



INSTITUTIONAL STANDARD

OCA Model Rules & Scoring

Standards for Fair, Transparent, Auditable Competition

The activity does not have to be culturally prestigious for its competitors to deserve competent rules.

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GAME FOR ANYTHING.

Foreword: Serious Rules for Every Serious Competition

Competitive legitimacy does not depend on fame, television coverage, Olympic recognition, or the size of a governing bureaucracy. If people train, prepare, enter, are judged, ranked, timed, measured, advanced, eliminated, or awarded places, they deserve rules that tell them what the contest is, what success means, how decisions are made, and how those decisions can be checked.

OCA Model Rules & Scoring exists for disciplines where that work has not already been comprehensively done. The Alliance does not seek to duplicate mature codes maintained by established governing organizations. Instead, it provides a rigorous default where rules are incomplete, inaccessible, inconsistent, event-specific, or largely traditional.

THE OCA PRINCIPLE
The activity does not have to be culturally prestigious for its competitors to deserve competent rules.

A model ruleset should therefore do more than produce a winner. It should define the competition clearly enough that competitors can prepare intelligently, officials can administer consistently, judges can make disciplined decisions, organizers can reproduce the event, and an independent reviewer can understand how the result was reached.

1. Scope and Institutional Role

1.1 What OCA Model Rules Are

OCA Model Rules are voluntary, discipline-specific competition standards published to create a coherent starting point where no sufficiently mature rules framework exists. They may be adopted in full, adopted with disclosed organizer options, or used as a reference when creating sanctioned competition rules.

They are intended to be practical. A rule that cannot be administered on an event floor, explained to a judge, represented on a ballot, or reconciled in final results is not finished merely because it sounds formal.

1.2 What OCA Model Rules Are Not

- They are not an attempt to replace established governing bodies or mature rule systems.
- They are not a claim that OCA originated a discipline, its traditions, or its customary judging values.
- They are not an excuse to erase legitimate regional, stylistic, cultural, or historical variation.
- They are not event marketing language. Rules must remain operationally precise even when the activity itself is playful, artistic, unconventional, or locally rooted.

1.3 When OCA Should Decline to Publish a Model Ruleset

OCA should ordinarily decline to create a competing comprehensive ruleset where one or more established organizations already maintain detailed, broadly used standards covering the essential competition structure, technical requirements, officiating, and scoring of the discipline.

Situation	OCA Response
Mature, widely used rule ecosystem	List or recognize external rules systems; do not duplicate them.
Several mature but materially different rule ecosystems	Treat them as recognized variants; do not collapse them into an artificial OCA hybrid.
Rules exist, but are narrow or event-specific	Consider a model standard if a portable baseline would materially improve access and consistency.
Tradition exists but formal rules are fragmentary	Strong candidate for OCA Model Rules, with careful documentation of customary practice.
New/emerging competition format	Candidate for a provisional or experimental model ruleset, clearly labeled.

EXAMPLE: GYMNASTICS
OCA would not create its own comprehensive gymnastics code merely because gymnastics appears in the OCA Discipline Directory. Organizations such as USA Gymnastics, NFHS, AAU, FIG, and others already maintain substantial rules systems. OCA recognition of the discipline is separate from OCA authorship of its rules.

2. Governing Principles for Model Rulemaking

2.1 Codify Before Inventing

Begin with documented common practice, established terminology, recurring competition formats, and existing local or regional standards. New mechanisms should be introduced only where necessary to resolve ambiguity, improve fairness, or make the competition administrable.

2.2 Define the Contest Before Defining the Winner

Rules must first explain what competitors are being asked to do. A scoring system cannot compensate for an unclear competitive task.

2.3 Make Material Decisions Visible

Any decision that can materially change placement should be represented in the published rules: judging criteria, weights, deductions, dropped scores, advancement thresholds, tie procedures, disqualification grounds, and permissible organizer options.

2.4 Separate Rule from Preference

A mandatory provision must be distinguishable from a recommendation, organizer option, customary practice, or illustrative example.

2.5 Minimize Hidden Discretion

Officials will always exercise judgment, but discretion should have a defined domain. “The judges decide” is not a scoring method.

2.6 Avoid False Precision

Numeric scoring should not pretend that subjective distinctions are more exact than judges can reliably perceive. Scales should be no finer than the decision task reasonably supports.

2.7 Protect Against Single-Point Failure

Where feasible, results should not depend disproportionately on one judge, one undocumented judgment, one arithmetic anomaly, or one clerical action.

2.8 Treat Competitors Symmetrically

Comparable competitors should face comparable conditions, criteria, opportunity, timing, equipment, and decision procedures unless a disclosed rule justifies the difference.

2.9 Preserve Explainability

A competent reviewer should be able to reconstruct a result from the official record without relying on private memory or unwritten custom.

2.10 Design for Real Operations

The rules should anticipate registration, check-in, heats, rounds, panel assignment, ballot submission, corrections, withdrawals, penalties, result certification, and record retention.

3. Required Architecture of an OCA Model Ruleset

Every discipline-specific OCA Model Rules publication should address the following subjects unless a section is genuinely inapplicable. Omissions should be intentional, not accidental.

Required Part	Minimum Content
Scope & purpose	What competition is covered; what is excluded; relationship to other recognized rules.
Definitions	Technical terms, roles, scoring vocabulary, round types, statuses.
Divisions & classifications	Age, experience, style, apparatus, team size, ability, or other competitive classes.

Eligibility & entry	Who may enter, duplication rules, roster rules, substitutions, credentials.
Competition task	What must be performed, produced, completed, measured, or demonstrated.
Equipment / environment	Permitted tools, dimensions, surfaces, attire, music, materials, safety constraints.
Officials	Roles, minimum panel, conflicts, assignment, authority, recusal, replacement.
Judging / measurement	Criteria, scales, timing or measurement procedure, evidence judges may consider.
Score calculation	Weights, aggregation, normalization, dropped scores, rounding, invalid scores.
Penalties & disqualification	Trigger, amount/effect, authority, documentation, appealability.
Rounds & advancement	Qualification, seeding, heats, recalls, finals, advancement counts.
Ties	Tie-breaking sequence and what happens if the tie remains unresolved.
Results & records	Certification, corrections, publication, retention, audit trail.
Organizer options	Exactly which provisions may be changed locally and required notice.

4. Rule Language and Drafting Discipline

4.1 Normative Terms

Term	Meaning
shall / must	Mandatory requirement.
shall not / must not	Prohibited conduct or condition.
may	Permitted but not required.
should	Recommended practice; departure does not itself invalidate the competition.
organizer-selectable	A permitted local choice that must be declared before competition begins.
provisional	A rule or method under active evaluation and subject to revision.

4.2 The Specificity Test

A rule is adequately drafted when a reasonable organizer and a reasonable competitor, reading independently, would reach substantially the same understanding of what is required. If two competent readers could administer materially different competitions while both claiming compliance, the rule needs more work.

4.3 Mandatory Pre-Event Disclosure

Any organizer-selectable provision capable of affecting competitive strategy or result must be published before the applicable entry deadline whenever practicable, and in all cases before competition begins. Examples include panel size, category weights, time limits, preliminary advancement counts, dropped-score rules, permitted equipment, and tie procedure options.

5. Competition Structure

5.1 Divisions and Classes

A division should exist because it produces a meaningfully fairer or more coherent competition, not merely because a label is available. Each classifying characteristic should have an objective entry rule wherever possible.

- Age divisions should define the controlling date for age calculation.
- Experience divisions should define the qualifying experience, time period, points, wins, credentials, or self-selection rule.
- Team divisions should define roster size, minimum participants, substitutions, and whether one person may appear on multiple rosters.
- Equipment or style divisions should define the feature that distinguishes one class from another.

5.2 Entries, Duplicate Participation, and Conflicts

Rules should state whether the same person may enter more than once, partner with multiple competitors, compete on multiple teams, or appear in multiple categories. If permitted, scheduling and conflict handling must be addressed rather than left to improvisation.

5.3 Rounds, Heats, and Advancement

For any competition too large to resolve in a single final, the rules must state how competitors are distributed, evaluated, and advanced. Random assignment, seeding, balancing, and heat size rules should be explicit enough to prevent convenient but inequitable rearrangement.

FAIRNESS CHECK

If advancement depends on a threshold, judges should know whether they are selecting a fixed number, recommending advancement independently, or assigning scores from which advancement will later be computed. Those are different decision tasks and should not be disguised as one another.

6. Officials, Panels, and Conflicts of Interest

6.1 Minimum Roles

A model ruleset should identify the officials required for the discipline. Depending on the competition, these may include a chair or chief judge, panel judges, referee, timer, measurer, recorder, scrutineer/tabulator, technical official, equipment inspector, floor manager, or result certifier.

6.2 Conflict Standard

No official should participate in a decision where a reasonable observer would question the official's impartiality because of a material personal, financial, coaching, family, team, or supervisory relationship. Discipline-specific rules may define ordinary community relationships that do not by themselves require recusal.

6.3 Panel Composition

The required panel size should reflect the type of judgment being made. Highly subjective, placement-sensitive judging generally benefits from multiple independent judges. Objective measurement may require fewer evaluators but stronger calibration, redundancy, or verification.

6.4 Independence of Marks

Unless the format specifically requires consensus judging, judges should enter marks independently and should not discuss competitors, provisional scores, or preferred placements before ballot submission.

7. Judging Criteria: Turning Values into Decisions

7.1 Criteria Must Be Distinct

A criterion should measure a recognizable dimension of performance. Two differently named categories that reward essentially the same quality create accidental double-weighting. When overlap is unavoidable, guidance should tell judges how to separate the concepts.

7.2 Criteria Need Anchors

Labels such as “excellent” or “poor” are not enough. A model ruleset should provide behavioral or observable anchors showing what stronger and weaker performance tends to look like.

Score Band	General Anchor
9–10	Exceptional execution of the criterion; highly controlled, complete, and clearly superior in the relevant dimension.
7–8	Strong execution; meaningful strengths with only limited deficiencies.
5–6	Competent / mixed execution; criterion is substantially present but inconsistently realized.
3–4	Weak execution; notable deficiencies materially reduce quality or effectiveness.
1–2	Minimal successful evidence of the criterion.
0	Criterion not demonstrated, not attempted where required, or score specifically authorized as zero by rule.

7.3 Weighting

Weights should reflect the actual values of the competition. If Technique is stated to be central but contributes only 10% of the score, the scoring design contradicts the rulebook’s rhetoric. Weighting decisions should be explicit and sum to 100% unless a different mathematical model is deliberately used.

7.4 Whole-Number vs Decimal Scales

Decimals should be permitted only when judges can use them consistently and the added granularity serves a real purpose. A 1–10 scale in 0.1 increments creates 101 nominal values; most disciplines cannot support that level of perceptual precision. OCA should prefer coarser scales unless calibration evidence supports finer scoring.

8. Score Calculation and Data Integrity

8.1 Publish the Formula

The score formula must be describable in plain language and, where useful, in mathematical form. Competitors should not need proprietary tools or insider knowledge to understand how marks become placements.

8.2 Recommended Weighted-Category Formula

For each judge: Judge Total = $\sum$ (criterion score $\times$ criterion weight). Final Performance Score = the permitted aggregation of valid Judge Totals, less any applicable penalties.

8.3 Aggregating Multiple Judges

Permitted methods may include mean, median, trimmed mean, rank aggregation, majority placement, or a discipline-specific method. The choice should reflect the underlying judging task. OCA rules must state the method and not silently switch between score-based and placement-based logic.

8.4 Dropping High and Low Scores

Dropping extremes can reduce the effect of outliers but is not automatically fair. It should generally be used only with sufficiently large panels and should be disclosed in advance. With small panels, dropping two marks can leave too little independent information.

8.5 Rounding

Intermediate values should retain full computational precision. Rounding should occur only at the final published-score stage unless the rules expressly require otherwise. The number of published decimals should not imply more judging precision than the system actually supports.

8.6 Missing, Invalid, or Corrected Marks

- A missing required judge mark should not silently become zero.
- An invalid mark should be flagged for official resolution before result certification.

- Any post-submission correction should preserve the original mark, corrected mark, correcting official, reason, and timestamp in the event record whenever an audit record is maintained.
- A result should not be certified while unresolved score-validation errors remain.

9. Penalties, Disqualification, Withdrawals, and Ties

9.1 Penalties

Every penalty should identify the prohibited or deficient condition, the consequence, who may assess it, when it is assessed, and how it is recorded. A rule should avoid leaving the amount of a routine penalty to ad hoc discretion.

Penalty Type	Preferred Treatment
Time overrun	Published deduction per defined interval or threshold.
Required-element omission	Fixed deduction or criterion consequence, but not both unless intentional.
Equipment violation	Correction opportunity if feasible; otherwise defined penalty or disqualification.
Unsportsmanlike conduct	Defined range of sanctions with authorized decision-maker.
Safety-critical violation	Immediate stop or disqualification where necessary to protect participants.

9.2 Avoid Double Punishment

If a deficiency already depresses a criterion score, an additional fixed deduction should be imposed only when the rule intentionally treats the deficiency as both a quality issue and a rules violation. Otherwise the same mistake may be counted twice without justification.

9.3 Disqualification

Disqualification should be reserved for specified conditions of sufficient seriousness, such as ineligibility, prohibited assistance, material cheating, dangerous conduct, refusal to comply with an official direction, or other discipline-specific grounds. The authority to disqualify should be explicit.

9.4 Withdrawal and Did-Not-Start Status

Rules should distinguish withdrawal, did not start, did not finish where meaningful, and disqualification. These statuses have different competitive and recordkeeping implications and should not be collapsed into a generic zero.

9.5 Tie Resolution

Tie-breaking procedures must be hierarchical, finite where possible, and published before competition. A recommended pattern is: primary criterion comparison; then secondary criterion comparison; then higher median or majority placement; then a defined final mechanism such as shared placement, head-to-head re-evaluation, or limited tie-break round.

DO NOT INVENT TIE-BREAKERS AFTER SEEING THE TIE

A tie procedure chosen after scores are known creates an avoidable appearance of result-shopping. If a competition can tie, the rulebook should know what happens before anyone competes.

10. Results, Review, Corrections, and Records

10.1 Result Certification

Final results should be certified by an authorized official after the scoring record has passed completeness and validation checks. Certification indicates that the published result corresponds to the rules and official record; it does not mean every subjective judgment is reviewable on the merits.

10.2 Reviewable vs Non-Reviewable Matters

Generally Reviewable	Generally Not Reviewable
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Arithmetic / tabulation error	A judge's good-faith qualitative opinion within the scoring criteria
Wrong competitor or team credited	Disagreement with a lawful subjective mark
Penalty applied contrary to rule	Preference for a different judging philosophy
Ineligible or unauthorized participant	A close call expressly committed to official judgment
Ballot omitted, duplicated, or corrupted	Outcome dissatisfaction without a procedural error

10.3 Correction Window

Discipline rules should identify a reasonable period for reporting clerical, eligibility, or rules-application errors. Corrections after awards should remain possible where the official result is demonstrably wrong, but the process and authority should be controlled and documented.

10.4 Record Retention

At minimum, the organizer should retain final entries, panel assignments, official marks or measurements, penalties, advancement decisions, certified placements, and any material corrections. OCA-sanctioned event policy may impose a common retention period or submission requirement independent of the discipline rules.

11. Worked Specimen: Generic Judged-Performance Competition

This specimen is intentionally discipline-neutral. It demonstrates what a complete, understandable scoring structure looks like without pretending that the same categories fit every activity.

11.1 Competition Task

Each competitor presents one performance lasting 2:00–3:00 minutes. The performance is evaluated by five independent judges. Competitors are judged on Technique, Execution & Control, Presentation, Difficulty, and Originality. Time violations are assessed separately by the designated timer.

11.2 Criteria and Weights

Criterion	Weight	What the Judge Evaluates
Technique	30%	Command of the discipline-specific fundamentals and correctness of method.
Execution & Control	25%	Consistency, precision, stability, completion, and management of errors.
Presentation	20%	Clarity, communication, composure, pacing, and effectiveness of the overall presentation.
Difficulty	15%	Challenge, complexity, or ambition successfully undertaken; difficulty alone does not excuse poor execution.
Originality	10%	Distinctive choices, construction, interpretation, or problem-solving appropriate to the discipline.

11.3 Judge Scoring

Each criterion is scored from 0 to 10 in whole numbers. Judges must assign every required criterion. The weighted total for one judge is calculated on a 100-point scale by multiplying each criterion score by ten and then by its weight.

EXAMPLE JUDGE TOTAL

Technique $8 \times 10 \times .30 = 24.0$; Execution $7 \times 10 \times .25 = 17.5$; Presentation $8 \times 10 \times .20 = 16.0$; Difficulty $6 \times 10 \times .15 = 9.0$; Originality $9 \times 10 \times .10 = 9.0$. Judge Total = 75.5.

11.4 Panel Aggregation

With five judges, the highest and lowest Judge Totals are dropped and the remaining three are averaged. If fewer than five valid judge totals remain because of a panel failure, no scores are dropped and the available valid totals are

averaged only if at least three judges remain. Otherwise the performance must be re-evaluated or the round resolved under an emergency procedure published by the organizer.

11.5 Penalties

Violation	Penalty
Performance under 2:00 by more than 5 seconds	2.0 points
Performance over 3:00 by 1–10 seconds	2.0 points
Each additional 10 seconds or fraction over	Additional 2.0 points
Use of prohibited equipment after warning opportunity	5.0 points or disqualification if safety/material fairness is affected
Material outside-assistance during performance	Disqualification

11.6 Final Score

Final Score = trimmed panel average – penalties. The final score is published to two decimal places, but all calculations retain full precision until the final publication step.

11.7 Tie-Breaking Order

- Higher average Technique score among the three retained judges.
- Higher average Execution & Control score among the three retained judges.
- Higher median retained Judge Total.
- If still tied for an advancing or award-bearing placement, a three-judge tie-break panel evaluates the tied performances only on Technique and Execution & Control.
- If a tie remains after the authorized tie-break, the placement is shared unless the event rules require a single qualifier.

11.8 Why This Specimen Is Defensible

- The categories are named, defined, and weighted.
- Judges use a bounded scale with anchors rather than unlimited impressionistic scoring.
- The aggregation method is known before marks are entered.
- Time penalties are objective and separate from quality scoring.
- The tie sequence is determined before results exist.
- The calculation can be independently reproduced from the ballot record.

12. OCA Model Rules Drafting Template

Section	Required Drafting Question
1. Scope and Purpose	Define the competitive activity, covered formats, exclusions, and relationship to external rules.
2. Definitions	Define technical terms, competitor roles, round statuses, score vocabulary, and official roles.
3. Competition Classes and Divisions	Define age, level, style, apparatus/equipment, team size, ability, or other classifications.
4. Eligibility and Entry	Define entry requirements, duplicate participation, roster rules, substitutions, credentials, deadlines.
5. Competition Requirements	Define the task, required/optional elements, time, sequence, permitted assistance, and completion standard.
6. Competition Environment and Equipment	Define space, materials, equipment, attire, music, safety, inspection, and organizer-supplied items.
7. Officials	Define required officials, authority, panel size, conflicts, recusal, replacement, and calibration/briefing.

8. Judging or Measurement	Define criteria, scales, anchors, timing/measurement method, observations, and invalid attempts.
9. Scoring and Ranking	Define formula, weights, judge aggregation, normalization, drops, rounding, validation, and placement logic.
10. Penalties and Disqualification	Define violations, deductions/sanctions, decision authority, notice, and records.
11. Rounds and Advancement	Define heats, seeding, order, preliminary/semifinal/final structure, advancement, and withdrawals.
12. Ties	Define tie hierarchy and final unresolved-tie treatment.
13. Results, Review, and Corrections	Define certification, protest/review scope, correction procedure, publication, and records.
14. Organizer-Selectable Provisions	List every permitted local option and required advance notice.
15. Recommended Operations	Non-binding event practices: check-in, judge briefings, score verification, floor flow, emergency procedures.
Appendix A: Ballot / Score Sheet	Provide the actual judge or official record structure.
Appendix B: Worked Examples	Show at least one complete score calculation and one tie or penalty example.
Appendix C: Revision History	Track version, effective date, major changes, and superseded editions.

13. OCA Rulebook Quality-Control Tests

Test	Pass Condition
Competitor Test	Can a first-time competitor determine what to prepare, what is permitted, how they will be evaluated, and what can cost them points or eligibility?
Judge Test	Can two trained judges independently understand what each criterion means and how to use the scoring scale?
Organizer Test	Can an event be scheduled and administered without inventing material procedures on the day?
Scrutineer Test	Can a tabulator reconstruct every placement from the official inputs and published formula?
Tie Test	Can every plausible tie be resolved without creating a new rule after scores are known?
Failure Test	Does the ruleset explain what happens when a judge is absent, a ballot is incomplete, equipment fails, or a competitor cannot continue?
Bias Test	Do structurally comparable competitors receive comparable conditions, and are conflicts of interest controlled?
Audit Test	Could an independent reviewer explain the final result from retained records?
Plain-Language Test	Are technical terms defined and sentences sufficiently direct that formality does not hide meaning?

PUBLICATION GATE

An OCA Model Ruleset should not be published merely because every section contains text. It should pass the

operational tests above and include at least one worked scoring example before release.

14. Publication, Revision, and Governance

14.1 Status Labels

Status	Meaning
Draft	Consultation or development document; not approved for OCA model-rule adoption.
Provisional	Approved for limited use or field testing; expected to receive near-term review.
Standard	Approved OCA Model Rules edition suitable for adoption.
Superseded	Replaced by a newer edition; retained for historical reference only.
Withdrawn	No longer recommended for use because of a material issue or changed external landscape.

14.2 Revision Discipline

Each edition should carry a unique version number and effective date. Material changes affecting eligibility, scoring, penalties, advancement, equipment, or judging should be summarized in a revision history. Organizers should identify the edition governing their event.

14.3 External Rule Ecosystem Review

Before creating or substantially revising an OCA Model Ruleset, OCA should review whether the discipline has developed a sufficiently mature external rules ecosystem that makes an OCA model unnecessary or inappropriate. A model ruleset may be retired when the gap it was created to fill no longer exists.

14.4 Consultation

Where practical, model rules should be informed by competitors, experienced organizers, judges or evaluators, technical practitioners, and representatives of relevant traditions or communities. Consultation does not require unanimous agreement, but OCA should understand the consequences of standardizing practices that may previously have varied.

Appendix A. Model Rules Development Worksheet

Development Question	Resolution / Notes
What exactly is the competitive task?	
What traditions or existing rules already govern it?	
Why is an OCA Model Ruleset warranted?	
What are the legitimate competitive divisions?	
What outcomes are objectively measurable?	
What outcomes require judgment?	
What judging criteria are truly distinct?	
What scoring scale can judges use reliably?	
How should multiple judges be aggregated?	
What errors require penalties versus lower criterion scores?	

What conditions justify disqualification?	
How are rounds/heats formed and competitors advanced?	
What tie sequence applies?	
Which provisions may organizers vary?	
What records must exist to audit the result?	

Appendix B. Quick Review Checklist

- ☐ Purpose and scope are explicit.
- ☐ External mature rule systems have been reviewed.
- ☐ Mandatory and optional provisions are distinguishable.
- ☐ Every defined division has an entry rule.
- ☐ Competition task and time/equipment constraints are clear.
- ☐ Officials and conflicts are defined.
- ☐ Criteria, weights, scales, and anchors are published.
- ☐ The score formula is reproducible.
- ☐ Missing/invalid marks have a procedure.
- ☐ Penalties are fixed or bounded and assigned to an authorized official.
- ☐ Withdrawal, DNS/DNF where relevant, and disqualification are distinct.
- ☐ Tie procedures are predetermined.
- ☐ Advancement is defined.
- ☐ Results are certified and corrections are auditable.
- ☐ Organizer-selectable options require advance disclosure.
- ☐ At least one worked calculation appears in the rulebook.
- ☐ The rulebook passes competitor, judge, organizer, scrutineer, tie, failure, bias, audit, and plain-language tests.

Appendix C. Document Control

Field	Value
Document	OCA Model Rules & Scoring
Standard ID	MR&S-1
Edition	Version 1.0
Publication date	August 2026
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Purpose	Framework and specimen for development of discipline-specific OCA Model Rules & Scoring publications.