

Report on Judging Concern Submissions during 2015 MLFA Season April 18, 2015

Overview

During the 2015 MLFA season, twenty-two (22) Judging Concern forms were submitted to the Judges Standards and Training Committee. Of these, one (2) had to do with check-in mistakes, one (1) complained about the room setup at a tournament, and one (1) disputed a timing infraction. These are not judge issues, but rather relate to tournament practices or infraction appeals. Thus, there were, in actuality, **eighteen (18)** judges concerns submitted via the website interface.

Of these 18, the reasons for the submissions broke down as follows:

- Low scores (9)
- Inappropriate comments (4)
- Lack of meaningful comments (3)
- Inappropriate oral comments (2)

Of these 18, four (4) of the low score submissions were assessed as not substantiated. In one case, the purported low score was not outside the acceptable range of scoring variation. In the other three cases, the low score came from the first tournament of the year so there is no scoring track record for comparative purposes. Three (3) of the inappropriate comments submissions were judged to be either lacking substance (i.e., trivial or inconsequential).

Thus, the judging concerns submissions that were determined to be valid and actionable were:

- Low scores (5)
- Inappropriate comments (1)
- Lack of meaningful comments (3)
- Inappropriate oral comments (2)

Analysis

Comparison of the judging concerns from 2014 to that from 2015 produces the following data:

Issue	2014	2015
Low Score	5	5
Inappropriate comments	4	1
Lack of meaningful comments	9	3
Inappropriate oral comments	2	2

As can be seen, the number of comments related to inappropriate comments fell by 75% and the percentage of complaints related to lack of meaningful comments decreased by 66%. Given these dramatic declines, it seems that the updating of the Judges Training video to include more specific guidance in the area of written judges comments has had the desired positive effect on judging performance.

The two inappropriate oral comments related to judges asking students for the title of their pieces prior to the performance. This was due to the training that the judges received from a new coach, so the issue was quickly addressed.

Almost one-third of the 18 submitted judge concern forms came from the same school. This school and two others account for two-thirds of all submitted judge concern forms.

Assessment

The number and percentage of judge concern submissions relating to low scores sharply decreased in the years following the insertion of scoring ranges into the Judges Training video. This past year more explicit directions were inserted into the Judges Training video on appropriate written comments and a similar dramatic decrease of these type of complaints has followed. Thus, improvements in the Judges Training video seem to result in decreasing the number of concerns related to judging performance.

Given that we can assume that there were at least 5000 judged rounds over the course of the MLFA season, the rate of insufficient judging is 0.0005, which is quite insignificant. Thus, the evidence from the submission of Judging Concerns substantiates that the quality of judging was quite sufficient this past season. Further there is no consistent pattern related to insufficient judging patterns, as poor judging is not related to any individual school, school type, or program size. Thus, the data indicates that inadequate judging performance was an anomaly and an insignificant phenomenon during the 2015 season.