



# NATIONAL JUDGES ASSOCIATION ADJUDICATOR GUIDELINES

*PROVIDING ADJUDICATION FOR TOURNAMENT SINCE 1973*

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## WELCOME

Welcome to the National Judges Association—NJA. Whether you are a veteran judge or ready to begin your judging career, these guidelines will be helpful. Use this guide as a resource as you move through the judging process or at any point in your judging career. If you have any questions as you proceed, contact your Caption Chair, Facilitator, Education Director, or NJA Judging Coordinator.

As a member of the National Judges Association, you join a fraternity of professionals dedicated to the art of adjudication, education, and pageantry in the musical and visual arts. A long line of professionals and experts have set a high standard and achieved great strides in the world of adjudication. NJA has provided adjudication for almost sixty years. We are proud to be one of the oldest and consistent associations in the United States.

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## THE HISTORY OF NJA

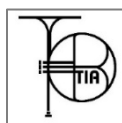
The National Judges Association was founded in 1960. NJA provides adjudication services to Tournament of Bands (TOB) and Tournament Indoor Association (TIA). NJA was founded for the advancement and education of its membership in adjudication of all pageantry-oriented events, as well as to promote the advancement of pageantry-oriented arts for youth in both scholastic and independent endeavors. NJA has provided judges to other performance organizations such as Winter Guard International (WGI), Drum Corps Associates (DCA), Elks, Shriners, Lions (state, national and internationally), various junior drum corps associations as well as municipal drill team, cheerleading, parade events, etc.

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### TOURNAMENT MISSION STATEMENT:

Through positive reinforcement and an educational environment, Tournament provides a tradition of performance opportunities in the musical and visual arts.

- GOALS:
1. Promote education for directors and students
  2. Promote student achievement
  3. Promote quality assessment/evaluation
  4. Promote enrichment of schools and communities



# WEBSITES

TOURNAMENT: [WWW.NJATOB.ORG](http://WWW.NJATOB.ORG)  
NATIONAL JUDGES ASSOCIATION: [WWW.NJAEDUCATION.COM](http://WWW.NJAEDUCATION.COM)

Our [Tournament](#) website houses all information for both TOB and TIA, as well as WINDI judging assignments and materials. Visit often for updates and news regarding the competitive associations. Keep your information in the WINDI system current from the site. Here is the process to log onto WINDI.

1. Migrate to njatob.org
2. Click WINDI from the top menu bar
3. Click Judge Entry from the drop menu
4. Click JUDGE UPDATE USER INFORMATION HERE
5. Enter your user name (first.last)
6. Enter your password
7. Check and update your information here – please keep this current!

No one can see your password. If you forget your password, contact the Education Director. You will be sent a temporary password.

- Use the temporary password to gain access to your WINDI account.
- Choose Change Password from the drop menu under your name in the upper right corner.
- Be sure to click Submit and Save Changes after you update any information in WINDI.

[Essential Notes](#) is the blog of the NJA judging community. Updates, notes, educational materials, recaps, internal judging information, and other timely information are housed in [Essential Notes](#). Please follow the blog to receive update notices.

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## PREPARING TO JUDGE WITH NJA – CURRENT MEMBERS

The first step each season is to submit your availability. Notification and instructions will usually come from the Education Director or NJA Judging Coordinator via Essential Notes to submit your availability. Select the captions in which you are currently certified, the dates you are available to judge, and any conflicts or affiliations you may have. Other information may be requested. Update your information in WINDI at this time as well.

**AFFILIATION:** Attending, participating, and/or consulting with units/staffs within one calendar year (two seasons TIA-TOB or TOB-TIA) of the upcoming season will cause an affiliation. You will list the groups you worked or have an affiliation with (such as a spouse, child or sibling) when submitting availability. Any questions or other situations will be handled by the NJA Judging Coordinator.

Prior to the beginning of each season for TOB or TIA, an Educational Day will be held to review, discuss, or introduce new material for the upcoming season. It is mandatory for all current NJA Judges who will be adjudicating that season to attend, and for prospective judges. Tournament Bylaws also mandate that NJA Judges adjudicating that season must attend the NJA Education Day.

Attendance sheets are provided to the Director of TOB, TIA and the NJA Director with the judges who were present. The NJA Judging Coordinator and Education Director may schedule a make-up clinic for those judges who may have had a conflict. These on-line sessions will be the week following Education Day and will include participation at TIA-TOB Preview Shows. While it is understood that conflicts arise prohibiting a judge from attending Education Day, they are scheduled and announced well in advance and every opportunity should be made to attend. Lack of attendance by a judge will severely reduce any judging opportunities throughout the season. Please advise the NJA Judging Coordinator and Education Director if you have any conflicts with attending the scheduled Education Day prior to the start of the season.

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## **NJA ASSIGNMENTS**

All assignments are made by the Judge Coordinator and the Caption Chairs. It is important to note that if your availability changes at any time after it has been submitted online, please send the Judge Coordinator and Caption Chair an email with your updates. It is very important that the Judge Coordinator and Caption Chairman have current availabilities. Please keep in mind that many weekends have multiple shows scheduled. We need to have as many adjudicators available to fill all panels.

While scheduling, every attempt is made to put panels together that have the opportunity to carpool during long distances. You may have to drive a little to meet up with a fellow judge, but it is important to try to reduce your travel expenses as much as possible.

Assignments will be delivered electronically. You will have the opportunity to see who is on the panel with you to schedule travel arrangements to carpool. It is very important to notify the Chief Judge of your show confirming you have accepted the assignment. If they do not receive an email from you, they will also be contacting you to confirm. If you have a conflict that has developed and cannot accept the assignment, immediately contact the Chief Judge of your show, the Judging Coordinator, Caption Chair, and Caption Facilitator. This will allow plenty of time to find a replacement.

Championship assignments are made by the Caption Chairs, Facilitators, and NJA Judging Coordinator. All assignments are approved by the TOB/TIA Director as well as NJA Director. Many attributes are considered when making these assignments.

**NOTE:** Assignments are confidential and not to be shared outside the association.

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## **NJA ATTIRE**

All Judges are required to wear the appropriate assigned attire when judging for the National Judges Association. NJA attire may be purchased through [Essential Notes](#). Click Judge Apparel.

This is the uniform for Tournament of Bands and Tournament Indoor Association.

- NJA polo
- Black pants
- Black shoes
- Black socks
- Current Judge Badge

When the weather is cooler, a black NJA pullover is appropriate. A solid black coat is acceptable. However, there may be no designs, logos, or bright colors on it. Dress in layers and be comfortable. Clear or black raincoats or ponchos are acceptable if it is raining.

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## **END OF THE SEASON – ATLANTIC COAST CHAMPIONSHIPS**

At the end of each Tournament Season, each organization holds the Atlantic Coast Championship. These events are the climactic events for many of our groups as it provides a finals performance opportunity to culminate their season.

NJA, as the parent organization, is responsible for the management of these championships. It takes all members of NJA to assist in the operations of these shows. You are expected to staff these shows. Please give of your time and volunteer for one of the many jobs to help make these championships successful.

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## **A – CONTINUING EDUCATION-DEVELOPMENT**

Throughout the season, your Caption Facilitator will provide feedback on your judging performance. This is a way for you to grow your judging craft. A review process will also occur at the end of the season. Caption Chairs and Facilitators, Education Director, and the NJA Judging Coordinator will review each judge's performance throughout the season. The information, meant to assist in personal growth, will be shared with the judge and help place them in a continued training path, and possibly lead them to work toward certification on another caption.

Our organization houses a huge amount of knowledge and experience. Members are encouraged to become active in continuing education efforts. Consider hosting an elective session at an Education Day or facilitating a virtual clinic. Contact the Education Director to design and schedule any education sessions.

Several NJA members, and trainees, have asked about judging in other associations. NJA offers hours of education, training, and professional development for all our adjudicators – at no cost to the individual. The following NJA policy covers this. If you have any questions, please contact NJA Director Tom Kondziela and Judge Coordinator Kevin Wrightstone.

Some judges wish to expand their horizons and judge with other circuits. The NJA policy on this is as follows.

- Several months prior to the outside judging association assignment, you must contact the NJA Director and Judging Coordinator to discuss this opportunity.
- The outside judging association should not be within our footprint, i.e., an area served by Tournament and NJA.
- We have several weekends each season that are very busy weekends, and we need all available judges to work those Tournament contests. It is recommended you do not schedule outside assignments on those weekends. Please refer to the Tournament schedule on the website.
- NJA/Tournament is your home circuit, and thus, if needed, you are expected to be available on busy weekends.
- NJA/Tournament Caption Heads, Facilitators, Coordinators and Assistants are expected to work ONLY for NJA/Tournament.

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## **B – DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY**

Since winter 2013, NJA has utilized the WINDI system, a new recording system for commentary dialogue, and score submission to the Tabulator. All equipment will be provided by NJA for use at each contest throughout the season. Personal devices are not permitted. You will want to have a 9-foot extension cord and an outlet splitter with you, as well as a power stick or rod.

Judge worksheets are provided to all judges via Essential Notes. You must use a paper worksheet to record your scores. Do not record them on a laptop, phone, iPod or iPad, etc. If an issue arises, tabulators and administrators will want to have paper copies.

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## **C – AFFLIATION**

**AFFILIATION:** An NJA judge must disclose any affiliation with any performing unit based on the following definitions:

**PRIMARY AFFILIATION:** Designer, instructor, manager, or administrator of the competing ensemble. Individuals may not judge for NJA if they are performing in any competing ensemble.

If you have a PRIMARY AFFILIATION – you may not judge a show where that ensemble is competing. \*

SECONDARY AFFILIATION: Any judge who receives compensation from the school, and/or sponsoring organization and any related organization that sponsors or supports the competing ensemble i.e. an individual who teaches in the school or who might teach or provide other services for the sponsoring organization as well as any judge, who through family, spouse or significant other who has a primary affiliation as described above. These affiliations will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

If you have a SECONDARY AFFILIATION – you may not judge a show where that ensemble is competing. \*

CONSULTATIONS: A current NJA Judge who consults with any competing ensemble creates an affiliation with that unit. This is a PRIMARY AFFILIATION.

NOTE: A TIA/TOB Preview is NOT considered an affiliation.

AFFILIATION DURATION: An NJA Judge will not judge any unit with which they have had an affiliation for 2 seasons from season of departure.

Example: Teacher retires from school in June 2015. May now judge an ensemble from that school in September of 2016.

CONDUCT: No judge may display interest or preference toward any competing ensemble he/she may judge. Wearing an insignia is not permitted. Judges are encouraged to give input regarding the ethical standards of the judging community. This should be handled through the NJA/TIA/TOB Director.

\*NOTE: There may be rare assignment exceptions to be at the discretion of the NJA/TIA/TOB Director

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## **D – PROFESSIONALISM AND SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR NJA/TOURNAMENT MEMBERS**

Members of National Judges Association and Tournament represent one of the largest judging organizations in the country. As representatives of NJA and Tournament, our communication both inside and outside our organizations must reflect the ideals of our members and judges.

It is important to understand that you are looked upon as the professional face of NJA and Tournament. Be cautious of the different types of social media, and how you may use them. It is improper to comment that you are assigned to a certain show, or make comments about something you may have judged.

Social media is a double-edged sword we must use to our advantage. Social media is an easy tool we can use in several ways.

- Spread general news for the general membership
- Congratulate members/units on achievements
- Release timely updates at contest events and sites
- Promote our organization and member units in our organizational context
- Promote our membership in our organizational context

Social media is just as easy to misuse, in many more ways.

- Comments on professional behavior of members
- Releasing information embargoed by the organization, e.g., assignments, interpretations of rules/placemats, schedules
- Promoting personal agendas of members and member units
- Influence pedaling amongst members or outside of our organizational context
- Complaints, inappropriate comments, conversations best kept confidential and private

To that end, the following guidelines are established for members and member units. Until these guidelines are revised, consider them the official guidelines for NJA members and member units.

- Use caution in posting in any social media contexts. Ask if anyone, in any organization, could misinterpret any posts, including text, images, and video, to show any type of biased affiliation or influence.
- Consider changing personal settings on social media sites to allow review and approval for posts visible to the public regarding any NJA/Tournament member or member unit.
- Refrain from public comments on anticipated or actual performance or anything related to the NJA competitive arena. Even positive postings can be misinterpreted and cause much damage to the NJA brand, memberships, and member units.
- Do not release information that is embargoed by NJA/Tournament. This includes assignments, schedules, event details, and NJA organizational protocols.
- Use caution, professional judgement, and common sense. Always.

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## E – THE JUDGING DAY

Whether driving yourself or carpooling to the show, give yourself plenty of time to arrive at the show site one hour prior to the start of the show. The Chief Judge of your show will have provided you the address of the contest, report time, and any other pertinent information for the contest. Prior to leaving your house, make sure you have all judging information with you as well as the appropriate judging attire for the day. Upon arrival at the contest site, you may be greeted by a contest host. Advise them that you are one of the assigned judges and ask where you may park. They may have an area for judges parking. You will also want to inquire as to where the Judges Room is. Thanks any guides and remember, people are always listening and watching.

Many shows will have some type of hospitality set up in the room. Please thank the show hosts assigned to the Judges Room. Be considerate of the show hosts and the hospitality extended. This is a courtesy provided to judges. The people in the room are probably Boosters, so remember that what you say or do will be observed.

Check in with the Chief Judge for the show. Show line-ups will be provided as well as any additional show information for that contest. Be aware of your surroundings, and what is discussed before, during, and after the contest. Be aware of “statements or comments” made and who may be listening. Always be respectful and professional.

**NOTE:** Hosts in our organization traditionally have extended superb hospitality to our judging panels. Note the words “judging panels.” It is not professional to bring family and friends into the Judges room to eat and hang out.

Each judge, excepting trialing judges, is assessed a Technology Fee of \$5. per contest. This will go to offset the expenses of upgrading technology for all our judges. The Chief Judge will collect this and remit to the association.

Make sure you have your caption placemat, notebook to record notes for discussion during critique, and plenty of pens or pencils. Use this time to prepare for the contest of the day.

Here are helpful tips to make your day educational and enjoyable for everyone. You can refer to [A Day in the Life of a Judge](#) for more information.

### Show Preparation

- Review the Caption Placemat to reinforce the priorities of your caption.
- Be aware of the promotion numbers (TIA ONLY).
- Review any prior score you may have given in the past on the caption you are judging. Keep in mind the TOB/TIA Linear.

- Review any notes you may have made from previous contests.
- Remember that groups normally improve from week to week and scores should reflect growth as it occurs.

#### Duties

- Judges are to rank the units.
- Judges are to rate the units by the comparative scores earned during the course of the contest.
- Judges are to aid the units to improve through comments and via critique.

#### Conduct During the Contest

- All judges are expected to maintain a dignified and impartial attitude at all times. Refrain from discussing the performance while adjudicating the contest.
- Have your Caption Placemat handy for reference after each unit.
- Keep brief, clear notes on each unit.
- Keep your wrap up concise and to the point; give the greatest amount of time to your scoring.
- Use a ranking tote sheet to assure sub-caption ranking in the contest.

#### Impression, Comparison, Analysis

- Impression is the judge's subjective reaction to the program they are evaluating.
- Analysis is the objective aspect of the evaluation that seeks out reasons to support or modify initial impressions.
- Comparison requires the judge to look at the number given and compare it to other marks he/she has given in that caption not only in that contest but also in previous contests.

#### Derived Achievement

The basis for the application of a score is based on the principle of derived achievement. Derived Achievement means that the scoring potential of a group's Achievement/Performers has a direct correlation to the scoring potential of their Content/Composition/Repertoire. It is the measurement of the achievement relative to the depth/complexity of the given skills.

#### Accountability through Scoring

- All judges must share a consistent, collective understanding and application of the philosophy. Personal interpretations or personal values must be put aside.
- All judges must be independent in arriving at their scores, and avoid the tendency to assign "follow the leader" numbers for no other reason than insecurity or "safety." However, the concept of "independent judging" may not become an excuse for unaccountable decisions.
- All judges are held accountable for every score assigned, as well as supporting that score with valid discussion relative to ranking and rating.
- All judges must feel confident to make hard, but accurate calls, which sometimes might not be popular. They must feel confident to assign scores that they believe are right in spite of what other judges may have done. When a score is correctly given based on the criteria, judges must be confident that their decision will be supported. If the call is not correct, it must be identified immediately, and both judge and group advised of this.
- All judges must "judge" each contest as a new event, carrying NO PRE-CONCEIVED OPINIONS into the actual contest.

All judges can only judge what is presented; they cannot judge what is not presented. Speculation or expectation of what the judge thinks "should be in the show" is inappropriate.

#### Accountability through Numbers Management

Every judge has the responsibility to rate and rank each group within each of the sub-captions on the score sheet. This involves providing numerical information to the group, telling them where they are in the competitive field relative to other groups, as well as how high on the development curve they are. Each sub-

caption must provide this information if the judge is to do the best, most accurate job of scoring within his/her caption.

- The caption is always judged “top to bottom” including every competitor. The system is designed to work when these ratings combine to yield the total ranking.
- A judge who applies ties in sub-captions must understand that this tells the staff that the two groups are equal. This also suggests that either the judge did not give due thought to the “comparison” process of scoring, or that the judge’s management of numbers failed to allow scoring room for the proper ranking of all groups within each sub-caption.
- Within each sub-caption remember what a “of a tenth” means.
  - For Guard, Dance, and Twirl value
    - 0 – 1 tenths = Insignificant Differences
    - 2 – 3 tenths = Slight Differences
    - 4 – 6 tenths = Moderate Differences
    - 7 tenths of more = Significant Differences
  - For Marching Bands, Percussion, and Winds
    - 1 to 2 percentage points = Very Comparable
    - 3 to 4 percentage points = Minor Differences
    - 5 to 7 percentage points = Definitive Differences
    - 8 and high percentage points = Significant Differences

### *Accountability through Sampling*

All sheets need to be sampled equally between the What and the How sub-captions. Judges’ observations at all points in the season should be 50% designer and 50% performer. Every viewing is virtually the first viewing, due to limited exposure, ongoing changes in the program, and development of performance skills.

Every contest is a “new contest” with a new and unique set of dynamics while on a TOB/TIA LINEAR. All achievement should be seen through “*what the performer is being asked to do.*” The *What* and *How* exist simultaneously; observations should include both pieces as they occur.

- Scores should offer all groups a true barometer of the success of their process in each sub-caption.
- Scores should always accurately reflect the degree of quality and achievement of each group, at every point in the season.
- Scores should NEVER be elevated just because it is the end of the year and the judge wants to give a year-end bonus. A TOB/TIA LINEAR MUST BE PRESERVED.

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## **F – A DAY IN THE LIFE OF AN NJA JUDGE**

### **Pre-Departure**

Directions to site  
Contact information for  
Chief Judge  
Host  
Emergency

### **The Day Of**

Attire  
Black pants, socks, shoes, belt  
Green polo shirt  
Current Judge Badge or Trialing Judge Badge  
No logo wear other than NJA/TOB/TIA

### **Your Judging Bag**

Tote sheets	Judge badge
Placemats	Power stick
Pens/pencil	Extension cord
Paper	Weather clothes/accessories

### **Upon Arrival**

Park in assigned area	Pay \$5 Technology Fee
Locate Judges Room	Prepare totes and notes



Check in with Coordinator

Sign out iPad

### During the Contest

- Complete adjudication and submit scores
- Take notes
- Be ready for the next group
- Be back from breaks on time

### After the Contest

- Gather materials/notes from contest
- Wait until you are in the Judge Room to discuss
- Wait for the Tech Tab to log off the iPad
- Prepare for critique
- Return in iPad
- Thank your Tech Tab
- Thank your host

### Critique

- Be ready to start on time
  - TOB Group in this arrangement
    - IA/EA Music
    - IA/EA Visual
    - GE Visual/Music
    - Special Awards (if any)
  - Be polite, professional, and practical
  - Remember your roles
    - Critic
    - Educator
    - Counselor
  - *If you are trialing, do not make any comments even if asked by the staff. You can politely say that you are trialing and your presence in critique is merely as an observer.*
- |                               |
|-------------------------------|
| TIA Group in this arrangement |
| IA Mvt/Equip                  |
| DA                            |
| GE                            |

### After Critique

Thank your Tech Tab	Thank the host
Thank the people who have catered	Have a safe trip

### Day After . . . ish

- Review notes, reflect and order thoughts
- Identify an area in which to improve your craft

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## G – PROSPECTIVE JUDGE TRAINING PROCESS

- Complete the [Judges Application](#)
- Attend the NJA/TOB/TIA Education Day
- Register to trial judge by emailing [education@njatob.org](mailto:education@njatob.org)
  - Registration must be completed by the Tuesday before the contest at which you want to trial
  - Caption Chairs, Region Coordinators, and Chief Judge will be notified by Thursday
- Review the Prospective Judges Information and prepare for the contest
  - Arrive one hour prior to contest start
  - Meet with your assigned mentor at the contest site
  - Have a great judging experience at the contest
  - Review your experience, comments, challenges, rankings, and ratings with your mentor at the contest
  - Follow up by sending your recorded commentary to the appropriate Caption Facilitator or Chair

- You will receive timely and relevant feedback from the Caption Facilitators or Chair

## Prospective Judges Information

### Dress

NJA/TOB uniform is NJA green polo shirt, black pants, black belt, black shoes, and black socks, and a trialing judge badge. Jackets, hats, etc. are to be black with no logos other than NJA or TOB logos or lettering.

### Before the Contest

Prepare for the contest by using this checklist:

- ✓ Digital recording device (tape recorder if necessary and two long length tapes)
- ✓ Placemats and worksheets for captions
- ✓ Pens/Pencils
- ✓ Paper/Notebook
- ✓ Correct uniform
- ✓ Directions to contest site
- ✓ Emergency phone numbers
- ✓ Inclement weather clothing
- ✓ Positive educational attitude

At the contest site, you will meet with your assigned mentor or training representative. They will introduce you to the Chief Judge, introduce you to other judges, and answer any questions you may have.

Your mentor is an experienced judge and has been selected to help you during your trial judging assignments and to help you learn as much as you can about the art of judging. Take advantage of this resource.

### During the Contest

Throughout each performance, you will be recording commentary. We want your experience to be as realistic as possible, but take care to avoid being a distraction and avoid interfering with working judges on the field and in the press box. Provide an introduction for at least the first two units.

Follow any directions or cues you may receive from your mentor or the Chief Judge. At the end of a performance:

- Complete your commentary and wrap up
- Write any notes you would want for review and critique
- Assign numbers for the unit on your personal tote sheet

During a performance is not the time to discuss your scores or seek advice from your mentor. If there is an intermission, you may have an opportunity at that time. Keep your recorded comments and scores until after the contest.

### After the Contest

- Review your notes and scores
- Remain with your mentor during critique as an OBSERVER. *If you are trialing, do not make any comments even if asked by the staff. You can politely say that you are trialing and your presence in critique is merely as an observer.*
- When time allows, compare notes, scores, and challenges from the contest with your mentor
- Send your recorded files/tapes to the appropriate Caption Chair or Facilitator, along with your personal tote sheet/scores
- Caption Chairs and Facilitators will review your submitted material and provide feedback on your commentary, numbers management, appropriateness of your ranking and rating, and other parts of your trial judging experience

- When the reviewers feel you are ready for certification, they will forward that information to the Education Director and Judging Coordinator

**Fees**

Prospective NJA judges are not required to pay for any of the Education Day activities, trialing opportunities or worksheets/placemats during their education process. Prospective judges are not paid for training contests. When you are certified, you will be required to pay the \$5 technology fee at each Tournament show, and you will also collect the standard NJA payment, based on the season and number of units adjudicated at each event.