

# Anatomy of a Marching Contest

Munford Band Parents,

I thought it wise to take the opportunity to give some insight into the anatomy of a marching contest. We all go and enjoy, we all have our personal favorites but too many times we do not understand the judges' outcome.

In "caption judging" each judge is responsible for only a small part of the whole performance. They are divided into music, visual, effect, percussion and colorguard. Usually there will be two judges for the first three captions and single adjudicators for the last two. The redundancy is to reduce the possibility of one judge controlling the overall outcome with extremely high or low scoring.

If you will read the recap of scoring of the 2007 Bandmasters Championship,

[http://www.tigerbandalumni.com/Bandmasters/Reports/rptOverallContestRecap\\_2007.pdf](http://www.tigerbandalumni.com/Bandmasters/Reports/rptOverallContestRecap_2007.pdf)

you will see this in action. Though the scores are varied, they are held in check by the averaging of scores within a caption. You will notice that the scores for both Houston and Munford include top scores. Opinions are always just opinions, however they are tempered by experience and expertise.

Now comes my point. (finally)

The margin of victory for us was a mere five one-thousandths of a point. One seemingly insignificant error in either music or visual, percussion or colorguard can and does sway the outcome. Quarters of inches in accuracy or nanoseconds of musical imperfection do make a difference. No performer goes unnoticed. No performer can be excused. No performer is less or more important to the overall goal.

I know that many of you have wondered why the staff and I complain about things that just "could not be heard or seen." One comment of late is that we never compliment the band members. It is in the details where contests are decided and where impact on our audiences is made. How many times have YOU said to another adult: Munford just looks sharper, or Munford just sounds better? As we have stated over and over again, we are just like a chain. We are strong when we all do our jobs to our potential, and we become easily broken when we do not. Saturday night you witnessed a tremendous effort put forth by our students. It was our first competition for 2008, filled with minute errors that will be repaired soon. At this time, it is a race between groups to clean and fine-tune their programs to be called as champions. The cleanest Band will be called last indeed.

We earned our position on that Saturday and this past one as well, but the margin of victory was miniscule for both. The difference was secured during practice time. Hours

and hours of meticulous observations and critical analysis combined with eager and willing students provided the difference in score. As in the 2007 Bandmasters, five one-thousandth of a point is where Munford needs to live. Munford needs to embrace this small difference and find new and old means to put these seemingly small earnings into our category for our next event. Rest assured that our competition will be better prepared. Also rest assured that we too will be poised to show improvement by our performers. We need to refine our skills, re-dedicate our purpose and perform at an even higher level than ever before. We need to look deep inside and find that last bit of improvement that will be this week's margin of victory....or loss. Where it comes from is in the heart. These will be the most difficult improvements to date and yet they will also be the most remembered by the students.

We are good as we stand now, but yet there is more to give. Give your child one more hug of congratulations and tell them how much you care about them. Also encourage them to strive for even more. The journey is where we find life, not in the destination. This journey is nearly complete and the prize is golden. These children are now young adults, the future of our legacy and the writers of history.

Mainly they are just my favorites.