



**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COUNCIL OF CAMERA CLUBS
(S4C)**

**COMPETITION HANDBOOK
2008-2009**

**SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA COUNCIL OF CAMERA CLUBS (S4C)
COMPETITION HANDBOOK 2008-09**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW	3
2. ENTRANT ELIGIBILITY	3
<i>Uniform Entry Number (UEN)</i>	<i>3</i>
3. COMPETITION SCHEDULE	4
4. DIVISIONS AND SECTIONS	4
5. SECTION DEFINITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS	4
<i>All Entries</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Reality-Based Divisions</i>	<i>5</i>
6. SKILL LEVELS	5
7. ENTRIES	5
<i>Makeups</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>DQ's (Disqualifications) and Revokes</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Image Duplicate Entry</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Titles</i>	<i>7</i>
<i>Files and Filenames</i>	<i>8</i>
8. JUDGING, SCORING, HMs & AWARDS	8
<i>HMs and Awards</i>	<i>8</i>
9. STANDINGS & REPORTS	8
10. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS	9
<i>Digital Competitions</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Print Competitions</i>	<i>9</i>
11. INTERCLUB (Digital)	10
12. END OF YEAR JUDGING	11
APPENDICES	12
APPENDIX 1: CURRENT COMPETITIONS	12
APPENDIX 2: SECTION DEFINITIONS	12

1. INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

The Southern California Council of Camera Clubs (S4C) is a member of the Photographic Society of America (PSA). The Council consists of a number of photography clubs. The Council's primary objective is to conduct photography competitions among member clubs and among individual members of those clubs. The Council has chosen to follow PSA guidelines in the conduct of these competitions.

This handbook describes S4C's current requirements and guidelines governing these competitions. It is intended for clubs and their members considering entry into one or more of S4C's photography competitions. Since details of these requirements may change from time to time, entrants are encouraged to check from time to time the S4C Competitions Home Page at¹:

http://www.pcms-photo.org/s4c_competitions

This handbook details requirements for entrant eligibility ([Section 2](#)); the competition schedule ([Section 3](#)); the competition structure ([Section 4](#)); requirements for images submitted to each competition ([Section 5](#)); assignment of Skill Levels to entrants ([Section 6](#)); certain restrictions on the number of images submitted to a competition and reasons for disqualification ([Section 7](#)); judging methodology and judging results ([Section 8](#)); competition standings and communication of competition results ([Section 9](#)); specific image submission requirements and details ([Section 10](#)); requirements and conduct of the Interclub competition, a special competition among clubs rather than individual entrants ([Section 11](#)); and of the end of year judging ([Section 12](#)).

For questions, corrections, or comments on this handbook, please email:

s4cinfo@pcms-photo.org

2. ENTRANT ELIGIBILITY

To enter an S4C competition, an entrant must be a current member of a club that is a member of S4C. Please be sure to check with your club president as to whether your club is a paid-up member of S4C.

Uniform Entry Number (UEN)

Any member of an S4C club entering an S4C competition must have a Uniform Entry Number (UEN). The UEN is used to identify the entrant in all competitions. Once assigned, it may be used for so long as the entrant is a current member of an S4C club.

Requests for UENs must be received at least 4 weeks prior to the first competition at which it will be used (late requests are granted from time to time when practicable, but the entrant should not depend on it). A UEN is requested by completing an online form and emailing it to S4C. Click to access the S4C UEN Request Form:

http://www.pcms-photo.org/s4c/s4c_uen/S4C_uen_request_form.pdf

¹ All links to web pages in this document may contain underscores that may not be easily visible due to the underlining. Readers should assume there is an underscore wherever it may appear to be a space, since spaces are not allowed in web references (URLs). If the reader is online while viewing this document, the links are 'hot', that is, clicking on the link will connect to the referenced web page.

3. COMPETITION SCHEDULE

S4C competitions are held in October, November, December, January, February, March, and April, those months comprising the S4C Competition Year. Competitions are normally held the second Saturdays of each of those months. However, the schedule may vary according to facility availability.

Click here for the current schedule and for driving directions to the meeting location:

http://www.s4c-photo.org/saturday_sched.html

The day's events start promptly at 9:00 am. Doors open at 8:00 am to allow time for setup and preparation and for the submission of print entries (see [Section 10](#)).

The Competition Year 2008-2009 is often just abbreviated to Competition Year 2009, that is, named for the year in which the last month of the Competition Year occurs.

Following the immediate end of the Competition Year, a special Year End judging (see [Section 12](#)) is held. Images submitted to this special judging consist of all those images that have won HMs or Awards during the Competition Year. Winners of the Year End judging are announced at the Annual Banquet, held in June following the end of the Competition Year.

4. DIVISIONS AND SECTIONS

S4C conducts competitions within four Divisions: Pictorial (Digital and Print), Nature (Digital), Photo Travel (Digital), Photojournalism (Digital). Procedures and requirements for entries are described in [Section 10](#).

Within each of these Divisions, there are one or more Sections. A Competition is held within each Section, each with its own rules and requirements. Current Sections are listed in [Appendix 1](#).

Except for the Interclub Color Section (Digital) of the Pictorial Division, all Section Competitions are entered by individuals

Each Section is headed by a Section Chair who is responsible for image intake and communication with entrants regarding results and eligibility of submissions.

5. SECTION DEFINITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

All images entered into a Section Competition must follow requirements established for that Section Competition. These are listed in the [Appendix 2](#). However, these definitions and requirements may change from time to time. The most current definitions can be found on the S4C Competition website at:

http://www.pcms-photo.org/s4c_competitions/divdefs/divdefs.html

Entrants should take care to familiarize themselves with the definitions applicable to any Section that they enter. In addition to the special requirements of each Section, General Requirements are as follows:

All Entries

Without exception, the original image must be made by the entrant on photographic emulsion or acquired digitally. All images must be original and may not incorporate elements produced by anyone else. Subject to Divisional restrictions (see below), images may be altered by the maker, and artwork or computer graphics created by the entrant may be incorporated, if the photographic content predominates. Images may not be constructed entirely within a computer.

Reality-Based Divisions

The Nature, Photo Travel, and Photojournalism Divisions are all termed 'Reality-Based Divisions' because images entered are required to represent what the photographer actually saw. In addition to the definitions applicable to each of these Divisions, the following special rules apply:

- No borders are allowed with any Reality-Based Division entry/image.
- No elements may be moved, cloned, added, deleted, rearranged, or combined. No manipulation or modification is permitted except re-sizing, cropping, selective lightening or darkening, and restoration of original color of the scene. No special effect filters can be applied. Any sharpening must appear natural.

6. SKILL LEVELS

Prior to entering a Section Competition, Entrants are assigned to 'Skill Levels'. Skill Levels are: E (Evaluation), A, AA, and AAA. Each Section Competition may operate at one or more of the available Skill Levels.

Except for the E Skill Level, Skill Levels are assigned based on past performance by the Entrant in that particular Section or in a similar Section. The E Skill Level (Evaluative) is used for the first year for new Entrants in a particular whose work in that Section is unknown.

Following the end of each Competition Year, the S4C Board assigns each Entrant who has previously entered a Section Competition to an appropriate Skill Level for the following Competition Year as performance warrants. Entrants who enter a Competition Section for the first time during a Competition Year are assigned by the Competition Chair to a Skill Level for the balance of that Competition Year.

Skill Levels cannot be changed in the middle of a Competition Year.

7. ENTRIES

Each submission by an entrant into a single S4C Section Competition is termed an *Entry*. Each entry consists of up to 2 images (except for Interclub – see [Section 11](#)), not counting Makeups (see below) that conform to the rules and requirements of the Section Competition.

Makeups

Since (except for Interclub) **two** images are allowed per Entry per month, a total of 14 images may be submitted to a given competition during a given Competition Year². An entrant may 'make up' for any images not entered earlier in the Competition Year by entering additional images later in the same Competition Year. However, a maximum of **two** makeup images may be submitted during any month into a given Section competition.

Thus, in any given month, an entrant may submit up to four images: a Regular Entry consisting of up to two images and, if available, a Makeup Entry consisting of up to two images. *Note that submitting images ahead of schedule is not permitted*, that is, the number of images submitted year-to-date may not exceed the number of elapsed competition months times the number of images permitted per entry (two, except for Interclub which is four).

Entrants should note that there may not be time in the balance of the Competition Year to make up for several competitions missed earlier in the year.

A judge (see Section 8) may not enter makeups in any month that s/he is judging.

DQ's (Disqualifications) and Revokes

Any image that does not meet the conditions of entry may be disqualified by either the Section Chair prior to competition; by one or more judges during the judging; or by the Section Chair after the judging. For images submitted into digital competitions in advance of the submission deadline, Section Chairs will attempt, if time allows, to advise entrants of any potential problems so the entrant has time to make any corrections or to substitute images *prior to the submission deadline*.

Images may be disqualified for any of the following reasons:

- The image does not meet requirements of the Section Competition or of general competition requirements (see [Section 6](#) on Section Definitions and Requirements);
- The image does not meet entry Submission Requirements (see [Section 10](#) and [Section 11](#));
- The image violates Image Duplicate Entry limitations (see next subsection), such as if it has already won an HM or an Award in the same Division.

If an image is DQed in any month except April, the Entrant is entitled to submit a make-up substitute image in any subsequent month for the same Competition Year in addition to any other makeups to which the Entrant may be entitled (see above). For this reason, there are occasions when the Entrant may find s/he is entitled to submit five or more images in any given month. If a judge DQ's an image, s/he will give the reason for the decision, and this reason will subsequently be communicated to the Entrant.

An image that is retroactively DQed by the Section Chair after the actual judging is termed a Revoked *image*. An image is normally only revoked because it is subsequently found to have violated the Duplicate Entry requirements.

² Occasionally, new Sections and Section Competitions are started that may be launched during the Competition Year. This will, of course, mean that the number of allowed images may be fewer than 14 according of the month of launch.

Image Duplicate Entry

With the exceptions noted below, an image that has won an Award or an HM (see [Section 8](#)) in any Section of any Division *can never be re-entered in any Section of the same Division* (however, it may be resubmitted as many times as the Entrant desires until such time as it may receive an HM or an Award).

The image can only be re-entered into *another* Division's competition in a *subsequent Competition Year* (that is, a Competition Year subsequent to the Competition Year in which it first received an Award or an HM).

Exceptions to this rule are as follows:

1. Images that have won an HM or Award in any Print competition can be re-entered into any Digital competition in a *subsequent* Competition Year, or vice-versa.
2. With the exception noted in (1), once a manipulated (including conversion to monochrome for purposes of entering a Monochrome competition) image has received an HM or an Award in any Pictorial competition, the original base image may not be re-used with another manipulation (including conversion to monochrome) for entering the same or any other Pictorial Division competition.

For these purposes, the base image is the image – or any substantial part or major focal point of that image - first entered into any competition (and that received an HM or an Award), or any image from which that first image was derived

Titles

Regardless of how many times it is entered into however many Divisions, the same image - whether digital or print - **must always bear exactly the same title**. (An image entered into Monochrome may have the abbreviation mono or bw appended. An image entered into Creative may be titled differently from the original image(s) from which it was derived).

Titles of images may not exceed 35 characters. *The characters may not include any of the following reserved characters: *,\$,!,%,#,,=.*

This limitation of 35 characters includes any 'qualifiers' used for the maker's convenience to distinguish images that would otherwise have the same title. Apart from such qualifiers, titles must be composed of understandable words or common acronyms; no digits are permitted in this part of the title (use 'Two Flowers' rather than '2 Flowers'). Any qualifiers are limited in length to 5 characters plus, if required, an additional optional qualifier to indicate that the image is a monochrome version (Mono or BW). The qualifier and its constituent parts should be separated by hypens or underscores. Thus, for example:

The Rain In Spain_508-2_BW

is acceptable.

Files and Filenames

Digital entries should be in jpeg format dimensioned so that the longest dimension does not exceed 768 pixels.

The filename **must** consist of the entrant's UEN plus the image title separated by an *underscore* (with, of course, the .jpg following). Thus, using the above example, the corresponding filename would be:

72_ The Rain In Spain_508-2_BW.jpg

8. JUDGING, SCORING, HMs & AWARDS

Competitions are judged and scored by three judges selected by the Judge Selector (an S4C position). Judges are selected from either S4C member clubs or from outside the S4C family. However, two or all of the judges may not be members of the same S4C member club. Furthermore, none of the judges in the last month of the Competition Year (April) may be active participants in club or S4C competitions.

A scoring machine is used to ensure that the scoring is 'blind', that is, each judge is unaware of any other judge's decision before making his/her own decision. Each judge gives each image a score of 3 to 9 (DQed images are given a score of 3). All Skill Levels are judged together, but the judges are not aware of the Entrant's Skill Level for any given image.

Thus each image may receive a score as high as 27. Images rarely score below 18 unless DQed.

A judge will recuse herself or himself if there is a clear conflict of interest. Thus a judge will recuse if the image under consideration is her or his own image or that of a close relative or partner. In the event a judge recuses, the image will receive the average of the other two judges' scores, rounded up.

Regardless of the recusal rule, judges may not enter makeups into any competition they are judging. See also [Section 11](#) regarding a special rule affecting Interclub entries and judges.

HMs and Awards

Following the judging of each Section's competition, the President (or his/her substitute) and Section Chair will review the distribution of scores in each Skill Level and determine the appropriate ranges of scores for allocation of Honorable Mentions (HMs) and Awards. These ranges will be announced, together with a presentation of the HM and Award images for each Skill Level, and the names of the makers. At the President's discretion either HM's or Awards or both may not be awarded if there are insufficient entries in the Section/Skill Level.

9. STANDINGS & REPORTS

Scores for each image of each Entrant in each Section Competition are aggregated into Standings Tables for each Section within that Section. At the end of the year, the highest scoring Entrants in each Skill Level receive Gold, Silver and/or Bronze medals depending on the final standings. Silver and/or Bronze Medals are only awarded if there are sufficient eligible Entrants and images submitted

for the particular Skill Level.

The latest Standings Tables are posted each month on the S4C website, normally within a week following the competitions. These Standing Tables can be found at

http://pcms-photo.org/s4c_competition_reports/s4c_competition_reports.html

Within two weeks (or sooner at times) following the monthly competitions, each Entrant for whom S4C has a valid email address receives a comprehensive report tabulating all the images submitted by the Entrant year-to-date, scores received, and any HMs and Awards. Each Entrant also receives an annual report of all images in the S4C database that Entrant has ever submitted and that have received HMs or Awards. These reports are to assist the Entrant to ensure s/he does not violate the Image Duplicate Entry requirements (see [Section 7](#)).

Scores for individual prints are also written on the label (see [Section 10](#)) affixed to the back of each entered print.

10. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

There are specific submission requirements for digital competitions and for print competitions.

Digital Competitions

All the Section Competitions in the Nature, Photo Travel, and Photojournalism competitions are Digital. The Pictorial Division hosts both Digital and Print competitions. Entries into the Digital competitions must be emailed to specific addresses, conform to specific formats, and meet other requirements.

Digital submission instructions for individual competitions can be downloaded in pdf format from:

http://pcms-photo.org/s4c/s4c_info/s4c_digital_individual_submission.pdf

Entrants should download these requirements and must conform to the specifications detailed in this document, including *the requirement that all digital images and forms are entered not later than 11:59 pm on the last day of the month immediately preceding the competition* (September 30 for the October competition, for example).

Digital Interclub submission requirements are detailed in [Section 11](#).

Print Competitions

There are three Print Sections within the Pictorial Division: Monochrome, Small Color, and Large Color. Prints submitted to these Sections must comply with the following requirements:

- Prints submitted to Small Color Section must be 8.5 x 12 inches maximum, including mount and an optional single mat.
- Prints submitted to Large Color or Monochrome Sections must be 16 x 20 inches maximum, including mount and an optional single mat.

All print titles must be pre-entered following instructions and using entry forms that can be found at:

http://www.pcms-photo.org/s4c_competitions/printentry/printentry.html

The Entry Form should be downloaded, completed, and emailed following the instructions on the form *not later than 11:59 pm on the last day of the month preceding the competition* (September 30 for the October competition, for example).

Print labels should not be attached to the prints. Pre-printed labels will be available at the meeting to be affixed then. These are specially coded to facilitate judging.

The prints themselves are entered at the meeting on the day of the competitions (see [Section 3](#)). The cutoff time for entry is 8:45 am. A mail-in option may also be available for prints: details when available are announced on the S4C competition [website](#).

Prints whose titles have not been pre-entered on the requisite form or that have not been handed in (either directly or via the mail-in option) by 8:45 am on the day of the competition will not be accepted into competition.

11. INTERCLUB (Digital)

The S4C Pictorial/Color Division hosts one competition that is for S4C member *clubs* to enter rather than individuals: namely the Digital Interclub Section Competition. The Interclub competition includes the A, AA, and AAA Skill Levels. Each club can submit as many as one entry from each Skill Level.

Submission requirements for this competition should be downloaded from:

http://pcms-photo.org/s4c/s4c_info/s4c_digital_interclub_submission.pdf

Entries for each club are all *coordinated* by an individual designated by the club as the Interclub Coordinator (IC), although an IC's alternate may actually *submit* each entry in any given month. In any given month, however, all entries must be transmitted by the designated individual for that month whether it be the IC or his/her alternate for that month. The Club IC designates the Skill Level of each Entry.

An Interclub Entry at each Skill Level (see [Section 5](#)) consists of up to 4 images. Up to 4 makeup (see [Section 7](#)) images are allowed to compensate for missed or deficient Entries earlier in the Competition Year. As with individual competitions, extra makeups are allowed to compensate for DQ's or Revokes (see [Section 7](#)).

So in December, say, a club could submit 3 entries constituting 12 images in total: one entry (4 images) at Skill Level A; one at AA; and one at AAA. In addition the club could be submitting makeup images to which they might be entitled.

One extra restriction to the makeup rule occurs if a judge is a member of a club that is submitting an entry into Interclub Digital. In that case, *no makeups are allowed that month* for that club.

An individual who is a member of several clubs can only submit Interclub entries through a single club

and at a single Skill Level in a given Competition Year. S/he can switch the designated club in the subsequent Competition Year.

The four images in a regular Entry at a given Skill Level must consist of images from four *different* club members. The total number, including Makeups, of images from a particular member must not exceed the number of competition months elapsed since the beginning of the Competition Year. The following example might clarify this rule:

Club A entered 4 images, including 1 from Member B in October at Skill Level AA (say), none in November; and 8 images in December, of which 4 were makeups. Then 2 of the 8 images in December can be from Member B. Member B thus has 3 images in total submitted through December, there having been 3 competition months elapsed.

A given member's images must all be entered at the same Skill Level during the same Competition Year.

Care must be taken by the club to ensure that images entered do not violate the Duplicate Entry requirements (see [Section 7](#)). Because Section competitions are coordinated by different individual Chairs, duplicate entries may not be discovered until the judging or later, resulting in DQs or Revokes (see [Section 7](#)).

Standings Tables are maintained for clubs just as for individuals (see [Section 9](#)) based on total aggregate points accumulated from the club entries. HMs and Awards, however, are attributed to the individual image makers.

In addition to other recusal requirements (see [Section 8](#)) judges must recuse themselves from scoring images entered by their club. The image then receives an imputed score for that judge of the average of the other two judges' scores, rounded up. To ensure this is practicable, *no more than one judge can be from the same club.*

12. END OF YEAR JUDGING

All images that have won an HM or an Award in any given Section Competition are automatically entered, following the last month of competition (April), into a Year End Judging organized by the Section Chair. Judges are selected from among PSA member clubs that are not themselves members of S4C.

The judges select Best Of Show, Gold, Silver, and Bronze medals that are awarded and presented at the Annual Banquet in June following the close of the Competition Year. Other special subject medals may also be designated for that Competition Year at the discretion of the President. However, not all medals may be awarded in any given Section Competition, depending on the number of Entrants involved in the Section Competition that year, the number of eligible images entered into the Year End Judging, and the number of Skill Levels involved (no Best of Show medal is awarded, for example, if there is only one Skill Level).

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: CURRENT COMPETITIONS

In 2008-2009, the competitions will be conducted in the following Divisions/Sections:

- Pictorial Division (Digital):
 - Interclub Color (for clubs only – see [Section 11](#))
 - Individual Color
 - Creative
 - Monochrome
- Pictorial Division (Print):
 - Monochrome
 - Large Color
 - Small Color
- Nature Division (Digital):
 - Nature General
 - Nature Wildlife
- Photo Travel Division (Digital):
 - Photo Travel General
- Photojournalism Division (Digital):
 - Photojournalism General
 - Photojournalism Human Interest

APPENDIX 2: SECTION DEFINITIONS

The most current definitions for each Section can be found at:

http://www.pcms-photo.org/s4c_competitions/divdefs/divdefs.html

As of the date of this Handbook, however, the definitions are as follows (see also [Section 5](#) for general requirements and special requirements for the Reality-Based Divisions” Nature, Photo Travel, and Photojournalism; [Section 7](#) for Duplicate Entry restrictions; and [Section 10](#) for Submission Requirements).

Special Note for Prints (P):

Prints are judged not only for subject matter and impact - that is their pictorial content - but also for technical print quality. Beyond the standard definitions for Pictorial Color and Pictorial Monochrome images as defined below, print quality and presentation are also considered: including, for example the paper texture used or, where applicable, the quality of mounting and/or matting - and their suitability for the subject matter.

Pictorial Interclub Color (D), Pictorial Individual Color (D), Pictorial Large Color Print (P), Pictorial Small Color Print (P):

Pictorial Color images are judged both for their technical and pictorial merit. The image must be properly exposed, be in focus, and have appropriate depth of field. A Pictorial Color image should have

strong composition, pleasing quality, and color impact. The content is unrestricted.

Pictorial Creative (D):

Pictorial Creative is defined as altered reality that is apparent to the viewer. Pictorial Creative images are judged both for their technical and pictorial merit. The image should have strong composition, pleasing quality, and color, texture, pattern, and/or tone impact. The appropriateness of the technique selected to create altered reality is considered in judging. The content is unrestricted.

Pictorial Monochrome (D), Pictorial Large Monochrome Print (P):

Pictorial Monochrome images are judged both for their technical and pictorial merit. The image must be properly exposed, be in focus, and have appropriate depth of field. A Pictorial Monochrome image should have strong composition; pleasing quality; and texture, pattern, and/or tone impact. The content is unrestricted.

Monochrome images may be black and white, or black and white plus one fully-toned color.

Nature General (D):

Nature photography is restricted to the use of the photographic process to depict observations from all branches of natural history, except anthropology and archeology, in such a fashion that a well informed person will be able to identify the subject material and to certify as to its honest presentation. The story telling value of a photograph must be weighed more than the pictorial quality. Human elements shall not be present, except on the rare occasion where those human elements enhance the nature story. The presence of scientific bands on wild animals is acceptable. Photographs of artificially produced hybrid plants or animals, mounted specimens, or obviously set arrangements, are ineligible, as is any form of manipulation, manual or digital, that alters the truth of the photographic statement.

Nature Wildlife (D):

In addition to the requirements for Nature General:

Authentic Wildlife is defined as one or more organisms living free and unrestrained in a natural or adopted habitat. Therefore, photographs of zoo animals or photographs of game farm animals (regardless of the game farm's use of wildlife terminology) are not considered wildlife images.

Photo Travel General (D):

A Photo Travel image must express the feeling of a time and place, portray a land, its people, or a culture in its natural state, and has no geographical limitations. Ultra close-ups which lose their identity, studio-type model shots, or photographic manipulations which misrepresent the true situation or alter the content of the image are unacceptable in Photo Travel competition.

Photojournalism General (D):

Photojournalism images shall consist of pictures or sequences with informative content and emotional impact, including human interest, documentary and spot news. The journalistic value of the photograph shall be considered over pictorial quality. In the interest of credibility, photographs which mis-

represent the truth, such as manipulation to alter the subject matter, or situations which are set up for the purpose of photography, are unacceptable in Photojournalism.

Photojournalism Human Interest (D):

In addition to the requirements for Photojournalism General;

Human Interest images depict a person or persons in an interactive, emotional, or unusual situation, excluding sports ACTION. [Guidelines for Human Interest Images](#).