BE ALLOWED. NO COMBINATION OF FLAT PICKING AND FINGER PICKING WILL BE ALLOWED.

Standard / traditional acoustic 6-string or standard / traditional acoustic 12-string guitars may be played in this competition. The alteration or tuning of the low E (6th) string will be permitted. The low E (6th) string can be changed to any note desired, not limiting the tuning of the 6th string to "Drop D" or a low D note but to any desired pitch. No other string tuning or variance from the standard E (1), B (2), G (3), D (4), A (5) will be permitted. Some slight, overall variance from concert pitch A=440 will be tolerated. (See #2 in the general rules.)

Standard or traditional style capos may be used. No capos which allow the alteration of individual strings, such as the Third Hand Capo, the G7 Capo AND no partial capos depressing some, but not all strings, will be allowed. CAPOS, IF USED, MUST BE APPLIED ACROSS ALL STRINGS OF THE INSTRUMENT.

Contestants must be registered and present at the BABA table 30 minutes prior to contest start to draw for order of appearance and receive final instructions. Winners will be announced and will receive their awards immediately after the contest on the main stage.

The following criteria will be applied by the contest judges in scoring entrants:

40 points: ARRANGEMENT - Contestant's version of the tune selected. Is it appropriate to the tune and arrangement? Is the tune selected in keeping with the flavor of BABA? Is the arrangement original, for the most part, to the contestant, or is it someone else's known arrangement?

40 points: EXECUTION & ARTICULATION - Are the notes buzzing and muddy, or are they clear and distinct? Tone - Are the notes full or thin sounding? Timing - Is the tempo steady and constant? Dexterity - Are the notes played in difficult positions up and down the fingerboard or is the piece played for the most part in first and/or second position? Tuning - Is the instrument in tune with itself and relatively close to concert pitch of A=440?

10 points: EXPRESSION, DYNAMICS & SHOW VALUE - The music should be played with life and feeling. The performance is not to be based on audience response.

10 points: OVERALL IMPRESSION - Paragraphs 1 through 3 are considered at this point.

### **TEXAS BLUEGRASS BANJO CHAMPIONSHIP**

Contestants will be prepared to play four instrumental numbers. Two numbers will be played in the first round of competition and the other two will be played in the final round should the contestant be selected as a finalist. Maximum playing time is five (5) minutes. Contestants must be registered and present at the BABA table 30 minutes prior to contest start to draw for order of appearance and receive final instructions. Winners will be announced and will receive their awards immediately after the contest on the main stage.