

Dear Coaches and Judges,

This communication is being sent to you in the hopes of clarifying the new concept of the GROUP event. There seems to be some confusion about the expectations of this event both with coaches and judges.

I would like to begin with providing you the definition and mission of this event:

***The GROUP event is an ensemble of baton twirling athletes that prioritizes EFFECT and ENTERTAINMENT as the cornerstone for the event. The GROUP achieves this through the use of effective characterization, interesting staging, creativity, artistic detailing, and a keen sense of musical interpretation, all interlaced to create an entertaining production value.***

The GROUP event is judged via 4 captions: General Effect 40 points, Design/Choreography 30 points, Baton 15 points, and Body 15 points.

**BATON:**

Before explaining General Effect and Design/Choreography it's CRUCIAL that coaches and judges know what is expected regarding the use of the baton and body. The BATON should NOT be used and valued like it is in TEAM. Basic skills are used (see the group content restrictions) BUT it's important that coaches and judges regard the baton as, more or less, a PROP that enhances and contributes to the EFFECT and DESIGN. The baton "completes the picture" of the design. Groups are NOT to be judged on the modes of twirling as in team. In fact, there are NO "requirements" regarding skills used. Groups do NOT *have* to demonstrate contact material, rolls, or aerials. Of course, some of these modes will be chosen to be used BUT it MUST BE CLEAR that DIFFICULTY of baton (as we've known it in teams) is NOT a focus of this event. Judges will look for the consistency and the perfection of the handling of the baton by every member.

"Twirl LESS, move MORE, and be PERFECT" is the "moto" of this event.

**BODY:**

Likewise, the use of the BODY (dance and movement skills) will ENHANCE the design and contribute to the EFFECT of the whole program. As in baton, the body should be skills that EVERY member has mastered PERFECTLY. Coaches: the concept of "writing to your weakest member" is truly important when constructing GROUP programs. The BODY (head, arms, hands, legs, feet) will be judged on how it contributes to the General Effect and Design. It will also be judged on how CONSISTENT EVERY MEMBER executes each moment. All members should work together as "ONE". Although feature moves and solos can be used, keep in mind that they are NOT to be used to create more difficulty for the group. Any feature move

done by a solo or duo, for instance, MUST be a logical contribution to the EFFECT and DESIGN. Credit for “feature moves” will be considered in the EFFECT caption, NOT the baton and/or body caption.

Coaches: avoid walking pedestrian style or randomly going from place to place. Coaches should choreograph specific footwork during movement transitions. Coaches should pay close attention to ALL members’ work “below the waist” and work for PERFECTION of the feet/movement/transitions FIRST, then work on the top half of the body. By doing this, the foundation of the program will be established.

### ***DESIGN/CHOREOGRAPHY:***

This caption is the “blue print” or “written plan” of the GROUP program. This caption reflects the work of the COACH. Did the program have forms that evolved logically and seamlessly? Was the staging well-coordinated with the choreography to be fully accessible to the audience? Did the movement of the forms reflect the music? Did the staging and forms present a “background” for the “character” to be displayed clearly?

This caption can be challenging for coaches who have little to no experience with staging and/or drill design. Coaches should reference the marching band activity to gain inspiration in drill design and the use of moving forms. Coaches: please visit: [www.micromarching.com](http://www.micromarching.com) and become acquainted with how forms are staged and, more importantly, how they move from one shape to another. Of course, this site is for marching bands but it certainly can be applied to our needs in baton twirling and our new GROUP event.

GEOMETRIC DRILL is something that coaches should study. It is the basic use of forms such as a circle, square, cone, cylinder, linear, curvilinear. These shapes and others should be the foundation of the program and the movement and transition of these forms should be constant with VERY little stationary sets.

### ***GENERAL EFFECT:***

This caption weighs the heaviest since it’s responsible for the ENTERTAINMENT portion of the GROUP program. Here, the athletes “bring the show to LIFE” and “communicate” with the audience in a way that is engaging, intriguing, and emotional. General Effect is created from believability of a character, the musicality of the design and how it “speaks” to the audience, the visual PERFECTION of unison, surprise moments, cleverness, etc. General Effect will arouse some kind of emotion. When successful, this caption will make a program memorable. A well-paced, intriguing, perfected, and musical program will captivate an audience and make the audience wanting more!

I hope this explanation of the new GROUP event can help coaches and judges begin on the correct path. Soon, video examples will be used to illustrate some of the concepts contained in this document.

Sincerely,

Dale White  
Executive Technical Committee Member