

GETTING THE MOST FROM YOUR CONTEST ENTRY

By Jim Tangney, MMR

Judges get their information on what you did from the score sheet and other items submitted. Most entrants assume each factor writeup is a part of their whole entry, but the trend is towards decreasing judging time so each team has only a few minutes for each entry and they can read only the material concerning the factor they are judging.

You get credit for work you have done so it is vital that judges can distinguish between what you did and what a manufacturer did. They are not supposed to guess. If your entry is not clear you may not get all the credit due. At an airline seat there is usually a magazine and emergency instructions. The magazine, designed to entertain, uses lots of space to say little, while the instructions use graphics and efficient wording to quickly impart information. Use these ideas in your writeup. Get a copy of judging instructions from the Contest Chairman and volunteer to judge. You will find that there is much overlapping between factors. Here are some examples:

1. Detail judges consider only quantity of detail you added. Construction judges consider the quality of the work done in adding details as well as work done in making details. Conformity judges consider how well your details conform to prototype practice. Scratchbuilding judges consider the amount of scratchbuilding you did including the work on details. Thus to get all the credit you are due, you may have to include some information about details under not only "Detail" but under "Construction", "Conformity", and "Scratchbuilding" also. The point is usually missed by entrants.
2. Scratchbuilding judges look at the amount of scratchbuilding you did. Since it is work you did, Construction judges will judge its quality. If you scratchbuilt car sides to show the exact number of siding boards as the prototype had, Scratchbuilding, Detail, Construction and Conformity judges all need the information, so again, even though there will be duplication, it should appear more than once.

Generic information such as sample parts, pictures of the prototype with transparent overlays showing details you added, kit instructions, and prototype plans are useful. They can be referred to under a number of factors so the information is available as needed without requiring a lot of writing.

Try to put yourself in the judges' place. They are looking at a lot of unfamiliar models and your entry materials are their only guide to what you did and what someone else did on your entry. Type rather than write. Prefer graphics, samples, and brevity to long writeups. These make judges happy and you are better off with a happy judge than with a confused, doubtful, or unhappy judge.

Enter early so you can look for a well-lighted spot where the model is easy to see. If the underside is detailed, a mirror helps show it. A rotatable base (easily made from a Lazy Susan) makes it easy to see all sides and helps make your entry stand out. If you have interior detail and a removable roof, it may be better to leave the roof in place. Much detail can still be seen thru doors and windows, while the overall appearance of a complete model is better than a partially disassembled one, and you may avoid penalties from such things as the appearance of the otherwise hidden top edges of walls, and an improperly replaced roof.

AP judging, in a non-competitive setting without time limits of a big contest, allows judges to clear up questions left by the write-up. This is a main reason an AP judging often yields a higher score than a contest judging. By careful preparation you should be able to improve your scores in a hectic contest environment.

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