



USofA Pageants LLC Official Judges Guidebook for Preliminary Pageants/Contests

Serving on the panel of judges at a USofA Pageants LLC Pageant/Contest is an important responsibility as it's from the State or Regional preliminary pageant that the next National Titleholder is found.

To assist you in discharging this responsibility in a most credible manner, we are outlining here the system of judging devised by USofA Pageants LLC after several decades of experience. We ask that you carefully study this information for your understanding of and adherence to the official system of judging which will result in the selection of the most eligible contestant who has the best qualification to carry him/her through the next stage of competition. From these contestants by using the official scoring system, you will select the one contestant who has the best qualifications to carry him through the next stage of competition on his way to the National Pageant/Contest.

Prior to beginning the actual judging duties it is important that you first consider the qualifications of a USofA Pageants LLC contestant. We are looking for more than a beauty queen/king. We are looking for an individual who is intelligent person and when in costume possesses talent, dignity, poise, charm, good manners, beauty and the intangible called personality.

A USofA Pageants LLC representative must be able to meet the public, speak extemporaneously and represent their State or Region with dignity and charm. They must also have the necessary talent and wholesomeness to appeal to the public and successfully compete at the National level. As you can see you have a very important responsibility by serving as a judge of a USofA Pageants LLC Preliminary. If you should have any questions

please contact that particular promoter who is hosting this official preliminary.

Please read this Judges Guide as it has been compiled to help you in understanding the qualifications that the winner of this preliminary will need to successfully move on to the next step of competition which will be the National Pageant.

THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW –

1. It is important to adhere to the request that each contestant be judged in only the category in which they are competing using the criteria listed at the top of each category ballot.
2. You should just as carefully and judiciously give valued points to numbers 5, 4, 3 and to as to number 1 in each category.
3. Judges should **NOT** attend rehearsals at any time and should **NOT** talk with the contestants before the pageant/contest.
4. Never forget that the contestants consider participation in this pageant as serious business. As a judge you should realize that these contestants are sincere in their effort and as a judge you should respond at all times with great understanding and dignity.
5. As a judge you will be observed during competition. Therefore you should not react as a spectator and remain “poker faced”. You should not applaud for any contestant unless you applaud for every contestant. If it’s difficult for you to show appreciation equally to all it’s better to refrain from showing appreciation to the contestants.
6. **Under no circumstances should you ever take photos, record video, or stream live any portion of the pageant/contest.**

JUDGING ETHICS –

1. There should be no laughing or talking while contestants are on stage particularly during talent or evening gown/fashion presentations.
2. Watch all contestants and consider them. Do not study your forms or begin to vote until the last contestant has finished their competition.
3. Never applaud any category as you may forget to applaud for them all. Remember as a judge you are watched by the audience, friends and

- family for your reactions. If you cannot judge a contestant impartially do not accept the responsibility judging this pageant/contest.
4. If you disagree with a decision do not do so until you have left the location of the pageant/contest. At that time you may discuss it with other judges.
 5. If you feel the outcome was not consistent with the scoring talk to the promoter of the pageant/contest and ask to see the ballots and then ask them to prepare a new Master Tally Sheet. If the problem is not to your satisfaction contact the National Titleholder or the National Office at 832-425-1240.
 6. Judges should be aware of the point values of each category. Talent is 50%, Evening Gown/Fashion is 25% and Personal Interview is 25%.
 7. Never leave the judges table to discuss who your winner will be with anyone (including other judges). That decision is made at the judges table using your ballots.
 8. Watch lose talk between judges concerning contestants or the pageant/contest itself. You never know with whom you are talking or who is sitting or standing near you and could hear your conversation.
 9. Never openly compare the winner or contestants with winners or contestants of other preliminary pageants/contests.

JUDGES NOTES –

The promoter of the pageant/contest will provide you with a judges workbook for keeping personal notes as each contestant appears individually in each phase of competition.

You will find these notes most helpful when the contestants return in a group for comparative competition in Evening Gown/Fashion. They will NOT be brought back in a group after the conclusion of the Talent Competition therefore you must rely on your notes taken during their talent presentation. It's helpful to indicate in your notes the type of talent each contestant presents.

It is wiser to rely on notes made at the time of the performance than to rely on your memory at the conclusion of competition.

JUDGES COMMENT SHEETS –

In your judges workbook you will find a “Comment Sheet” for each contestant. On this sheet will you write your comments for each contestant. These should be both complimentary and constructive. Many contestants return to compete for many years in hopes of one day winning the National Title. These comment sheets are designed to help the contestants on the journey to the crown. Do not leave these comments blank!

These comments should contain information for the contestant in such a manner that they understand why they were given the placement you gave them.

Casting Your Ballots –

The most important consideration in each phase of competition is that you cast your ballot for the most outstanding contestant in that particular category. Concentrate only on the qualifications being sought in that category and vote accordingly regardless of whether you feel your first place vote is going to the contestant that you would like to see capture the title or not. By following this procedure you will find that the total points will result in the best contestant being announced as the winner.

Vote for the contestants in order of preference. Much care should be exercised in voting for your 5th place choice as for your 1st place choice. Remember that valuable prizes and money is at stake.

As soon as you have marked your ballot and signed your name you should record the points awarded on the comment sheet for each contestant and then turn your ballot to the auditor. It is very important to record the score you gave each contestant on their comment sheet as this is the only form that shows them the score they actually received. If you change your vote or make an erasure make sure you initial that change or erasure before your ballot is corrected.

PERSONAL INTERVIEW (ALL) –

Contestants will be individually interviewed by the panel of judges. After each seven (7) minute interview you will be given a brief time to make notes prior to the next contestant being introduced. Your notes are very important when it comes time for you to cast your ballot as you must rely on those notes taken during each contestant’s interview.

The Personal Interview in USofA Pageants LLC differs greatly from other National Systems. The nature of personal interview is intended to be casual and relaxed. The suggested attire is casual however, each contestant should select clothing in which they feel at ease whether it be in male or female attire.

The purpose of the Personal Interview in USofA Pageants LLC is to allow you some insight into the character of each contestant. During the interview you are also afforded the opportunity to evaluate each contestant's basic qualities such as intelligence, ability to communicate, attitude, composure, personality, mental alertness, vocabulary, voice, general knowledge, personal appearance, sincerity and manners. As a judge you may also gather information about a contestant's professional and personal life.

NEVER are questions concerning current affairs, religion, politics or governmental issues to be asked in Personal Interview.

EVENING GOWN (Miss Gay USofA/Classic/At Large/Newcomer Pageants) –

Evening gowns may be of any color or style. They must, however, be full length. The gown must fit well, the contestant must model it elegantly and all of the elements (hair, make-up, accessories, shoes, and gown) must come together for an overall look that makes the contestant look his very best. The USofA Pageants LLC Evening Gown/Fashion competition has traditionally rewarded contestants who bring a unique combination of evening gown, hair, make-up, accessories, modeling and poise to the stage. This has not changed. The USofA Pageants LLC system has often rewarded gowns that include lots of rhinestones, beading, etc., as well as hair and accessories that may be described as "high drag". These are still appropriate for Evening Gown/Fashion competition in the USofA Pageants LLC system and its preliminaries. While couture gowns are also appropriate for the USofA Pageants LLC Evening Gown/Fashion category, this is not creative evening wear competition, and gowns that are costumes should be avoided.

We also discourage gowns that are so heavily embellished that the contestant cannot model them elegantly. Judges are asked to educate themselves about current fashion and contestants should be aware that a gown, though beautiful, may be outdated and therefore not score as well as it might otherwise.

Further, a gown with few or even no embellishments (stones, etc.) can score just as well as a fully embellished gown if the overall look (make-up, hair, accessories, shoes, poise, fit, and modeling) makes the contestant look his very best. Many contestants spend thousands of dollars on their Evening

Gown and the contestants have the right to expect that the judges understand and know what is being presented to them. We would recommend that you study some fashion magazines before arriving at the pageant. Please remember that 25% of the contestants overall score will come from this category.

CLUB WEAR (Mr. Gay USofA/At Large Contests) –

In Club Wear, contestants should dress as they would for an exciting night out on the town. They should wear clothing that you would expect to see in a large club in one of the major cities in the United States. Club Wear should NOT be a costume for stage, but rather what you would wear into the club. Club Wear should be fun and sexy and be in between formal clothing and ultra-casual looks. Contemporary looks are perfect, but a classic cool look (like a crisp white shirt and boot cut dark denim) fit in just as nicely. Wearing layers can also be used.

EVENING WEAR (Mister USofA MI/Classic Contests) –

Creative Evening Wear is to show creativity and individuality. Creative Evening Wear may be of any color or style, however, a jacket is required. This is not limited to a Tux or Suit. Creative Evening Wear should not be overdone to the point of being a costume.

Scoring will be based on the creativity, originality, presentation, poise, fit, coordination, hair & make-up, and general appearance.

EVENING WEAR (Miss Diva USofA Pageants) –

Creative Evening Wear is to show creativity and individuality. Creative Evening Wear may be of any color or style. This is NOT limited to an evening gown, pant suit, cocktail dress, etc. The look would be something seen at a red carpet or an evening event. Creative Evening Wear should not be overdone to the point of being a costume.

Scoring will be based on the creativity, originality, presentation, poise, fit, coordination, hair & make-up, and general appearance.

COMPARATIVE FASHION (ALL) –

During the fashion competition, the Master/Mistress of Ceremonies will announce the contestant's sponsor(s) as well as other pertinent information. After the last contestant has presented their fashion, all contestants will be brought back to the stage and lined up in their numerical order so the judges

can have a final look at all of the contestants. At the conclusion of this phase of competition, you will cast your ballot based on poise, grace, and general appearance in the fashion category with NO relation to any other qualifications or their performance in any previous category. Remember to make notes on each contestant as he appears individually.

TALENT (ALL) –

Take into consideration that the point value for talent is 50% of the overall score for each contestant. This is an extremely important phase of competition for all contestants and particularly for the winner. You should consider the talent category from an entertainment point of view.

Besides honesty the single most important issue that separates the USofA Pageants LLC system from other national systems is the fact that our National titleholder has always been a superior entertainer. He/She could be placed on any stage in America and entertain an audience.

Talent presentations can be any type of entertainment as long as it does not create any danger or injury to either the contestant or any other person. Talent presentations are limited to seven (7) minutes. There is no restriction on the number of persons who may be involved in this presentation. You will see great productions and single person acts. When judging a production you must take into consideration that the props and dancers are to be judged as well as the contestant. One other point is the quality of the sound track that the contestant is using. It is impossible to pull off a performance when all you hear is “popcorn popping” or “bacon frying” from an old or poor quality track.

CONCLUSION –

We hope that this Judges Guidebook has been a help to you as you prepare to judge this Official USofA Pageants LLC Preliminary. As you can see your part in this production is very important and on behalf of the Board of Governors of USofA Pageants LCC we thank you for taking your time and efforts to be a part of this pageant/contest.

One last point we would like to make is that all of us as people like our hometown girls. Most USofA Pageants LLC preliminaries are open which means that any contestant from anywhere in the United States of America may enter. These contestants spend a lot of time and money traveling to get to these preliminaries and deserve to be treated equally and fairly when you cast your ballot. Remember that the contestant, sponsor(s), friends, fans and family will judge the results of this pageant so keep this motto in mind. “Let Honesty Be Your Guide”.