

## **A Shift In Your Mindset (sub-caption profiling)**

As the diversity of color guards has increased, so too has the vast numbers of guards competing in regionals and at Championships increased. This presents many challenges for us; however, the one that is outlined below addresses only one. Using a full range of numbers in properly assigning sub-caption scores. We all need to shake the preconceived notion of what profiling formerly represented – a system where most sub-caption profiling was one, two or three tenths “what” over “how,” except in extreme circumstances (once or twice during a contest). Think about this – if you assign numbers in this manner, the judging system is skewed in a way that provides an advantage to the “what” sub-caption. Therefore, superior design / repertoire / vocabulary will always receive higher scores if we don’t evolve and adjust the way we assign numbers. In this case inferior design might inappropriately receive more reward than the achievement of the performers. It is a shift in your mindset.

The judging system is designed with an equal allocation of numbers, a 50/50 split if you will, of “what” and “how.” How then did we arrive at a point where we find it so difficult to profile “how” over “what”? Our activity was originally built on a tic system that overly rewarded performance – “how.” Only a few of us judged under this system, but we are all keenly aware of our roots. Then an evolution occurred, and rightfully so, where “derived achievement” took precedence. Remember big-what/little-how, little-how/big-what? The performance took a back seat to the “what.” Most of us were trained under this philosophy.

Now (over the last several seasons), we have been asking you to bring both captions into an equal partnership, assigning numbers evenly, equally and within certain, well-established guidelines. Is “derived achievement” erased from our philosophy, does it simply go away? Of course not, it is simply put in perspective. We are asking that derived achievement be reflected through the profile, not instead of the profile. Have the guidelines changed (.4 above one point below)? No, but remember, that they are simply guidelines. You must make conscious decisions and be prepared to articulate why you assigned numbers, this also is not a change.

Give all the points you can, this may occur in either sub-caption. Give the teams the points they deserve, where they are deserved, when they are deserved. This requires that you thoroughly evaluate, both sub-captions. The pendulum has simply swung to center – no one sub-caption should be over emphasized. For those of us that were trained thinking one way or another, this will be a challenge. One that I know we can overcome. The shift in thinking for some of us has been slow, if at all. This explanation is an attempt to continue down the path, to shine a brighter light, one that will hopefully allow you to make the shift required.

So, with this in mind, I have outlined some of the situations where profiling the “how” sup-caption over the “what” could be utilized.

- Incomplete programs – this should be the most obvious and straightforward of all the situations you come across. The show is unfinished – the performers have a rough run, multiple breaks, there’s lack of clarity. But the performers haven’t been given the opportunity to fully perform a complete program. Ideas are incomplete, phrases are incomplete, no flags, no costumes, no floor, etc.

- The program is underdeveloped – performers have skills beyond what has been given. This is different from an incomplete program, the show may be complete (beginning, middle and end), but the ideas may not be clear, or some phrases may still be under construction (filler). Performers are trained to a degree, but there is lack of clarity and breaks occur.
- Performers handling show exceptionally well, their training is evident. Performers still have breaks, drops, and lack some clarity; they were not “perfect.” But the performers understood their roles and achieved well in relation to the criteria (their third of the box), the class, and / or in comparison to other teams in their neighborhood.
- Show is not creative / innovative / depth, variety, range is somewhat limited in relation to the criteria (their third of the box), the class, and / or in comparison to other teams in their neighborhood. Here think about box descriptors. A program about zombies, in the spring, at the prom all in florescent colors. Reference your sheet; there are points of comparison that address this. Again, performers lack clarity, even some training, breaks occur – think about sub-caption integrity. Does the “what” meet **some** of the criteria **some** of the time and “how” meets **most** of the criteria **most** of the time?
- Performers require more points. Never refrain from giving points, work your numbers to allow reward. There were moments of the performance that were stellar, crystalized, mouth dropping. Not from the beginning of the program to end, but moments of the program were outstanding. Were there still breaks, moments of individual error? Yes. Was the performance better than others in their neighborhood?
- Show has built in “errors,” these are construction, choreography and repertoire errors. Again, performers lack clarity and training in some areas, there may be many breaks – however, the performers have not been set up to succeed. The written errors prohibit achievement.
- Sub-caption ranking demands “how” over “what.” This could occur in any round, but most often in larger rounds. Utilizing a full range of numbers is critical, when you refuse to use those tenths (of “how” over “what”) you are limiting your numeric range. Rounds of 24 at Championships will require it, and if you are not comfortable using those numbers until Championships, it may be too late. Just like anything in our activity, this will require practice.

Below is an example of what sub-caption profiling could look like. For each guard, the reason for the profiling is different. In one case, the program was not complete, in another the sub-caption ranking demanded it and in still another the performers handled their responsibilities extraordinarily well in relationship to their neighborhood. Take a few minutes to analyze the tote, what explanations can you come up with to articulate the story being told?

What	66	68	70	69	72	71	65	63	58	73	74	61
How	61	69	60	66	70	72	67	62	63	75	65	59
Total	127	137	130	135	142	143	132	125	121	148	139	120

Proper sub-caption profiling takes on another component when discussing IA judges and the factoring that occurs. Consider what occurs when you stay in the habit of applying a “formulaic” profile of .3 in this example:

Your initial “what” impression is Box 4 (most/most), but you think the achievement is weak, so you incorrectly keep the “what” score low:

**what 69 / how 66 = 13.5.** Instead of a more accurate: **what 72 / how 63 = 13.5**

The factoring process would convert your **what 69 / how 66** into **13.41**  
the more accurate **what 72 / how 63** into **13.23**

A difference of almost 2 tenths!

The factoring process only works when you accurately profile the sub-captions.

In all captions, you have now drastically limited your ability to accurately sub-caption rank, spread and profile the remaining guards in the contest. You’ve reduced your “maneuvering room” and bottom line ties will now impede you each time you try to break the formulaic approach of one, two or three tenth spread.

An argument could be made for profiling in every contest in every class. We know that upstairs judges and downstairs judges will look at this differently. But the opportunity exists equally, in all captions, to utilize your full range of numbers. Practice, release those demons, allow yourself to step out of your comfort zone. It’s time to make a shift in your mindset.