



## LOCAL TEEN COMPETITIONS JUDGES' ORIENTATION

### JUDGES ORIENTATION FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Thank you for making the commitment to ensure the integrity of your program by providing your panel of judges the best Judges Orientation possible. This guide is designed to allow you to conduct your Judges Orientation with uniformity with other Local Competitions. However, it is also designed to allow you the flexibility to modify the specifics of the Orientation to fit your precise needs.

#### **Creating a "Job Description"**

Prior to the judges' arrival, you should meet with all relevant competition officials and the current titleholder, if applicable, and write a "Job Description", outlining what the role and responsibilities of the titleholder will be. As you discuss this, prepare a list of appearances she is already scheduled to make as well as possible future appearances. List all partnerships with which your organization is associated, including Chambers of Commerce, school programs, charities, churches, etc. Once you have made the list of appearances and partnerships, look at each individual listing and write down the audiences she will be serving. Will she need to perform her talent? Will she need to create a program and how long will it need to last? What qualities and attributes are necessary for your specific titleholder?

You must be realistic in your approach to writing this description and your expectations of your titleholder. Remember that she is a teen, who is still a full-time high school (or middle school) student, so travel and appearances should not interfere with her studies and school activities. Being Miss Local/State/ or National Outstanding Teen is a privilege and an opportunity, but it cannot be a full-time job.

In addition to your specific titleholder's role, all Miss Local's Outstanding Teens must be:

- ✓ An Ambassador of the Local Organization
- ✓ Well-spoken
- ✓ Attractive, with a confident, comfortable, and commanding presence
- ✓ Talented
- ✓ Intelligent and an eloquent communicator
- ✓ A proven achiever
- ✓ A leader by virtue of her accomplishments
- ✓ A role model who inspires and relates to young people
- ✓ A role model who cares about her community
- ✓ Committed to a Platform Issue of broad public interest
- ✓ Able to relate to young people
- ✓ Outgoing and approachable
- ✓ Reflective of teens her age (not someone who appears to be "Miss")
- ✓ Contemporary in her style and fashion - a relatable and individual young woman who can connect with today's modern teen

- ✓ Energetic and charismatic
- ✓ Genuine, trustworthy, compassionate, patient, appreciative, dedicated
- ✓ Physically fit and emotionally ready to handle the duties and responsibilities
- ✓ Manageable and flexible
- ✓ Enthusiastic about working with the organization
- ✓ Punctual
- ✓ Able to completely understand her position and how important her actions are to the overall success of the Miss America's Outstanding Teen program at all levels

Prepare a thorough description of the titleholder's role and responsibilities and make sure each of your judges receives a copy. The judges should place this document inside their judge's books as a constant reminder of the young woman they are expected to select.

### **At the Orientation:**

The Orientation Room should be conducive to the presentation of the judging materials and the facilitation of open discussion. Consider your options within the appointed room and plan accordingly. Will you need a podium and microphone, projector, DVD player, internet access, etc.?

Once the panel of judges arrives for your competition, welcome them and thank them on behalf of your organization for taking time out of their schedules to be with you. Ask each of them to introduce themselves and perhaps mention a little background about themselves so they can get to know each other. As the person providing the orientation, you might also mention your professional background, your experience in the Miss America or Miss America's Outstanding Teen systems, and the fact that we are all volunteers for the organization.

Ask the judges to complete and sign the MAOTeen Judges' Affidavit if they have not already done so prior to arriving. If the same judges' panel is also judging the Local "Miss" competition, they must sign the official MAOTeen Judges' Affidavit **and** the official Miss America Local Judges' Affidavit.

In general, when judging a Miss America's Outstanding Teen system Local competition, a judge is expected to:

- Perform their duties in a dignified and professional manner that is appropriate and sensitive to the feelings and impressions of the young women who are participating.
- Maintain an environment to the end that each and every contestant receives a fair, objective and unbiased opportunity to compete.
- Maintain the confidentiality of the information entrusted or known by them by virtue of their position as a judge, regardless of the source of the information (i.e., contestants, competition personnel or any other person).
- Will not allow, under any circumstances, any person to exert or try to exert any influence upon them in their capacity as a judge. If anyone should attempt to influence them, then as part of their fiduciary responsibility, they agree to immediately disclose such attempted influence to the National Office of the Miss America's Outstanding Teen Organization (813-510-3237) as soon as it is practical.
- Preserve and promote the goals and spirit of the Miss America's Outstanding Teen Program.
- A Judge must be:
  - ✓ Decisive
  - ✓ Impartial
  - ✓ Consistent

- ✓ Appreciative of the Arts
- ✓ Appreciative of Community Service Endeavors

Discuss thoroughly the description of your titleholder's role and responsibilities that you have previously created. Explain to the judges that you will educate them on how to use the four phases of competition that they will be judging to help them focus on that "Job Description" and each contestant's abilities to fulfill that role. The judges will also need to consider each contestant's ability to be the primary Teen representative of the Local organization, and to represent the Local organization at the State competition, and perhaps the National competition eventually. They must also be able to assess the contestant's desire to actually WANT to perform the duties of her role as the titleholder.

Emphasize that we are not looking for a particular "type" of young woman, although she needs to meet the criteria for each competition category. She can be any "type" of accomplished young woman. She can be or desire to be an athlete, scientist, cheerleader, band member, artist, debater, interested in politics, cooking, acting, or interested in marrying and having children in the future. We ask that one keeps an open mind and heart, and that special young woman will make herself known.

### **GENERAL SCORING GUIDELINES**

- In the Miss America's Outstanding Teen judging system, an "Olympic" scoring system is used, scoring from a low of '1' to a high of '10', using whole numbers only. You can give a score of 7 or 8, but not 7.5.
- The Auditors will drop the highest and lowest score given by the panel of judges for each competition. The judges should not be concerned about this, as it is the Auditor's responsibility, nor should they keep it in mind when scoring. Give the contestant the score she deserves.
- Each phase of competition will have its own score sheet, handed to the judges when a new phase of competition is about to begin.
- The score sheet should be signed by the judge as soon as he/she receives it.
- The judge should review the scoring criteria shown at the bottom of each score sheet to remind them what should be factored into scoring in each area of competition.
- After each contestant has competed in a phase of competition, the judge should immediately assign her a score. It is important for each judge to understand how to use the entire point range of 1-10. The judge needs to establish what (in their opinion) is average for each phase of competition, and, if the judge feels the contestant's performance is below average, then she must be given a 1, 2, or 3. If the contestant's performance is average, she must be given a 4, 5, or 6; above average a 7, 8, or 9; and a perfect score is a 10. Unfortunately, too many judges score too high and end up hurting truly good contestants. A good judge is decisive, uses the ENTIRE point range and awards each contestant the score she deserves.
- The judge must also remember to be consistent in scoring - what is average at the beginning of the competition must be average at the end of competition. Do not become "easier" or "tougher" as the competition moves along.
- Each of the judges must individually use the phases of competition to find the young woman who can best accomplish the role of Miss Local's Outstanding Teen. The judges do not judge by "caucus", so remind them that they are NEVER allowed to discuss how they have scored with the other judges.
- It is very important that the judges understand that the contestants are NOT competing against each other, but against each judge's individual standards. They are not being compared to one another, so more than one contestant may receive the same score.

- If the judge wants to change a score, he/she should draw a line through the original score, write the new score next to it, and initial the change.
- The judges should write clearly so the auditors can easily understand the scores.
- The judges must not get overwhelmed by one phase of competition and carry it over into the other phases. Just because a contestant is a 9 in Private Interview, does not mean she should receive a 9 in Lifestyle and Fitness, if she is actually below average in that area, and ought to receive a 1, 2, or 3. In some competitions, awards may be given to the contestant who scored the highest number of points in a specific phase of competition. That is why it is critically important for the judges to award the score she deserves in each phase.
- The judges will also receive a Judges' Worksheet. This worksheet is theirs to keep and it is recommended they use it to:
  - ✓ Make notes about each contestant. These notes can include what she is wearing, her talent selection, first impression, etc.
  - ✓ Write down all of their scores in every phase of competition to help them recall every contestant as the competition moves forward.

# THE PHASES OF COMPETITION

## THE PRIVATE INTERVIEW (25% OF TOTAL SCORE)

- This phase of competition is an opportunity to learn as much as possible about the contestant's qualities and attributes to fulfill the titleholder position; her level of communication skills; her opinions and aspirations; her sense of accomplishment; poise and presence, as well as her ability to fulfill the responsibilities outlined in the Local "Job Description".
- The judge will need to assess the "impression" the contestant makes. She needs to possess a confident personality and the ability to express and distinguish her beliefs. She needs to have knowledge and understanding of her Platform Issue and have a commitment to community service. She needs to be attractive and stylish in an age-appropriate manner.
- The Private Interview Questions:
  - Questions should be structured to avoid one word answers.
  - Questions should be clear, brief, and easy to understand so that as many questions as possible can be asked. Don't hog the conversation and use up the contestant's time!
  - The contestant can be asked a two-part question, give additional details to an answer already given, or a new question can be formed based on her answer.
  - Don't be afraid to ask questions that will challenge the contestants, but always be courteous and age-appropriate.
  - The questions should provide an overall view of the contestant's ability to secure an audience and keep their attention.
  - Types of questions:
    - ✓ Behavioral - Past behavior can be an indicator of future behavior so one could ask, "How did you handle it when...?"
    - ✓ Situational - Give the contestant a situation and ask her how she would handle it.
    - ✓ Role Play - "Pretend we're a third grade class. What would you tell us about your platform?" (Pay close attention to how she handles the material with children. Many contestants ignore the question and tell the judges what they want them to know or what they think the judges want to hear)
    - ✓ Experience - "What did you learn from...?"
    - ✓ Opinion - Is it valid, well-reasoned, and defensible? (A judge should never get into a debate with the contestant. It is a judge's job to evaluate how a contestant answered the question and if she validated her opinion...**not** if her opinion matches the judge's own personal opinion.)
    - ✓ Off the Wall - Can she think on her feet? How does she react to a change in the interview tone?
- PRIVATE INTERVIEW SCORING CRITERIA
  - Overall "First Impression"
  - Exceptional communication skills including speech, vocabulary, and grammar
  - Confident, commanding presence and a charismatic personality
  - Attractive and stylish in an age-appropriate manner
  - Knowledge and understanding of her Platform Issue
  - Leadership and a sense of accomplishment
  - Ability to express and distinguish her beliefs
  - Ability to fulfill the role and responsibilities of the titleholder

- PRIVATE INTERVIEW SCORING CONSIDERATIONS:
  - Before placing the score on the sheet, the judge should consider, “What was my first impression when the contestant walked into the Interview and what was my impression as soon as she left the room?” Those will be the impressions that people who meet her will have when she is introduced to them at an appearance.
  - Assess how natural she is and whether or not she will be able to relate to her peers and the audiences she will need to serve.
  - Does she have a strong ability to communicate?
  - Examine her personality, personal appearance, and attractiveness.
  - Does she really understand her Platform Issue and how it can benefit the Miss America’s Outstanding Teen Organization through her involvement?
  - Determine whether or not she has the knowledge and commitment to her community that is needed in this role.
  - Can you envision the public and especially young people, being positively impacted by meeting this young woman?
  - Is the contestant charismatic enough, dynamic enough, mature enough, and intelligent enough to fulfill the responsibilities of Miss Local’s Outstanding Teen?

**PRIVATE INTERVIEW PROCEDURE:**

- All Private Interviews at the MAOTeen Local level are 6:00 minutes in length, with no opening or closing statement.
- Turn off all electronic devices.
- A podium will be used.
- Prior to arriving at Orientation, decide who will serve as the Head Judge. This person should be experienced (but not necessarily the most experienced) and capable of handling any issue which may arise.
- The contestant may introduce herself or a competition official may introduce each contestant as she enters the interview room.
- Designate who will ask the first question and which judge will wrap up the Interview (usually the Head Judge). Typically, after the first contestant’s Interview is completed, the judges rotate who asks the first question of each contestant. Once she has been introduced, the judge assigned to ask the first question should begin. Once the first question is asked, it is typically open for all judges to be able to ask questions, as at a press conference. Once the time for questioning has elapsed, the Head Judge (or the individual who is timing the interview) will tell the contestant her time is up.
- Remind the judges to give each contestant their undivided attention. Instruct that they may take some brief notes during the Interview, but they must not look down to write for long periods of time. The judges must always show interest in and attention to what the contestant is saying. There is a short amount of time in between each of the interviews to jot down further notes as a reminder of each contestant.
- Instruct the judges not to put a score down for the contestant until after each contestant completes her presentation.
- Many competitions will allow the judges to participate in a “mock” interview with the current titleholder or a former contestant who had a strong interview. This provides the judges the opportunity to work out any bugs in the process before interviewing the first contestant. If you elect to do a mock interview, please conduct it just as you will all of the other interviews, including providing the judges with an additional resume and platform essay.

## TALENT (35% OF TOTAL SCORE)

- This phase of competition separates the Miss America's Outstanding Teen program from other competitions.
- The Talent competition is an insight into the contestant's preparatory and performance skills. It acknowledges the quality of the performance, technical skill level, stage presence and entertainment value.
- The judge should look at whether or not this contestant has the true talent ability to represent the local organization as well as the MAOTeen program for the entire year.
- The judge should assess her talent presentation's overall effect as a member of both the judges' panel and the audience.
- The maximum time length for the talent presentation is 90 seconds at all levels of the MAOTeen program.
  
- TALENT SCORING CRITERIA:
  - ✓ Overall "First Impression"
  - ✓ Selection and performance - Distinguishes personality
  - ✓ Technical skill level
  - ✓ Entertainment value
  - ✓ Interpretive ability
  - ✓ Stage presence and on-stage personality
  - ✓ Total of all elements - Music, costume, voice, choreography and use of body, props
  
- TALENT SCORING CONSIDERATIONS:
  - ✓ Does the contestant's talent selection fit her skills and personality?
  - ✓ If she is asked to perform her talent at an appearance, is she going to entertain the audience? Impress them? Embarrass herself or the MAOTeen Organization?
  - ✓ Will you be proud that you selected this young woman when she performs her talent if she is selected as the titleholder?
  - ✓ **Both** raw talent and entertainment value must be considered.
  - ✓ Did you enjoy the presentation?

## LIFESTYLE AND FITNESS (15% OF TOTAL SCORE)

- This phase of competition is designed to see how well the contestant maintains a lifestyle of good physical health and whether or not she has the sense of confidence and self-assurance needed to be a titleholder.
- The contestant should show that she takes care of herself and participates in activities that promote a healthy lifestyle.
- The contestants will wear a type of aerobic/active -wear clothing, chosen by the Local Organization, NOT a swimsuit. This phase of competition is not a substitute for the Swimsuit

competition at Miss America and the MAOTeen Organization is not looking for the perfect swimsuit body. Our objective is not to place a teen contestant, whose body is changing almost on a daily basis, in a position of having to diet herself into the perfect swimsuit body.

- This phase of competition is a great indicator of confidence.
- LIFESTYLE AND FITNESS SCORING CRITERIA:
  - ✓ Overall "First Impression"
  - ✓ Physically Fit
  - ✓ Dynamic presence and attractiveness
  - ✓ Shows energy and a healthy vitality
  - ✓ Sense of confidence and self-assurance
- LIFESTYLE AND FITNESS SCORING CONSIDERATIONS:
  - ✓ Can she complete the presentation with energy, spirit, and charisma?
  - ✓ Does she meet the public's expectation of a titleholder?

## **EVENING WEAR/ON-STAGE QUESTION (25% OF TOTAL SCORE)**

- This phase of competition is designed to assess the contestant's beauty, poise, grace, and commanding stage presence, as well as her ability to answer a question with eloquence and intelligence in front of a large audience.
- When the contestant enters the stage, immediately assess the first impression she makes.
- The contestant's sense of confidence, personality, walk, posture and carriage should be considered.
- Do not consider the cost of the evening wear itself, but only consider the evening wear as it helps the contestant present her total look.
- Give special attention to whether or not she answered the question she was asked.
- The contestant's total look, grace, charm, and ability as a spokesperson must be considered.
- EVENING WEAR/ON-STAGE QUESTION SCORING CRITERIA:
  - ✓ Overall "First Impression"
  - ✓ Sense of confidence and composure
  - ✓ Poise, personality and stage presence
  - ✓ Walk, carriage, posture, and beauty
  - ✓ Sense of style and age appropriateness of the evening wear
  - ✓ Ability to answer the question she was asked, as well as make the audience *want* to listen to her answer
- EVENING WEAR/ON-STAGE QUESTION SCORING CONSIDERATIONS:
  - ✓ Does she take command of the stage by simply walking onto it?
  - ✓ Can she handle the pressure of speaking in front of a large audience?
  - ✓ Did she answer the question with eloquence and intelligence?

- ✓ Do her personality, attractiveness, and charisma carry “across the footlights” and make the audience pay attention to her?

Based upon these four phases of competition, the Auditors will tally the total points for each contestant. High and low scores will be dropped in all categories.

**These scores determine the Winner and Runners-up.**

**(Effective immediately, the Final Ballot is no longer used at any level of the Miss America’s Outstanding Teen program)**

## **PRELIMINARY WINNER ANNOUNCEMENTS**

- Some local competitions announce Preliminary Awards toward the end of the competition, for those contestants who scored highest in a specific phase of competition. Only two (2) Preliminary Awards can be given. (For example, a Talent Preliminary Award and a Lifestyle & Fitness Preliminary Award)
- If your local competition announces Preliminary Awards and there is a tie for the most points in a specific phase of competition (Talent, Lifestyle & Fitness, etc.) and your local organization’s directive is to break all ties, then there is a specific tie-breaking procedure in the Miss America’s Outstanding Teen Program.
- Explain to the judges that if this happens and the tie needs to be broken, then the Auditor will prepare a slip of paper and it will be handed to each of the judges with the names of the contestants who are tied for the award. These slips of paper will be clearly identified as to the phase in which the tie exists.
- Each judge must circle his/her choice for the winner of the award.
- If there is an even number of judges and a tie still exists after each judge has circled his/her choice to win the award, multiple winners should be announced or no winner should be announced.
- Do NOT use any other phase of competition to split a tie within another area of competition.

## POST CROWNING

- Review with the judges what will transpire immediately following the crowning, where they will go, who will escort them, etc.
- If there is an event following the competition that the judges are invited to, there may be contestants, family members and audience members who could approach them with sincere questions or comments. In addition, later on they may receive emails, letters, or social media requests asking for advice on how to improve. Remind the judges that the affidavit they signed earlier prevents them from responding to these questions or requests. It is best that the judges simply reply with "I'm sorry. I signed an affidavit which prevents me from discussing anything which took place during the judging process. Good luck with your competition experience".

## REMINDERS FOR THE JUDGES

- No talking at any time by the judges about the contestants or how they are scoring them.
- Talking amongst the judges must be kept to a minimum during the competition in the auditorium.
- Judges should never talk to each other while contestants are on stage during their competition or during production numbers.
- The judges should keep pleasant looks on their faces. The contestants can see them, even in the theater or auditorium.
- No clapping or applauding for any contestant except for production numbers with all of the contestants onstage or when the awards and winners are being announced!
- Remember, a contestant may not be the best speaker, the most talented, the most beautiful, or the most charismatic, but the winner must possess ALL of those qualities and abilities, because all of those qualities are required to fulfill her role.

## REMINDERS FOR THE ORIENTATION FACILITATOR

- The contestant paperwork given to the judges should not include any references to personal information, especially Social Security numbers, telephone numbers, addresses, etc. Please ensure that all contestant paperwork is handled properly and disposed of in a manner which will protect the contestants.
- Stress again to the judges the importance of judging FAIRLY in all phases of competition. Every one of these contestants, their families and friends, the local and state organizations, and the Miss America's Outstanding Teen Organization have put their trust in each of the judges to judge fairly and honestly so that this scholarship program can survive...and hopefully thrive.