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FESTIVAL

## JUDGING GUIDE 2010

**Warning: This is the guide given to Animania judges for the Cosplay and World Cosplay Summit Preliminary competitions. This guide can also be used by cosplayers to improve their costume and performance by paying attention to details that will be taken into account by judges.**

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Dear judges,

First, Animania festival and Animania's Cosplay department would like to thank you for judging the Cosplay Competition and the Australian World Cosplay Summit (WCS) preliminary competition. Animania is proud of hosting one of the best Cosplay Competition in Australia and being the host of the WCS preliminary competition. To achieve the highest standards in those competitions, Animania is taking the judging of the competition very seriously, and the highest standards of judging can only be achieved through the selection of qualified judges and strict guidelines.

You have been selected as a judge because Animania believes that you have the required qualifications. Please find below guidelines which will help during the judging process.

## **Marking scheme:**

To achieve the highest standards in Cosplay judging, Animania is applying an improved version of the marking scheme used in the judging of the international Cosplay champions of the WCS competition:

- Costumes (100 points): Workmanship, how faithful the costumes are to the original character
- Performance (100 points): Relating to production of performance, creativity of elements and entertainment.
- Faithfulness to story (50 points): How faithful is the performance to the story of the original work and characters etc

The Australian WCS preliminary competition will also judge the WCS team out of 250 following those criteria. Also, new this year, there are 50 bonus points to be won or lost (see below).

For the Cosplay Competition, where performances are not compulsory, the marking scheme was altered to fit each judging category. For the solo categories (male and female), judging is based on 100 points for costume, and 20 point for how faithful to the character the cosplayer is. For the group categories (group and skit), two different marking systems will be used:

- for groups, the marking system is the same as the solo categories, out of 120.
- for skits, 100 points will be rewarded for the performance and 30 point for the faithfulness to the story, totaling 130 marks.

In summary:

**WCS competition** - Marked on 250 points – 100 for costume, 100 for performance, and 50 for faithfulness to story + 50 bonus points (positive and negative).

### **Cosplay competition:**

Best Female and Male – Marked on 120 points - 100 for costume and 20 for faithfulness to character.

Best Group - Marked on 120 points - 100 for costume and 20 for faithfulness to character.

Best Skit- Marked on 130 points - 100 for performance and 30 for faithfulness to story.

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## Judging criteria:

### **Costume**

Judging costumes is probably the most straight forward and most common judging. 100 points are attributed to this judging category, yet it is often very hard to appropriately mark a costume. In the WCS guidelines, costumes are judged based on workmanship (quality and difficulty) and how faithful the costumes are to the original character (accuracy). To follow these guidelines, we would like to attribute 70 points for workmanship and 30 points for accuracy. Workmanship being really the combination of quality and difficulty, should be broken down into these two components and have separate points attributed to each of them. 40 points should be attributed to quality and 30 to difficulty.

Quality: Is the costume sewed well, put together well, well fitted? Is the choice of fabric good? Is the costume neat? Are there bits of costumes falling apart or thread hanging down?

Difficulty: Is the costume simple or difficult to make? Is it made of many parts complicated to put together? Does it use a wide range of techniques? Was the difficult technique applied well? Attempting difficulty and failing should not be rewarded.

Accuracy: Does the costume have every component appearing on the character's outfit? Is the costume looking exactly like the reference picture? Is the colour scheme the same? The score should decrease with every inaccuracy found on the costume.

In summary: 40 points for **quality**, 30 points for **difficulty** and 30 point for **accuracy**.

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### **Performance**

It is very hard to give guidelines for performance. It often comes to personal opinion and taste. In this guide, we won't be able to give specific example of skits and how to judge them. However, we should be able to give tips about judging.

There are four major categories you should consider before judging a performance. These are the following (with suggested marking scheme):

- conception/creativity of the skit (30 points)
- preparation (20 points)
- performing skills (20 points)
- entertainment (30 points)

Conception/creativity of the skit: This is about how the skit was created. Is the skit well conceived or does it have very little continuity? Is this an original idea or was it copied from somewhere else? Was the costume taken into account in the creation of the skit, or is the costume making the skit hard to perform?

Preparation: Has the skit been rehearsed or does it feel that it is the first time they are performing it? Have they prepared an audio track or are they performing it directly on stage?

Performing skills: It can be acting, dancing, singing, comedy, combat skills, anything other than just standing still on stage. Is the acting convincing or does it feel like they are reading (recorded) or simply saying lines without any acting (performed directly on stage)? Is the dance perfectly coordinated, or are the dancers out of synch? Is the singing good? Is the comedy fun? Is the combat impressive? Etc..

Entertainment: Am I enjoying what I am watching, or am I bored? Are the cosplayers performing without interruption or do they stand still for too long? Is the skit appropriate, or am I shocked by inappropriate content? Is the public reacting positively from the performance, or does the public remain silent?

Performance judging should become easier by breaking it into these 4 categories, and it will be easier to differentiate the different qualities of performances.

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## **Faithfulness to story**

This category sounds more straight forward than it really is. In the WCS competition, 50 points are awarded for how faithful the performance is to the story (of the original anime or game) and how faithful the cosplayer is to the character. At Animania, we decided to award 30 points for the faithfulness of the performance and 20 points to the character.

The first 30 points are based on the performance (WCS and skit category). If the skit has nothing to do with the story, for example, cosplayers dance to a music which has no relevance to the story, no point should be awarded. If the music they are dancing to have lyrics that sort of fit in the story or portrays the character, 10 point can be awarded. If the skit is a dance with music from the anime/game, or a comedy skit based on the anime/game, then it can be awarded 20 or 30 points depending on how well it fits the story. If the skit is directly taken from a scene from an anime/game, or could have been a scene from it, (is not part of the anime/game but fits perfectly in it) then it should receive all 30 points without a doubt. However, sticking too close to the story could also make the skit less entertaining (no element of surprise, and harder to entertain the general public

which is no familiar with the series), so it's important to also think outside the box while remaining faithful.

20 points are awarded for faithfulness to the character (WCS, solo and group category). If cosplayers are 'in character', they should receive high scores. Also, mannerisms are important, is the cosplayer moving as the character would? This means that in a skit (WCS only), cosplayers need to act like the character to receive the points, and out of the skit (solo and group categories), cosplayers should at least pose like the character (signature pose) or at least say something to show that they are in character. A Cosplay that comes on stage, talks normally (not like their character) and doesn't move or act like the character should not receive these points.

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### **BONUS POINTS (WCS only)**

This year, we will be introducing bonus points. There will be 50 bonus points up for grabs, as well as 50 negative points that can be lost. These are awarded as packets of 10 points (judges can't give 5 points for a category for example) to the teams that deserve those extra points or deserve to lose those points.

Here are the categories:

**Positive points** (10 points for each):

-WOW factor: The cosplayers and performance have that extra punch in them that others don't. Great chemistry between the characters...

-Costume Choice for stage: The costumes should look as stunning on stage as off stage, if not even more stunning. Great colour contrasts between the two characters. If the costume is drawn by the light, and details can't be seen, cosplayers should not receive these bonus points.

-Stage props: They should be used efficiently, to take the audience into another world and give more opportunities for the characters to interact. No ugly or useless props.

-General audience catering: The skit should entertain anyone, not just Anime people. If your mum, your cousin, your neighbour can enjoy the skit, then anyone will, and it is exactly what we are looking for in a team representing Australia in Japan.

-Portfolio: High quality. The best portfolios that stimulate the judges will received those extra points. You should be convincing the judges to send you to Japan through your portfolio. Use the portfolio to get the judges to know your series and

characters. Presentation and order in the portfolio are important, it's the difference between give judges a headache and making them want to read your portfolio again.

**Negative points** (10 points for each):

-Costume dysfunction on stage: Any parts of the costume falling apart? Is the cosplayer having trouble moving on stage? Is the costume restricting his movement or able to move at all?

-Poor stage use: Are the cosplayers immobile or are they connecting with the crowd by using the stage as a medium? Are they using the catwalk, or remaining at the back of the stage, or in a corner of the stage?

-Audio quality: Is the audio clear, or is it hard to understand?

-Emotion visibility: Do both characters have their face covered all the time (e.g. helmets)? The public should see at least one cosplayer's face during the performance. Are the cosplayers turning their back to the audience for too long?

-Attitude: Are the cosplayers taking the competition seriously? Are they on time? Are they respectful to other cosplayers in the competition, to the judges, to Animania staff and volunteers?

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### **WCS Pre-selection Rounds:**

Before the Pre-Selection Rounds, time and space during Animania will be allocated for pre-judging. Judges are encouraged to ask questions and examine costumes closely.

During each round of the Pre-Selection, Duos will perform their skit in costume in front of a panel of 5-8 judges.

After the competition, judges will give discuss the verdict orally to decide whether they believe entrants deserve to go on to the finals or not. The number of Duos selected may vary depending on judge's choice. Each of these selected Duos will receive an invitation certificate for the Preliminary Competition Finals.

After results are given, judges are advises to give positive and negative feedback to each participating teams if they wish to receive it.

## **WCS Finals:**

Before the Preliminary Competition Finals, time and space during Animaniamia will be allocated for pre-judging. Judges are encouraged to ask questions and examine costumes closely.

During the Preliminary Competition, Qualifying Duos will perform on the main stage in front of a panel of 7-8 Judges. Judges will score each team. Judges will first discuss each team, point out strength and weaknesses to other judges that they may have missed. Judges will be able to change their score after the discussion. Then, scores will be added to reveal the top 3 teams. Judges should discuss the results and may argue for or against the ranking of the top 3 teams if there are any ties. Judges cannot change the ranking

After results are given, judges are **forbidden** to discuss the results with any teams. Feedback will be given by writing at a later stage if teams wish to receive it.

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Thank you for reading the judging guidelines. We hope they will help you keep the standards of judging high for the WCS and Cosplay Competitions.