



**COLLEGIATE BARBERSHOP  
QUARTET CONTEST**

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**Official Rules Harmony Foundation Collegiate Barbershop Quartet Contest  
(CBQC)**

**I. Purpose and Philosophy of the Harmony Foundation Collegiate  
Barbershop Quartet Contest**

1. To expose young men to the pleasures of barbershop harmony in support of the Barbershop Harmony Society's Vision & Mission Purpose:

- Perpetuates and celebrates harmony in the barbershop style
- Promotes fellowship and friendship among men of good will
- Provides the opportunity to experience the joy of four-part a cappella singing
- Introduces and sustains music in the lives of people everywhere

2. To provide an equitable contest that: supports these aims; provides fair competition in the barbershop style; and recognizes the achievement of newcomers to barbershop harmony.

3. To maintain and nurture that interest by encouraging participants to continue singing barbershop harmony, and to spread that excitement to their fellow students, friends, families and communities.

The rules of the CBQC are few. When eligibility questions arise, they will be interpreted by the CBQC Coordinator at the Barbershop Harmony Society (hereinafter Society) office.

## **II. General Rules**

1. Two (2) songs in the barbershop style must be sung in each round of the competition. A quartet may use the same two songs at the preliminary contest and the international contest.
2. Certified Society judges will adjudicate all contests, both preliminary and final, using standard Society contest rules.
3. The quartet with the highest score in a spring preliminary contest of its home district, as defined in Section III, paragraph 7, will qualify to represent that district and compete in the CBQC International Contest. All other quartets scoring the minimum qualifying score will also qualify to compete in the CBQC International Contest. The minimum qualifying score is set by the Society Board of Directors and remains in effect until changed by subsequent action by the Society Board of Directors<sup>1</sup>. In the event that a quartet cannot compete in one of their regularly scheduled preliminary contests in their home district, they may only qualify for the International contest by scoring the minimum qualifying score or higher in another district's contest.
4. All arrangements performed by quartets must be obtained in accordance with international and USA copyright law.
5. Quartets are responsible for their own travel, lodging and other expenses incurred while participating in the competition(s). Some districts or chapters may elect to support a college quartet financially and with coaching.
6. Quartets wishing to participate in the CBQC preliminary and CBQC International contests must have their quartet names approved by the Society CBQC Coordinator prior to registering for any CBQC contests, so as not to conflict with names already selected and reserved by registered barbershop Society member quartets and previous CBQC champions. This ensures ease of quartet name registration should all members of the quartet decide to become members of the Society, register the quartet, and participate in Society contests, which are open only to member quartets. Approved CBQC participant quartet names will be reserved for as long as the quartet is an active participant in CBQC contests. Such quartets that cease to be active participants in CBQC events will have their names reserved for not longer than two (2) years after participating in their last CBQC event. CBQC Champion quartet names will be retired following the quartet's retirement and will not be available to other CBQC participants or to Society member quartets.

## **III. Eligibility**

1. The Harmony Foundation Collegiate Barbershop Quartet Contest is for male quartets, singing in the barbershop style, as defined in Section V.
2. The contest is open to young men who are 15-25 years of age, on the date of the international contest in which the men compete.

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<sup>1</sup> Current minimum qualifying score is average of 71% (426 points on a single panel of judges, 852 on a double panel, 1278 on a triple panel)

3. There are no restrictions regarding membership in the Barbershop Harmony Society or any affiliate organization. Society quartets who meet the age requirements are also eligible to compete in the CBQC.
4. A quartet may replace up to 2 members and still be eligible to compete under the same quartet name. No quartet members may be replaced between a qualifying CBQC preliminary and the International CBQC.
5. An individual can sing in only one CBQC quartet at a time. Past CBQC champion quartets are not eligible to compete. However, individual quartet champion members may compete in a new quartet, provided no more than two from the same champion may be in the same quartet.
6. Quartets interested in competing at the International CBQC must qualify by entering a CBQC preliminary competition in one of the Society's 17 districts. CBQC preliminary competitions are those listed in the CBQC Preliminary Sites and Dates schedule. Quartets may compete in only one preliminary contest. Any quartet representing an Affiliate of the Barbershop Harmony Society may also qualify by competing in a non-Society contest which uses the Society scoring format, and scoring the minimum qualifying score or higher.
7. Upon registration for an International CBQC preliminary competition, each competing quartet must declare the district that it will represent. This district will be known as the quartet's "home" district. The quartet's "home" district is the Society district in which the quartet's educational institution is located, or where the majority of the educational institutions represented by the quartet's members are located, or, if all of the quartet members are not enrolled in an educational institution, the district in which the majority of the quartet's members have permanent residence. Questions concerning "home" districts should be directed to the International CBQC Coordinator at Society headquarters.
8. If a total of 20 qualifiers for the international contest is not met, the positions will be filled by "wild card" entries, until a total of 20 qualifiers for the International CBQC is achieved.
9. The deadline for entering the Collegiate Barbershop Quartet Contest will be based on the preliminary round selected by the quartet. The CJ-17-A Official Entry Form must be received at the Society office, 21 days before the preliminary contest date, along with a check for \$10 US payable to "Barbershop Harmony Society". Extenuating circumstances surrounding deadline issues should be discussed with the CBQC Coordinator.

#### **IV. Scholarships**

Upon arrival at the international contest, each of the qualifying quartets will receive a \$1500 scholarship. Cash prizes are taxable income, and the Society may be required to report the prizes to the Internal Revenue Service in accordance with IRS regulations. Each qualifying quartet will receive instructions explaining the procedure for receiving the money.

## V. The Barbershop Style

Basic characteristics of barbershop harmony:

- Four unaccompanied male voices.
- Melody in the second voice down (lead, or second tenor). The melody lies within the good quality range for the average lead singer and is free of awkward skips that make it difficult to sing accurately.
- Consonant four-part chords on all notes of the melody, almost completely in root position and second inversion.
- Use of embellishments of many kinds, such as swipes, key changes, echoes, bell chords, etc. to enhance the lyric material of the song.
- A predominance of dominant seventh-type (barbershop seventh) chords, revolving around the circle of fifths.
- The use of barbershop sevenths on roots other than I, IV and V.
- Easily understandable lyrics which are in good taste.

## VI. Judging Criteria

For information concerning the current rules refer to the ***Contest and Judging Handbook*** found in the Document Center on the Society website ([www.barbershop.org](http://www.barbershop.org))

A chief characteristic of the barbershop style is its wholesome, "G-rated" entertainment values. Forfeiture, though, may result from one or all judges for:

- Anyone other than quartet members appearing on stage during the performance.
- Actions by any contestant that are deemed suggestive, vulgar, or otherwise not in good taste, as determined by acceptable, contemporary community standards. Songs must be neither primarily patriotic nor primarily religious in intent.
- Any spoken words deemed excessive or detrimental to the performance.
- Use of contestant's own electronic sound equipment.
- Instrumental accompaniment, including instrumental introductions, interludes, or conclusions.

For more information, call or write:

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