



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

**COMPETITION HANDBOOK
2015-2016**

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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 at:

<http://www.s4c-photo.org>

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 current 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 normally be received at least 2 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. The S4C UEN Request Form can be found at:

<http://www.s4c-photo.org/enter-competitions>

Note: All links to web pages in this documents 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 judged the second Saturdays of each of those months.

Only two of the competitions will be judged 'physically' at our California Baptist University location, namely the November and April meetings. The remaining competitions (October, December, January, February and March) will be all digital entries and will be judged remotely over the Internet. Print competitions are no longer held.

Click here for the current schedule and for driving directions to the location of the three 'physical' meetings:

<http://www.s4c-photo.org/meetings-schedule>

For 'physical' meetings, 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).

Note: The Competition Year 2014-2015 for example, is often just abbreviated to Competition Year 2015, 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

All S4C competitions consist of digital entries only. S4C conducts competitions within four Divisions: Pictorial, Nature, Photo Travel, and Photojournalism. 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 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 eligibility of submissions and regarding results.

5. SECTION DEFINITIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

All images entered into a Section Competition must follow requirements established for that Section Competition. 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.s4c-photo.org/enter-competitions/definitions/>

They can also be found as part of the on-line entry form for each Section.

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 (i.e., in Nature, Photo Travel, and Photojournalism), 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.

Furthermore, by virtue of submitting an entry, the entrant certifies that the work is his/her own and permits S4C to reproduce all or part of the entered images free of charge for publication and/ or display in media related to the Competition. This will include for example: presentation in the end of year Banquet Program should any of the images be selected for this Program; submission to the PSA Council Challenge should an image be selected for this purpose; and low resolution posting on an S4C website. The entrant further understands that S4C assumes no liability for any misuse of copyright. The entrant further represents that to the best of his/her understanding the entry complies with all S4C requirements for entry.

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:

- Borders are optional with any Reality-Based Division entry/image, but must be 3 or 4 pixels in width and must be white or a shade of grey.
- Techniques that add, relocate, replace or remove any element of the original image, except by cropping, are not permitted. The only allowable modifications are removal of dust, scratches or digital noise, restoration of the existing appearance of the original scene, sharpening that is not obvious, and complete conversion to grayscale monochrome. Other derivations, including infrared, are not eligible. All allowed adjustments must appear natural.

Note: "Restoration of the appearance of the original scene" may include techniques such as HDR, focus stacking and dodging/burning provided they do not alter the contents of the original scene.

6. SKILL LEVELS

Prior to entering a Section Competition, Entrants are assigned to 'Skill Levels'. Skill Levels are: E (Evaluation), A, AA, and AAA (not currently used). Each Section Competition operates 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 Section whose work in that Section is unknown, or for Entrants who have not entered sufficient images in prior years for their skill to be properly evaluated.

Following the end of each Competition Year, the S4C Board assigns each Entrant who has previously entered sufficient images in 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.

See Appendix 1 (Competition Definitions) for skill levels available for each competition section.

7. ENTRIES

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

Makeups

Except for Interclub, two images are allowed per Entry per month, so a total of 14 images may be submitted to a given competition during a given Competition Year. 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. See Section 11 for special rules regarding InterClub makeups.

Thus, in any given month, an entrant may submit up to four images into an individual digital competition: a Standard Entry consisting of up to two images and, if available, a Regular 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). However, in addition, up to 2 (4 in InterClub) Special Makeup Entries may be entered to compensate for any images that were DQed (Disqualified - see next section) earlier in the Competition Year.

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.

DQs (Disqualifications) and Revokes

Any image that does not meet the conditions of entry may be DQed (disqualified) by either the Section Chair prior to competition; by one or more judges during the judging; or by the Section or Competition Chair after the judging. For images submitted into 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.

If an image is DQed by a judge in the last competition month of the year, a discussion will be held among all judges to consider the matter. If the consensus is that the image should not be DQed, the DQing judge may reconsider his/her score.

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 5 on Section Definitions and Requirements);
- The image does not meet entry Submission Requirements (see Section 10 and Section 11);
- The image violates Image Re-Entry limitations (see next subsection), such as if it has already won an HM or an Award in the same Division.

If an image submitted to any digital competition 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 up to a limit of two extra makeups per month (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 DQs 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 or Competition 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 Re-Entry requirements.

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 Re-Entry

With the exceptions noted below, an image that has won an Award or an HM in any Division cannot be re-entered in any competition in the same Division. It can only be re-entered into another Division's competition in a subsequent competition year.

1. Image historically entered into the *print* Pictorial Division (color or monochrome) may now be entered into an appropriate *digital* Pictorial section.
2. Images may be manipulated for use in all Pictorial section¹ competitions (the term 'manipulation' includes conversion to monochrome). However, for purposes of considering re-entry all such manipulated images are considered to be the same image as the original if they share any substantial part or focal point. The original image and all such derived images are called 'like images'.
3. Once any like image has won an HM or an Award:
 - It or any other like image can be entered in any other Pictorial Division section competition² – but only in a subsequent competition year;
 - It or any other like image cannot ever be re-entered in the same Pictorial Division section competition.

1 Pictorial sections are Digital: Color (Interclub and Individual), Creative, Monochrome and Arranged.

2 Subject to the Section rules for that competition.

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. However, an image entered into Monochrome may have the abbreviation *Mono* or *BW* appended. Also, an image entered into Creative may be titled differently from the original image(s) from which it was derived).

Furthermore:

- Titles of images may not exceed 35 characters.
- The characters may not include any of the following reserved characters: *,\$,!,%,#,,=,?.
- Titles may not include file extensions such as .jpg or .jpeg (or any other camera capture filenames) or words such as “untitled” or “no title”.
- This limitation of 35 characters includes any ‘qualifiers’ used for the maker’s convenience to distinguish images that would otherwise have the same title.
- 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). Thus, for example ‘Rain In Spain 45DGH BW’ is acceptable.
- Apart from such qualifiers, titles must be composed of understandable words or common acronyms
- Except in qualifiers, no digits are permitted in the title (use ‘Two Flowers’ rather than ‘2 Flowers’).
- Titles may not consist solely of numbers.
- Titles may not contain a UEN.

Files and Filenames

Digital entries should be in jpeg format dimensioned so that the longest dimension does not exceed 1024 pixels.

The filename is not important for images entered through the online entry system. The system assigns its own filenames. Filesize is also unimportant, It is recommended that the jpeg quality be set to its maximum.

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.

With ‘physical’ 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 5 to 9 (DQed images are given a score of 3, but this may depend on the scoring system used). All Skill Levels are judged together, but the judges are not aware of the Entrant’s Skill Level for any given image. With competitions judged remotely over the Internet, each judge is automatically unaware of another judge’s scores.

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. For digital competitions, they can use makeups to compensate for any 'deficiency' in the total number of images entered across the year.

HMs and Awards

Following the judging of each Section's competition, the Competition Chair (or his/her substitute) 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. At 'physical' meetings, 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 Competition Chair'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.

Except for March and April, 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://www.s4c-photo.org/enter-competitions/standings>

Within one week (often much sooner) 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. This will normally be available online. 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 Re-Entry requirements (see Section 7).

Hi-Point Awards

At the end of the year, Hi Point awards are presented in the form of Gold, Silver, and Bronze certificates to eligible Entrants who have accumulated the highest number of points during the Competition year; however, only the entrants 12 highest scoring images are considered in the aggregation. To be eligible, an Entrant must have accumulated at least 225 points in E Skill Level; 250 points in A Skill Level; and 275 points in AA Skill Level. Multiple Gold Silver, or Bronze certificates are awarded if there are ties in the number of points accumulated. Silver or Bronze certificates may not be awarded if there are insufficient eligible Entrants.

10. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS & DEADLINES

Entries into the competitions must conform to requirements detailed in this Handbook. They must be submitted online via the Competition Portal:

<http://www.s4c-photo.org/enter-competitions/>

A User Guide to submitting images may also be downloaded via the portal.

All entries must be received not later than 11.59 PM on the Saturday immediately preceding the announced day of the judging. The judging is normally the second Saturday of the competition month, and the deadline for entry would be 11.59 PM on the first Saturday of the month. The competition schedule can be found at:

<http://www.s4c-photo.org/meetings-schedule>

11. INTERCLUB

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 may submit one entry from each Skill Level.

Entries into the Interclub competition must conform to requirements detailed in this Handbook. They must be submitted via the competition entry portal that can be found at:

<http://www.s4c-photo.org/enter-competitions/>

All entries must be received not later than 11:59 pm on the Saturday immediately preceding the announced day of the judging. The judging is normally the second Saturday of the competition month and the deadline for entry would be 11:59 pm on the first Saturday of the month. The competition schedule can be found at:

<http://www.s4c-photo.org/meetings-schedule>

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 submitted by the designated individual for that month whether it be the IC or his/her alternate for that month.

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 into Interclub 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.

Club Makeups

In each Skill Level (A, AA, AAA), four images per Competition are allowed per Entry per month, so for that Skill Level a total of 28 images may be submitted by a Club during a given Competition Year. A Club 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 four makeup images may be submitted during any month into a given Section competition. These are called Regular Makeups.

Thus, in any given month, a Club may submit up to eight images for each Skill Level: a Regular Entry consisting of up to four images and, if available, a Makeup Entry consisting of up to four images.

The exception to this is that a Club may submit extra makeups to account for any DQs (Disqualifications)

received earlier in the year at that Skill Level up to a maximum of an additional 4 per month. These are called Special Makeups.

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 four (not counting DQed images).

Clubs 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.

Individual Submissions and Makeups

The Club assigns the Skill Level for each club member image entered into InterClub. Once an image has been entered by a Club for that entrant, the same Skill Level must be used for that entrant and cannot be changed during the rest of the Competition Year. Skill Levels should be assigned as closely as possible to the Skill Levels at which entrants enter the regular individual Pictorial Color competition (although some judgment will need to be used for new E-level entrants into the individual competition).

An individual decides to which Club s/he joins and belongs, the 'Home' Club. Images by the entrant may only be entered into Interclub by the Home Club. **Thus, two or more clubs may not submit images into Interclub from the same Entrant during the same Competition Year.**

In any given Competition Month, for a given Entrant at most one Standard Entry Image and, if eligible, at most one Regular Makeup may be entered. Several Special Makeup images may be entered to correspond to the number of DQs that have not already been 'made up'; however, every effort should be made to spread these Special Makeups over the competition year so that a given Entrant does not overcrowd one competition.

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 Competition Chair. To the extent possible, judges are selected from among PSA member clubs that are not themselves members of S4C. The judges are appointed by the S4C Judge Selector.

The judges select Best Of Show, Gold, Silver, and Bronze images, for which certificates are awarded and presented at the Annual Banquet in June following the close of the Competition Year. Other special subject certificates may also be designated for that Competition Year at the discretion of the President and Competition Chair.

APPENDIX 1: CURRENT COMPETITIONS

Competitions are currently conducted in the following Divisions/Sections, with the indicated skill levels:

Pictorial Division:

- Interclub Color (for clubs only – see Section 11) - A, AA
- Individual Color - E, A, AA,
- Arranged - A, AA
- Creative - E, A, AA
- Monochrome - E, A, AA

Nature Division:

- Nature General - E, A, AA
- Nature Wildlife - E, A, AA

Photo Travel Division:

- Photo Travel General - E, A, AA

Photojournalism Division:

- Photojournalism General - E, A, AA
- Photojournalism Human Interest - E, A, AA

APPENDIX 2: SECTION DEFINITIONS

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

<http://www.s4c-photo.org/enter-competitions/definitions/>

Definitions for each competition can also be found at the Requirements tab visible when submitting entries online.