



Central Virginia Blues Society LLC
PO Box 475
Nellysford, VA 22958
June, 2015

Official Rules – 2015 Central Virginia Blues Society (CVBS) Blues Challenge

Note to competitors: Please keep in mind that the CVBS “Blues Challenge” is not just a talent contest. It is also a show for which people are paying money to attend and enjoy. So while these rules may seem strict, the purpose is to make sure that the competitors and blues lovers who attend enjoy a high quality professional event with minimal problems or issues.

Who Can Enter?

CVBS adheres to the International Blues Challenge (IBC) criteria for competitor categories, scoring and official eligibility rules. The [IBC website](#) makes all of these details publicly accessible. In the event of a perceived conflict or dispute between the IBC rules and these rules prior to the date of the event, the judgment of the CVBS Board of Directors will be considered final. On the day of the event, the decisions of the official event coordinator will be considered final and are not subject to appeal.

The purpose of the 2015 CVBS challenge is to select our nominee(s) for the 2016 IBC which will be held in January 2016 in Memphis, TN. CVBS *may* be able to provide limited financial support to the challenge winner (TBD), but the artist(s) are ultimately responsible for their IBC expenses.

CVBS will nominate the overall challenge winner, regardless of category, as their nominee to the IBC in the artist’s category, provided their score equals or exceeds 95 (out of 140).

The highest scoring competitor in each of the remaining categories will receive the CVBS nomination to the IBC in their category if their weighted final score equals or exceeds 95 (out of 140).

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.

Youth: any act that all members are under the age of 21 at the time of the International Blues Challenge in Memphis.

Entry Fee is \$55.00 and must be submitted with application.

Eligibility

The majority (50% or greater) of each competing act must be members of CVBS. Memberships are \$30 which includes a tee-shirt. If required, the membership fee may be sent with the challenge application fee.

CVBS will not accept an application from an act that is not eligible to compete in the IBC and by submitting an application, a contestant is certifying that it is eligible for the competition under IBC rules. Artists should familiarize themselves with [IBC's requirements](#) including:

- An act is limited to two consecutive appearances at the IBC. The act must then sit out at least one year before being eligible to compete again. An act under the same name will not be allowed to compete three consecutive years. Sponsorship by different affiliates does not alter the two consecutive appearances restriction.
- 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.
- An individual may not compete in more than one act in any capacity.
- A musician cannot compete in the Band Division and the Solo/Duo Division.

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.

The Eligibility Packet

As a condition of eligibility, each competitor is required to submit a digital application package via email to centralvablues@gmail.com before August 2, 2015. CVBS reserves the right to accept entry packets submitted after the deadline due to exigent circumstances.

Due to production lead times, competitors are strongly encouraged to submit their applications as early as possible in order for CVBS to include act names in publicity material and promotions.

Prizes

Cash awards will be presented to the top three acts regardless of category.

First place:

- Act will represent the CVBS at the International Blues Challenge (IBC) in Memphis, Tennessee. The 2016 IBC is scheduled for January 2016.
- Cash prize of \$500

Second Place: Cash Prize of \$200.

Third Place: Cash Prize of \$100

NOTE: If the 1st place Act in any category is unable to fulfill its responsibility to represent CVBS at the Memphis IBC, the 2nd place act in that category will be asked to take its place.

Competition

Sets will be 30 minutes long. Each act will be given 10 minutes to take the stage prior to their set and 5 minutes to clear the stage following the end of their set. Points will be deducted for exceeding time allowed in any category. Time is not cumulative – Each portion (Set up, Performance, Clear) is recorded separately and taking less time for one does not give additional time for another.

Note: While each artist will have a maximum of 30 minutes, there is no minimum time requirement. Artists are encouraged to present a concise and cohesive presentation designed to showcase their talent.

Staging and Equipment

CVBS will provide backline and sound. The setup on stage will include a standard 5 piece drum kit, amps, direct input boxes and mikes. Drummers may choose to bring their own snares, cymbals or pedals but no extra time will be granted to change out items, and the kit must be returned to original condition prior to clearing the stage. Harmonica players may bring their own harp amp. Keyboard players must bring their own keyboards*, amp will be provided. Effects racks and other auxiliary equipment are permitted. Musicians must note any additional or special equipment needed in their eligibility packet.

*Acts using excessively large keyboards (e.g. Hammond B-Series, with or without Leslie) must notify CVBS well in advance, and will be required to deliver and stage this equipment NLT 10:30 AM on the day of the competition.

Competitors are prohibited from bringing their own amplifiers (harp amps excepted.) Exceptions to this prohibition may only be granted pursuant to a formal petition submitted in writing and received by CVBS no less than 30 days prior to the competition. Include this request in the eligibility packet. Any petition for an equipment waiver must include a compelling reason for exemption.

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

Order of Appearance

Each act will be randomly assigned their performance slot by a scientific process known as "drawing slips of paper with band names on them out of a hat," which will take place the day of the competition

Judging

Sets will be scored using the criteria established by the IBC. The judges may or may not be members of CVBS and/or The Blues Foundation; membership is neither required nor a disqualifier. Current CVBS Officers or Board Members and persons with a familial or professional relationship with any competitor are ineligible to serve as judges.

Scoring Criteria

CVBS uses the criteria established by the Blues Foundation for scoring. Categories are: Blues Content, Vocals, Talent, Originality, and Stage Presence. There is a maximum of 10 points awarded in each category.

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. Vocals: The act's vocal skills.
3. Talent: The act's instrumental skills.
4. 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.
5. Stage Presence: 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, Vocals and 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 140.

Penalty Points

A Band is penalized one point from its Total Weighted Score (see below) for each ten seconds that it runs overtime. There is no penalty for using less than the allotted time.

The penalty for excessive time is applied for each timed portion (Taking Stage, Performing, Clearing Stage) that is exceeded.

The weighted multipliers will be Blues content (4); talent (3); vocals (3); originality (2) and stage presence (2).

In addition, IBC participants can lose points for non-compliance with administrative aspects of the competition.

One point will be deducted for the following administrative aspects.

- 1) Online application was filled out completely and accurately. yes no
- 2) Act photo was supplied by the deadline and in the format requested.
 yes no
- 3) Act bio was supplied by the deadline and in the manner requested. yes no
- 4) Act checked in on time on day of event. yes no
- 5) Act checked in with Event Coordinator at the required time. yes no
- 6) Act representative attended orientation. yes no

*Event Coordinator (EC) has the authority to act on behalf of CVBS to ensure that the event goes smoothly. In the event that a band scheduled to play in a specific slot is not able to perform for whatever reason, the EC will have the authority to deduct a point from the band's overall weighted score for the competition. 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 EC has the authority to deduct a point from that band, and so on. With that in mind, CVBS strongly suggests that after a band has met with the EC for their required check-in, they stay in the venue and are available to perform at the EC's direction, regardless of which slot they are scheduled to play. Bands that have missed their designated slot will be allowed to perform later but will still suffer the loss of a point on the weighted score.

These items demonstrate professionalism and seriousness about the competition or the business side of the blues.

Scoring System For Judges

Here is the scoring procedure for 2015 IBC.

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.
 - 1-3 Typical of a beginning blues band.
 - 4-5 Typical of a local weekend band.
 - 6-7 Typical of an advanced local band but not yet ready to headline a major blues club.
 - 8-9 Typical of the quality of blues artists who headline major clubs.
 - 10 Typical of those who play the main stage at major festivals such as Chicago or Arkansas Blues and Heritage.
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 act's 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.

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.

9. Judges are strongly encouraged to provide narrative on their ballots. These notes will be provided to the competitors and are helpful to the acts as they develop.

Notes for Competitors

Band Check-in

Band check-in time will be 11:30 a.m. on Sunday, August 30, 2015 at the Southern in Charlottesville, VA

Orientation

There will be a brief orientation prior to the competition at 12:14 p.m. with the Event Coordinator and Stage Coordinator. During orientation the Coordinators will review contest rules, introduce key people, and seek to resolve any questions or special problems that contestants may have. This is also when the designated band representatives will draw the previously described slips of paper to determine performance order. Any designated representative failing to attend the orientation without special arrangement will be disqualified.

Hospitality

Refreshments will be sold at the events and are the responsibility of the consumer. There is no "Guest List" for competitors. All entourage members, friends, family, etc. are expected to pay the event admission fee.

Other Points of Consideration

CVBS official timekeeper will hold up a placard to indicate 5, 3 and 1 minute remaining during the performance portion. During the taking the stage, and

clearing the stage portions only the 3 and 1 minute remaining placards will be used. Contestants may nominate an observer for the timekeeper.

CVBS reserves the right to use any contestant's name, voices, pictures, visages and other likeness for the purpose of advertising, publishing and promoting the Blues Challenge, CVBS, the IBC or The Blues Foundation.

CVBS reserves the right to videotape or otherwise record all IBC performances. CVBS shall retain total ownership of all recordings and programs, and reserves the right to edit the program, the right to broadcast the program, the right to copyright the program and the right to license others to use these rights.