Drum Corps United Kingdom SoundSport 2027

RULES AND REGULATIONS

October 2026

MPAUK Chairman
On behalf of DCUK

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This is an update of the rules and regulations for SoundSport contests as at 1st October 2026.

Any future amendments will be sent to you as an addendum to this booklet, or where any major changes to the rules, a new rules and regulations booklet will be produced and forwarded to each SoundSport team.

Should you require further copies of this booklet please contact the address above or visit the Download Section on the DCUK website – https://dcuk.org.uk/downloads/downloads.html

INTRODUCTION

Drum Corps International® and SoundSport™ together with Drum Corps United Kingdom

Drum Corps International® is the world leader in producing and sanctioning competitive events for the world's most elite and exclusive touring marching music ensembles for student performers.

Drum Corps International's mission is to bring the life-enriching benefits of marching music performing arts to more people worldwide. We do this by creating a stage for participating organizations to engage in education, competition, entertainment, and the promotion of individual growth.

DCUK is proud to be partnered with DCI to bring SoundSport to the United Kingdom.

SoundSport Philosophy

The SoundSport program exists to activate and advance the mission and vision of Drum Corps International by creating a world class stage to enable an affordable, inclusive, enjoyable and less time intensive ensemble music making experience worldwide.

SoundSport operates and sanctions an annual series of events that recognize and reward creative and innovative performance. Teams are, first and foremost, encouraged to entertain and engage the audience- their goal should be to attain excellence in everything they do. Our adjudication philosophy is designed to recognise and encourage the value of competition while allowing many ensembles of differing sizes, styles, instrumentations, etc. to successfully perform in the same event. Achievement levels will be awarded to each group as an indicator of the team's success in meeting specified adjudication criteria.

#GrowDrumCorps

It is of great importance to our effort that every member of the SoundSport community become empowered, mobilized, and focused on one organizational initiative: ***To engage as many people as possible in our collective endeavour.***

In order to support the current existence of the youth-focused performing arts activity and broker its longevity, we must continue to create an environment that facilitates the development of more quality organisations. Provided the participating organisations remain committed to delivering the value of what they do through education and the pursuit of performance excellence and they desire to share the experience as a fraternity, the *Drum Corps experience* will flourish.

1. ELIGIBILITY

1.1 SoundSport Teams can perform with members of all ages.

1.2 A person may only perform with one SoundSport Team in any one season. *(For 2027 units can request dispensation for this rule if both SoundSport Teams approve and are happy that the same person performs with both)*

1.3 SoundSport Teams may compete with a minimum of 6 and a suggested maximum of 40 members including Drum Major/Conductor. The maximum number is advisory to ensure performers can safely perform in the space available but can be higher if the SoundSport Team has assessed any risk and confirmed this to DCUK prior to the event. The minimum requirement may be waived by the Contest Referee* or by the MPAUK Chair in respect of the season.

1.4 In line with national safeguarding guidelines, the lower end age limit before a member can be registered to perform at a DCUK SoundSport event is 4 years old and therefore the member MUST be 4 years old on or before the 31st August 2026 to be eligible to perform in 2027.

2. ARENA SPECIFICATIONS

2.1 The minimum Competition Arena size will be 80ft *(approx. 24.4m)* (front line) by 50ft *(approx. 15.25m)* (side line). All reference to Competition Arena and/or Arena in this booklet refers to these measurements.

2.2 The Arena markings, except where otherwise specified or approved, shall be laid down on the arena with yellow/black adhesive tape and are as follows

2.2.1 Tape will mark the front-line boundary, with a taped mark at the centre.

2.2.2 The start/finish line will be marked on the front boundary line (see 3.2 below).

3. EVENT RULES

3.1 Time limits:

The maximum time allowed on the Arena (see rule 2.2.2 above) will be 12 minutes. There is no maximum or minimum performance time - you have a 12 minute block to include entering the Arena, setting up, performing and leaving the Arena.

3.2 SoundSport Teams total allocated Arena time (as specified above) will be divided into two parts:

A centre line will no longer be mandatory at contests and will be replaced by a small taped mark on the front boundary line. For the ease of definition, the Centre Line (start/finish line) is defined as a virtual line from the centre mark running at 90 degrees to the front line through the arena.

There will be no announcement to check if the Adjudicators are ready, The Chief Adjudicator will have responsibility to let the Contest Referee*/Arena Marshall** know if any issue arises prior to the next SoundSport Team crossing the start/finish line.

a) Arena Entrance Time

Any equipment and/or props may be placed in the Competition Arena by anyone prior to the start of competition. Any non-members involved in set up must exit the Competition Arena prior to the start of performance time. SoundSport Teams can move onto the floor up to the centre mark as the previous SoundSport Team exits past the centre line. The Arena Marshall** will indicate when the SoundSport Team can begin moving across the centre line or start pre-show music. Timing will NOT begin until the first performer or member of staff setting equipment/props crosses the centre start/finish line or the intro music begins.

b) Performance and Exit Time

The timing for this will start with the first note of music or movement from the SoundSport Team after the announcement that your SoundSport Team may start its performance (this announcement may be included within the SoundSport Team show music). The SoundSport Team MUST inform the Contest Referee*/Arena Marshall** at each and every show if this option is to be used). Timing will cease when all personnel, equipment and/or props have cleared the centre line and any music is completed. For purposes of timing, equipment and props are considered "removed" when they have crossed the vertical centre line and music as ceased. After the equipment/props have crossed this line, they must continue to make forward progress out of the Competition Arena ensuring the whole arena is left in a fit and cleaned state for the next performing unit – the Contest Referee* will make any adjudication regarding excessive time to completely clear the Competition Arena.

3.3 SoundSport Teams will be scheduled to compete on the Arena at intervals of no less than the maximum allowed Arena time for their class (see rule 3.1 above). Failure to appear at the marshalling area at the allotted time will incur penalties at the discretion of the Contest Referee*.

3.4 SoundSport Teams may enter/exit over any boundary subject to the provisions of rule 5.7. Equipment can only be used within the designated arena.

3.5 Any number of non-performing members may assist in setting out equipment prior to the SoundSport Teams performance and in clearing the arena on completion of the performance. However, only a limited number of passes will be issued by DCUK and all other helpers will be expected to pay for admission and be in possession of a valid ticket.

3.6 A member dropping their piece of equipment may retrieve it without assessment of a penalty. A SoundSport Teams may wish to designate one or two (maximum) equipment retrievers. They must not wear SoundSport Teams costumes. These retrievers may return dropped equipment to the performer without gaining a penalty but may not move any other equipment, scenery or props, or bring on new items of equipment, scenery or props, once the performance time has started

Non-performing personnel may not enter the Competition Arena during the SoundSport Teams performance time. The only exceptions to this will be in the act of returning dropped equipment, First Aid cases or Health & Safety concerns.

3.7 SoundSport Teams must not cause or risk injury to members of the audience, adjudicators or officials or themselves. SoundSport Teams should be particularly careful when discarding equipment to ensure that it does not land in the audience or hit an adjudicator or official. Any item of equipment or act of performance which is considered by the Contest Referee* to constitute a hazard or risk to any person may be prohibited at the show concerned or at any subsequent show. A minimum safety space of 1M should be maintained at all times from spectators.

3.9 All scenery, props and any other equipment used during the show can only be assembled either prior to the start of the competition or after passing the centre start line at the start of the total Arena time allowed. All scenery entering the Arena must be capable of fitting through a doorway 6'6" high by 6' wide at the point of entering the Competition Arena at the beginning and end of the total allowed Arena time. i.e. scenery can only be assembled to a size in excess of the aforementioned during the total Arena time and must be disassembled to the required size before clearing the Competition Arena.

3.10 An equipment/scenery storage area will be designated by the Contest Referee* in conjunction with the Show Organiser to the start of the event. This may be inside or outside the main hall and if outside may not be covered so SoundSport Teams must provide their own covers etc. All scenery/equipment removed after a performance must be returned to the storage area immediately after crossing the finish line.

3.11 Flooring surfaces *(please note: the use of a performance is floor optional)* must enter the Competition Arena without being in any way unfolded or otherwise prepared and must be immediately capable of storage when they clear the Competition Arena i.e. flooring surfaces cannot be folded once they have cleared the Competition Arena and must therefore be folded to an acceptable state for storage before leaving the Competition Arena. Small pieces of flooring being used as scenery or similar do not necessarily need to be folded before being removed but must not cause any hazard whilst being removed from the Competition Arena.

4. EQUIPMENT

4.1 The following WILL NOT be allowed on or around the Arena area - pyrotechnics, pressurised canisters, inflammable substances, animals, hazardous chemicals, smoke or dry ice machines, lasers strobe lighting, balloons, liquids (unless previously approved), glitter or confetti type products. Mains and battery powered electrical equipment is permitted and each SoundSport Teams must take full responsibility for the safety of any used equipment.

Each SoundSport Team should consult with Contest Referee*/Arena Marshall** prior to using any equipment not specifically defined in these rules.

4.2 Musical Instrumentation - general definitions:

4.2.1 The instrumentation of each SoundSport team may include any instrument or implement that is played or struck to create sound in real time including the human voice.

4.2.2 All equipment requiring wheels must be hand pushed into the performance area. Use of motorised carts is prohibited.

4.2.3 Wheels must be rubber and 8 inches on all wheeled equipment and props.

4.3 Amplification

4.3.1 The use of self-contained amplification systems is permitted.

4.3.2 Venues will provide a single power outlet at the back of the performance arena. If power is required at the front this request must be made at least 7 days prior to each event so the venue can be checked to ensure this is possible. Performing ensembles should take care not to overload the circuit & should not assume that there will be unlimited circuits for their use.

4.3.3 Adaptation to the environment of individual performance locations is the responsibility of the SoundSport Team. We will do everything possible to communicate logistical considerations in advance of event

4.4 Use of Electronic Equipment

4.4.1 “Music” (or “Musical”) shall be defined as the organisation of melodic, harmonic and/or rhythmic sound through time.

4.4.2. An “Electronic Instrument” shall be defined as any piece of electronic equipment that produces “Musical” sound.

4.4.3 A “Sequence” or “Loop” shall be defined as “Music” that is pre-recorded or programmed during a performance.

4.4.4 “Human Voice” shall be defined as spoken word.

4.4.5 Music from Electronic Instruments is allowed given that the Music is being performed live, in real time during the performance. Sequenced Music & Musical Loops are also allowed but may, in the future, be subject to licencing issues which might prohibit their use and this could take effect during the season. Pre-recorded Sound Effects and Human Voice may be used.

4.4.6 Permission must be obtained for all copyrighted material.

4.4.7 All SoundSport teams are required to provide a conductor’s podium for their performance, if desired.

4.5 Additional information on the use of Mains Electrical Equipment:

4.5.1 Contests will provide access to two electrical mains power sources at the front and back centreline to use any electrical device within their programme deemed safe by the Contest Organiser and Contest Referee* and that does not breach any other MPAUK/DCUKWGUK defined rule.

4.5.2 In the event of any electrical supply failure any performance re-run will be at the discretion of the Contest Referee*. In the event of any equipment provided by the performing unit failing no re-run will be permitted.

4.5.3 Neither the contest organiser nor any other organisation connected with the contest accepts responsibility in any way for the use of any electricity supply which might be provided. The use of any electricity whether supplied by the contest or by the competing SoundSport Team will be at the sole risk of the individual unit. All electrical equipment used will be deemed to be portable and as such must display/carry a valid PAT tested certificate.

5. PENALTIES

5.1 A SoundSport team will be disqualified from a competition if in breach of Rule 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.3a.

5.2 Improper use of National Colours will attract a penalty of 1/10 point for each offence. Dropping of National Colours will result in a penalty of one whole point. (National Colours refers to the national flag of any recognised nation. Such flags may not be used for display purposes and must at all times be treated with the dignity which should be afforded to a national flag.)

5.3 The use of any illegal equipment will attract a penalty of minimum 1/2 point.

5.4 Safety violations will attract a penalty of 1 whole point per member for each offence.

5.5 Penalties relating to timing offences will be at the rate of 1/10 point for every 1 second unless otherwise stated (over a maximum or under a minimum timing requirement).

5.6 A SoundSport Team failing to report to the assembly area at the stipulated time will attract a penalty of 5/10 points for each 5 minutes late or part thereof up to the conclusion of the contest at the discretion of the Contest Referee*.

5.7 Any infraction of Arena entry or exit rules will attract 1/10 point penalty for each member up to a maximum of 2 whole points for 20 members or more. The front line may only be crossed under the direction of Contest Referee*/Arena Marshall**

5.8 Any SoundSport Team causing or risking injury to any member of the audience, adjudicator, performing member or official will attract a minimum penalty of one (1) whole point for each incident at the Contest Referee's* discretion.

5.9 Any infringement of rules 3.6, 3.8, 3.9 or 3.10 will attract a minimum of 5/10 points penalty

5.10 General: Any SoundSport Team violating any rules, or part of a rule, for which no specific penalty is provided may be penalised for each such violation, not less than 1/10 point nor more than disqualification at the discretion of the Contest Referee*.

5.11 All equipment used must be adequately protected to avoid injury to any competitors, officials, audience etc, and to the Arena surface. Poles should have either a stopper fitted or be protected in some other way and rifles/sabres should be rendered safe. Any equipment may be inspected by the Contest Referee* and dangerous equipment may be prohibited from being used.

5.12 No show design or performance floor *(please note: the use of a performance is floor optional)* is to cross the front boundary. The side and back boundary lines are advisory; it must be born in mind that the safety of the audience and participants is paramount. Any designed activity which involves crossing the side and back boundary lines and which is, in the opinion of the Contest Referee*, unsafe or potentially unsafe may attract penalties up to and including disqualification. Designs involving the crossing of side and back boundaries must be reported to the Contest Referee*/Arena Marshall** prior to the competition. In no circumstances must aisles and safety gangway be used or compromised (A 1 Metre minimum clearance must be maintained between any activity and the audience). Fire exits must not be obscured. A penalty, at the discretion of the Contest Referee*, will be given for shows designed to cross the front boundary. If the front boundary line is crossed in error rather than by design then penalties may be given and will be at the discretion of the Contest Referee*.

5.13 Any SoundSport Team withdrawing from a show following the advertised closing date will attract a minimum penalty the cost of entry which must be paid before any next scheduled performance.

6. SCORING/ADJUDICATION

6.1 A full explanation of the current adjudication system and methods employed for the adjudicating of all Classes is available upon request (*see the Appendix 1 - Adjudication Guidelines)*. The email address for any adjudication enquiries is adjudicating@dcuk.org.uk.

6.2 All Adjudicators will be located at the front of the Arena (normally at the back of the stand or on the balcony if available) and will provide recorded comments/evaluation

6.3 Events will be evaluated in 3 categories: Music Performance, Visual Performance and Overall Impression *(see Appendix 2, 3 and 4 – Adjudication Sheets)*
Performances will be evaluated as follows:

Music Performance 100 points
Visual Performance 100 points
Overall Impression 100 points
Subtotal 300 points divided by 3 = Total Score

Total scores will be rounded to the nearest Hundredth (0.01) point.

6.4 All aspects will be adjudicated throughout the whole of a SoundSport Teams performance up to the maximum performance time allowed for each class

6.5 Missing Adjudicator Policy – if an allocated Adjudicator is unable to fulfil their duties on any given panel, an attempt will be made to fill that adjudicator's caption with a certified Adjudicator. Chief Adjudicator will work with the Adjudicating Co-ordinator to confirm the replacement.

In the event of a missing Adjudicator the missing Adjudicator's score will be determined as the average of the other two Adjudicators scores.

7. COMPETITIVE CLASSES

7.1 For the 2027 season there will only be two "open" class. Moving forward class structures based on age and/or size may be considered. The two classes for 2027 will be:

SoundSport® Medalist Class
- New name for the flagship SoundSport standard-setting class
- Assists in development of fledgling competitive ensembles, musical circuits, and more
- Adjudication system focuses on pursuit and achievement of excellence in performance

SoundSport® Challenge Class
- Maintains the core value of SoundSport (excellence in entertainment, showmanship and musical performance) but adds adjudicated ranking and scoring in a competitive format
- Encourages continued development of advanced performers, ensembles and circuits

8. AWARDS

8.1 **a.** Medalist Class - Awards will be given indicating Gold/Silver/Bronze which will be derived from the scores awards by the three adjudicators. The scores will not be announced

b. Challenge Cass - Awards will be given indicating Gold/Silver/Bronze which will be derived from the scores awards by the three adjudicators plus the scores and placings will be announced.

(see Appendix 1 – Adjudication Guidelines)

8.2 If three or more SoundSport teams at a contest then a "Best in Show" title will be awarded to the highest scoring ensemble regardless of competitive class.

8.3 If two or more ensembles have a tie in their final score, the higher placement will be awarded to the ensemble with the highest Overall Impression score.

8.4 Any tie for Best in Show will not be broken but rather be awarded to the two or more ensembles with a tie in their final score.

9. DISPUTES

9.1 Any dispute on the day of a competition shall be referred to the Contest Referee* for arbitration and the Contest Referee's* decision shall be final and binding on the day

9.2 Any dispute regarding the decision of a Contest Referee* should be reported immediately to the MPAUK Chairman in writing, by post to 3 Eridge Road, Hove, East Sussex. BN3 7QD. Any dispute not lodged within 72 hours, commencing at midnight on the day of the competition, shall be considered void. On receipt of any such dispute the Chair shall consult with other Contest Referee*s and/or Board Members to review the decision involved in the dispute. The person referring the dispute will normally be informed of the outcome of the review within 14 days of it being lodged. There is no right of review of a decision reached by this mechanism. If the Chair is involved in the dispute, then the matter will be referred by him to the appointed Deputy for consideration.

10. SEEDING

10.1 There is no seeding at any event and the order of performance will be determined by an open draw. Any entries received after the draw will go on first.

11. MEMBERSHIP & CONTEST FEES

11.1 Organisations can enrol on line for membership from the 1st October 2026.

11.2 For the 2027 season each SoundSport Team must pay a £35.00 fee per Contest entered.

12. INDIVIDUAL REGISTRATIONS

12.1 There are no individual membership registrations of fees. SoundSport Team must advise number of performing members at least 7 day prior to the event and this number will be checked against the number of performers at the contest and if less performers on the day (and spare passes not handed in) then invoices will be issued equivalent to the spectator entrance fee for the that contest per person

12.2 The number of available staff passes per organisation (inc Directors) is as follows:

1 SoundSport Team = 6 passes, 2 SoundSport Team = 11 passes *(if more than two SoundSport Team from one organisation please contact for details of number of allowed staff passes)*

13. USE OF MEDIA (PHOTOS/VIDEOS)

13.1 WGUK/DCUK/MPAUK reserve the right to photograph and record performances for use in DVD production, promotions (inc website and yearbook/programmes), UK Fan Network and other mediums as approved by the WGUK/DCUK Board.

14. WELL-BEING & SAFETY CODE OF CONDUCT

14.1 The latest version of the above can be found at https://dcuk.org.uk/about/codeofconduct.html

***Contest Referee** – Person who has final say on an event day regarding any issues or rule violations including deciding/approving any penalties/sanctions. Any decision made may be referred to the DCUK Board after the event for formal ratification. This Person will normally be a WGUK/DCUK Board Member/MPAUK Trustee or, if none available, then an appointed person by the MPAUK Chairman and/or WGUK/DCUK Board*

***Arena Marshall** – Person who controls flow of contest. This role is mainly for keeping the event to timetable by ensuring performing units move on and off competition arena in a safe and timely fashion and checking event staff and Adjudicators are ready and in position before allowing performing units to commence. Any issues, including rule violations, should be passed to the Contest Referee with enough information to allow the Contest Referee to take any action that may be required on the day or for the DCUK Board to consider after the event.*

APPENDIX 1

ADJUDICATION GUIDELINES

While we encourage the pursuit of excellence, the primary responsibility for the SoundSport Adjudicator is to recognise creative and innovative performance. The teams will present their concept in a variety of ways. Adjudicators should provide positive input that reinforces the team's training, encourages ongoing development, and where appropriate, make suggestions for next steps to further develop a concept or fundamental skill.

SoundSport teams will be awarded standard rating (Gold, Silver, Bronze - *see scores below*) that is commensurate with their level of achievement and if performing in the Challenge Class also a numerical score and placing. Throughout the team's performance, adjudicators should consider the guiding questions on the worksheet to help determine an overall level in the caption. At the conclusion of the performance, the Adjudicator will indicate the achieved score and circle the corresponding medal rating at the bottom of their sheet.

There are three SoundSport Adjudicators, each with a specific area of focus:

The **Music Performance** Adjudicator recognizes and rewards a team's quality of sound, technical accuracy, and musical interpretation. The Music Performance caption will award a total score out of 100 points.

The **Visual Performance** Adjudicator recognizes and rewards a team's precision, choreography, and expression. The Visual Performance caption will award a total score out of 100 points.

The **Overall Impression** Adjudicator has a holistic perspective and recognizes and rewards the entire team's ability to entertain the audience, demonstrate creativity and innovation, and display a highly coordinated design concept or theme. While a theme is not mandatory, the team that best brings together both musical and visual design will be awarded the highest standard for their collective efforts. The Overall Impression caption will award a total score out of 100 points.

The total score for each performing team will be calculated by adding the full value of all captions and dividing by three, rounding the final score to the nearest hundredth (0.01) point.

Music Performance: 100 points
Visual Performance: 100 points
Overall Impression: 100 points

Subtotal 300 points divided by 3 = Total Score

Awards

Bronze Award: Score 60 to 69
Silver Award: Score 70 to 84
Gold Award: Score 85 to 100

At the conclusion of the contest, Bronze, Silver or Gold recognition awards will be awarded and if three or more teams entered (combining both Medalist and Challenge Classes entries) there will also be a single Best in Show award. Any tie for Best in Show will not be broken but rather be awarded to the two or more ensembles with a tie in their final score.

APPENDIX 2

MUSIC PERFORMANCE ADJUDICATION SHEET

SOUNDSPORT®

Drum Corps United Kingdom

Musical Performance

Team : _____

Event: _____

Date: _____

Criteria
Ensemble Cohesion (Tempo, pulse, overall accuracy)
Quality of Sound
Balance and Blend
Musical Expression
Communication of Style

Judges will assess the extent to which the SoundSport Team achieves the specified criteria and award a corresponding rating by responding to the following guidelines.

- The team performs together.
- The team presents a quality sound.
- The team has a clearly developed concept of balance and blend.
- The team demonstrates musical expression.
- The program demonstrates a clearly defined musical style.

Comments:

SCORE

Sometimes	Consistently	Always
Bronze	Silver	Gold
60-69	70-84	85-100

Name _____ Signature _____

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APPENDIX 3

VISUAL PERFORMANCE ADJUDICATION SHEET

SOUNDSPORT®

Drum Corps United Kingdom

Visual Performance

Team : _____

Event: _____

Date: _____

Criteria
Ensemble Cohesion
Control of tempo and pulse
Control of movement (body and equipment)
Quality of Musical Expression
Communication of Character and Style

Judges will assess the extent to which the SoundSport Team achieves the specified criteria and award a corresponding rating by responding to the following guidelines.

- The team performs together.
- The team maintains tempo and pulse.
- The team demonstrates control of movement including body and equipment.
- The team demonstrates a range of expression.
- The team has a clearly developed concept of character and style.

Comments:	
	SCORE

Sometimes	Consistently	Always
Bronze	Silver	Gold
60-69	70-84	85-100

_____ Name

_____ Signature

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APPENDIX 4

OVERALL IMPRESSION ADJUDICATION SHEET

SOUNDSPORT®

Drum Corps United Kingdom

Overall Impression

Team : _____

Event: _____

Date: _____

Criteria
Audience Engagement
Effect and Entertainment
Concept and Coordination
Unity and Variety
Creativity and Innovation

Judges will assess the extent to which the SoundSport Team achieves the specified criteria and award a corresponding rating by responding to the following guidelines.

- The team engages the audience throughout the performance.
- The team is effective and entertaining.
- The team has a clearly developed and coordinated concept.
- The program concept demonstrates unity and variety.
- The program demonstrates creativity and innovation.

Comments:

SCORE

Sometimes	Consistently	Always
Bronze	Silver	Gold
60-69	70-84	85-100

Name _____ Signature _____

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