

Getting Started in the N-SSA Costume Competition

The N-SSA Costume Competition is open to anyone interested in the civilian clothing worn during the years 1861 through 1865. In order to compete in competition, you must be issued a costuming competitor number, register for competition according to the established procedures, and have not been barred from N-SSA activities. If you are interested in participating, the following information will assist you in getting started. Please note that the information given complies with N-SSA Rules (Section 35), Policy, and By-Laws in addition to Costume Committee procedures and/or guidelines. Military Uniform competition is held in addition to civilian costume competition. The Uniform Committee of the N-SSA coordinates this competition. See Appendix I & II

When and where is competition held?

The costuming competition and sewing circle are conducted in Memorial Circle at Fort Shenandoah, in Winchester, Virginia. The National Costume competitions are traditionally held mid-day Saturdays of the Spring and Fall National Skirmishes each year.

To view the most up to date schedule of events check any of the following:

- The Skirmish Line Magazine
- Official national program
- N-SSA web site
- Facebook N-SSA Costuming page
- Posted on the bulletin boards throughout Fort Shenandoah.

Some regions may also host a competition during their regional skirmishes. In the event of inclement weather at Fort Shenandoah, activities may be held in the lower level of the History Center/Veteran's Building across from Sutler Row.

How do I obtain a competitor number?

Costume competition participants must file an application with the registrar. Two signatures and/or an active N-SSA membership number as requested on the form must accompany applications. Applications are available from the Registrar, the Operations Coordinator or the Committee Chair the day of competition prior to the scheduled competition. Registration occurs in Memorial Circle at Fort Shenandoah. In addition, applications are also available on the N-SSA website. Upon receipt of the completed application, the Registrar will issue a costuming competition card that contains the costuming competitor number. Please note that the costume competition card is not the same as the N-SSA membership card.

The following information is required:

- Current N-SSA members must provide their competitor number and their signature.
- Competitors that are not N-SSA members but are family members of a current N-SSA member, the N-SSA member's name, competitor number and signature are required. Family members are considered the spouse, sibling, child, or grandchild.
- Individuals that are neither N-SSA members or dependents of a member of the N-SSA, his or her application must include the name, competitor number and signature of two (2) active N-SSA members in good standing of the organization who are willing to serve as their sponsor.

How do I register for competition?

All competitors must submit a completed registration form with the competitor number and required signature(s) to the competition Registrar prior to the start of competition. The Registrar will be set up in Memorial Circle at Fort Shenandoah. When registering, you will need to advise the Registrar as to which category you will be competing in. If you are not sure which category is appropriate for your costume, you may request advice from the Registrar or other committee staff. The final decision will be the competitors. Competitors may compete in one or more categories; however, competitor must be ready for the category when it is called for judging. Registration will close at start of competition. No late registrations will be accepted.

Do I need to make my own costume? Does it have to be sewn entirely by hand?

See the individual competition levels and categories. Some require the competitor to make the dress or costume, some require the entire costume (including underpinnings) to be made by the contestant, and others allow ready-made clothing to be entered. The sewing machine was readily available during the Civil War and clothing was constructed both by machine and by hand. It is up to the competitor to research and decide which method of construction to use.

What if I have special needs?

Persons that may have special needs must inform the Operations Coordinator of these needs prior to the start of competition. The staff will make every effort to accommodate special requests *if time permits*; however, situations arise where these requests may not be honored due to scheduling conflicts. An example would be if a person wishes to compete in multiple categories.

Physical limitations: Competitors whose physical condition may limit their ability to participate are encouraged to inform the Operations Coordinator or the Committee Chair of such limitations prior to the start of competition. The Operations Coordinator and Committee Chair will arrange for accommodations.

Competitors entering national competition shall pay an entry fee upon registration for costume competition. The fees are as follows.

- N-SSA Member Adult \$5.00
- N-SSA Member child \$3.00
- Non-member Adult \$10.00
- Non-member child under 12 years of age \$5.00

Competition Categories

Children's Category	Competition Level	Age Range
	Best Visual	All children
Infants	Regular	0-2
Children	Regular	3-5
Girl's Informal & Semi-Formal	Regular	6-11
Boys Civilian Regular		6-15

Young Ladies Category	Competition Level	Age Range
	Best Visual	12-18
Informal, Semi-Formal & Formal	Regular	12-18
Adult Ladies Category	Competition Level	Age Range
	Best Visual	19 and over
Informal, Semi-Formal & Formal	Intermediate & Regular	19 and over
Specialty Dress	Intermediate & Regular	19 and over
Men's Category	Competition Level	Age Range
Civilian	Best Visual, Intermediate & Regular	16 and over
Judges Category	For judges who wish to compete	

Category Descriptions

Informal Costumes are the simplest styles worn during this time period. They are intended for practical and certain leisure activities.

Examples: Housekeeping, gardening, traveling, country walks, picnics, some sporting activities.

- Style: Closed neckline, closed or narrowed sleeves, small, medium or no hoop.
- Fabrics: Cotton, wool, linen, blends of these fibers, some silks, colors and patterns. Reflect practicality of garment; generally plain weave.
- Trim: Small amounts usually sewn flat; skirts left untrimmed.
- Accessories: Simple collar and cuffs, simple hairstyles and head covering, other accessories plain and practical with little ornamentation.

Semi-Formal Costumes are dressier garments chosen to enhance the status of the wearer during social activities.

- Examples: Making and receiving formal calls, small dinner parties, walks in fashionable parks and resorts, carriage drives.
- Style: Neckline may be closed or slightly open, closed or open sleeves, small or medium hoop.
- Fabrics: quality cottons, wool, linen or silk; may be plain or textured weaves Jacquard, damask, moiré, velvet; colors and patterns reflect more fashionable use.
- Trim: Used more frequently and may be flat or three-dimensional.
- Accessories: More elaborate hairstyles and head coverings, accessories more ornamental and may be nicely trimmed.

Formal Costumes are special occasion garments worn for evening and more formal events.

- Examples: Balls, the theater, concerts, formal dinners, the opera, affairs of state.
- Style: Neckline usually low and wide, often off the shoulder; sleeves may be short or

slashed open; skirts are full, sometimes with a short train; elaborate, elegant.

- Fabric: Elegant, of the finest quality, very fine cotton, silk, moiré, velvet, gauze, tulle, lace.
- Trim: Amount depends on garment fabric, elaborate and elegant.
- Accessories: Fancier and more formal hairstyles and headdresses; accessories are elegant and exquisitely embellished.

Specialty dress category is for those that cannot be judged by the standards of the other categories; they must be substantially different in style and construction.

- Examples would be nightwear, clothing for special occupations, clothing of ethnic or religious groups, specialized sports clothing such as riding, sea bathing, and exercise, costumes for theatrical productions and fancy dress.

Competition Levels

Best Visual- Competition in the visual category is the basic or entry level. It is designed for those people just getting started in competition who may have a costume, but do not have all of the underpinnings, shoes, and so on, that make up a complete outfit. You are judged only on the outward appearance of your garment; there is no oral presentation to the judges, and you are not judged on any item that is not visible. You appear before the judges for a short period of time who will look at your costume from a distance of approximately six feet. After all of the competitors have been presented, the judges score the competitors. The scores are tallied and the competitor with the highest total is declared the winner. You may enter this category twice and then you are encouraged to move on to the next level of competition. If you have competed in Intermediate or Regular competition in the past, you are discouraged from returning to the Best Visual competition. In this category of competition, no touching or handling of the garment is allowed by the judges.

Note: All undergarments (with respect for modesty) and outer garments will be touched and handled by the judges in the Adult, Childrens, Teens, Specialty and Men's intermediates and regular categories.

Intermediate - Intermediate competition is for adult competitors who have a complete outfit but are still new to competition. At this level, a verbal presentation is made to the judges and every phase of the outfit is judged. In order to enter this category, you must have made your own *costume*. If you have purchased your costume, or someone else has made it for you, you must enter regular competition. This restriction applies to the *costume* only; underpinnings and/or accessories may be purchased or made by someone else. In this level of competition, the judges will touch and handle the outer garments and all undergarments presented by the competitor. Once you win first place in this category twice, you must move into regular competition. This applies to both women and men's categories.

Regular - Costumes in the regular competition may have been made by the wearer, or made by someone else. A verbal presentation is made to the judges. The total score is calculated

by adding the points from all sections of the judging form. In this level of competition, the judges will physically inspect all outer garments and undergarments presented by the competitor.

How is my costume judged?

Contestants are judged on a point system. The three judges are seated together. When each category is called for judging, the contestants in that category shall line up and approach the judges individually. The contestant gives the judges their competitor number. The contestant has four minutes to make a verbal presentation to the judges explaining any aspect of their costume. The contestant may bring a prepared script and read it and show documentation/pictures for special aspects of their costume, provided it falls within the allowed timeframe. A warning is given at the end of three minutes. Time is called at the end of four minutes. The judges then have three minutes to ask questions, enter scores, and note any comments. Maximum total time per competitor is seven minutes. Please note: Competitors may not continue their presentation once time (four minutes) is up. Continuation by competitor after time has been called will result in a disqualification of contestant. Contestants may answer questions that are asked by judges during the three-minute judges costume review. After judging, contestants are expected to make themselves available for presentation to the audience. The contestants may describe themselves or have the narrator do this for them. Special competitions for the revolving trophies have judging procedures specific to that award.

Three individuals who have been selected by the Judges Coordinator serve as judges for all categories in the competition with the following exceptions:

- Members of the 3rd Maryland Artillery select the winner of the Becky Wood Award.
- Young Seamstress and Costumer Award- will be judged by the Judges Officer

What happens if I win?

A costume may be entered and win first in a regional costume competition, and then be entered in a national competition. If a costume wins first place in a national competition, the costume (not the contestant) must be retired for a period of two (2) years unless substantially altered to a point where the costume would have an entirely different look. For example, a day dress skirt may be used within 2 years if worn with an evening bodice. After the two (2) year waiting period, a *dress* may be reentered unaltered. Regions holding costume competitions may make their own rules about whether a costume that has won a national competition may be entered in subsequent regional competitions. Special awards such as the Delaney and Rosaleen Hulshart Awards have specific rules regarding retirement. A Delaney award *dress (dress only, not underpinnings or accessories)* must be permanently retired. If a costume wins the Hulshart award, the entire costume must be permanently retired, including undergarments, shoes and accessories.

Awards

The Judges Officer calculates the scores. The Judges Officer is responsible for breaking of ties; if he/she is not successful, the Operations Officer will break the tie.

Awards may be presented for first place, second place and honorable mention in each category. Minimum point standards are required for each award. If the minimum point standards are not met, no award is given. Total possible points before judges' points are listed. Minimum points are as follows:

Ladies Regular – 66+ points possible
1st & 2nd Place – 66 points minimum, highest score wins 1st Place
Honorable Mention – 63 points minimum

1st & 2nd Place – 48 points minimum, highest score wins 1st Place
Hon. Mention – 45 points minimum

Ladies Intermediate – 66+ points possible
1st & 2nd Place- 54 points minimum, highest score wins 1st Place
Hon. Mention – 63 points minimum

Infants and Children (girl or boy), & Young Ladies-66+ points possible
1st & 2nd Place – 66 points minimum
Hon. Mention – 63 points minimum

Men's Regular & Boys (in trouser) – 54+ possible
1st & 2nd Place- 54 points minimum
Hon. Mention – 51 points minimum

Susan J. Brisbin Memorial Award (for special projects)- 15+ points possible, highest score wins
One place only awarded

Men's Intermediate – 54+ points possible
Best Visual Award- 27 possible points
1st and 2nd Place- 21 points minimum, highest scores wins 1st place

Protests and Concerns

A competitor may address their concerns and/or protests about any aspect of the costume competition by speaking with the Committee Chair. Depending on the nature of the concern, the Committee Chair, the committee staff, the national commander or the N-SSA Board of Directors may resolve it. Confidentiality will be maintained whenever possible. Concerns may be presented to Committee Chair at any time. Protests must be filed within one hour of the announcement of the close of the competition on Saturday.

Reviewing Individual Score

Contestants are permitted to review their respective judging scores anytime during a one-hour period immediately following the close of competition. This review can be accomplished by seeing the Judges Officer.

COSTUME COMMITTEE REVOLVING TROPHIES

The following awards are presented annually at specific nationals. The recipient of these awards is presented with the revolving trophy and a medal. After the awarding of the trophy, photographs shall be taken and the trophy returned and housed in the Historical Center. Revolving trophies shall not leave the competition area at any time.

SPRING EVENT

The Rosaleen Hulshart Award is presented at each spring national skirmish for outstanding achievement in historical costuming. The contestant may enter a costume made and worn by

the contestant; enter a costume worn by the contestant but made by someone else; or enter a costume made by the contestant and modeled by someone else. The competitor is allowed 29 minutes for their presentation to provide opportunity to demonstrate a thorough knowledge of the costume. Judging is done on a point system with a minimum number of points necessary to win the award. The winner of this award must permanently retire all items worn in the competition, including underpinnings, accessories and jewelry. There is no additional fee for this award if already entered in another category.

FALL EVENTS

The Elmer Venskoste Award is presented at each fall national skirmish to the competitor with highest points who has not previously won a first or second place award in competition. The competitor may only win this award once.

The Young Seamstress & Costumer Award is presented to a young person who had made his or her own costume/dress (excluding underpinnings and accessories). The recipient is known as the YSC and is presented in the fall; The Judges Officer will judge this category. This award is for competitors under the age of 18. It is not a separate category or level of competition; the YSC is awarded from competitors already competing in other categories.

The Delaney Award is presented at each fall national skirmish to the adult competitor with the best overall outfit *made by the wearer*. Any items not made by the wearer are excluded from the competition. Contestants are judged on a point system with a minimum number of points necessary to win the award. The winning garment is permanently retired from any future competition. At the time of registration competitors are given the opportunity to sign up to be judged for the Delaney award. There is no additional fee for this award if already entered in another category.

SPRING & FALL

The Potomac Region Award for children is held each spring & fall. The Potomac award is in memory of John Elton and is presented at each national to the child with the highest overall percentage score. To compensate for the difference in categories between boys and girls, the highest percentage score is determined by dividing the cumulative score of the three judges by the maximum number of possible points (not including judge's points).

The Susan Brisbin Special Projects Award is presented at each national skirmish. At a preceding national skirmish, a single item is selected for competition for this award; e.g. an underpinning, an accessory or specific article of clothing. The item may be for a man, woman, or child. Items are judged on a point system. The item must be made by the competitor.

Additional N-SSA Costuming Events held Saturday of the spring and/or fall nationals at Fort Shenandoah.

The Becky Wood Award is presented at each spring nationals in honor of a deceased member of the 3rd Maryland Artillery. Everyone in costume during the spring nationals the day the award is presented is eligible for this award. Members of the 3rd Maryland select the winner based on their own criteria. Competition in the costuming competition is not required, but encouraged.

The Robert L. Miller Award - Military Uniform

N-SSA members in good standing only are eligible for competition

The Robert L. Miller Award was created to encourage historical research, production, and the wearing of authentic Civil War clothing at N-SSA shooting events for public education of both participants and the general public. The Robert L. Miller Award competition is held during the Spring N-SSA National Skirmish at 4 p.m. Saturday at Memorial Park. Any individual N-SSA member in good standing who has not already won the award. Individuals wishing to compete for the award may do so by indication on the unit registration form for each Spring National, by signing in at the executive secretary's office, or by signing in at the actual competition

The Most Authentic Unit Award – Military Uniform

N-SSA members in good standing only are eligible for competition

The Most Authentic Unit Award was created to encourage historical research, production, and the wearing of authentic Civil War clothing at N-SSA shooting events for public education of both participants and the general public. Most Authentic Unit Award is awarded to N-SSA units representing Confederate and Union units. The Most Authentic Unit Award competition is held during the Fall National Skirmish at 4 p.m. Saturday at Memorial Park. The Most Authentic Unit competition is open to any member organization in good standing. Competing units must have a minimum of five of their own members in good standing present in order to compete. Supernumeraries from other member organizations are not allowed to participate in the competition. Units wishing to compete for the award may do so by indicating on the unit registration form for each Fall Nationals, by signing in at the N-SSA secretary's office, or by signing in at the actual competition.

For specifics pertaining to the Robert L. Miller Award and the Most Authentic Unit Award, please reference Section 34 of the National Rules.

Costuming workshops

In addition to costuming competition, the Costume Committee offers a sewing circle on Friday of every National event. This program is free and open to the public. Guest speakers are scheduled and a short class on sewing an item that may be used in regular competition is offered. Many times, original garments/items are shared.

During civilian competition, a guest speaker is scheduled and educational topics on period clothing, accessories and/or civilian life during the Civil War are discussed.

Revised: April 2023

SECTION 34: UNIFORM COMPETITION

34.1 ROBERT L. MILLER AWARD

- a. The Robert L. Miller Award was created to encourage historical research, production, and the wearing of authentic Civil War clothing at N-SSA shooting events for public education of both participants and the general public.
- b. The Robert L. Miller Award competition is held during the Spring N-SSA National Skirmish at 4 p.m. Saturday at Memorial Park.
- c. Any individual N-SSA member in good standing who has not already won the award.
- d. Individuals wishing to compete for the award may do so by indication on the unit registration form for each Spring National, by signing in at the executive secretary's office, or by signing in at the actual competition.

34.1.1 JUDGING PROCEDURE

- a. Judges are appointed at the discretion of the Uniform Committee Chairman or his designee and are normally N-SSA members who have previously won the Miller Award or are members of the N-SSA with professional experience or a strong background in the Civil War military material culture, its history, or related museum field.
- b. Competitors shall be judged individually and sequentially. The judging procedure is structured to allow each competitor time to present the impression to the judges, and allow the judges to ask questions of the competitor.
- c. Competitors are to wear the same basic uniform conforming to their unit's bylaws that they wear while shooting in team events. The competitor is to represent his parent N-SSA unit, and the uniform is to be a replica or theoretical recreation of the uniform that was worn by the original unit at some point during the period 1861 – 1865. The use of original items from the period is prohibited.
- d. Points System: A specific judging point system is used by the judges. In order to win the Robert L. Miller Award, a competitor must receive at least 100 out of a possible 125 points. (**Table 34.1**)

34.1.2 AWARD PRESENTATION

- a. The Miller award medal is a bronze medallion bearing the likeness of Robert L. Miller with the competition winner's name engraved upon it.
- b. The winner will be recognized on Sunday at the opening ceremonies before Company Musket Matches at the Fall Nationals following the competition.

34.2 JACK RAWLS AND ERNEST PETERKIN AWARDS

- a. The Jack Rawls and Ernest Peterkin awards were created to act as adjuncts to the Robert L. Miller Award to encourage historical research, production, and wearing authentic Civil

War clothing at N-SSA shooting events for public education of both participants and the general public.

- b. The Jack Rawls and Ernest Peterkin awards are reserved for Robert L. Miller Award competitors who, while not the highest scoring competitor (i.e., winner of the Robert L. Miller Award) have scored 100 points or more. The Jack Rawls Award is presented to an individual N-SSA competitor representing a Confederate unit while the Ernest Peterkin Award is presented to an individual N-SSA competitor representing a Union unit.
- c. As an integral part of the Robert L. Miller award competition, the Jack Rawls and Ernest Peterkin awards competition is held during the Spring N-SSA National Skirmish at 4 p.m. Saturday at Memorial Park.
- d. Any individual N-SSA member in good standing who has not already won the Robert L. Miller Award.
- e. Registration is the same as that for the Robert L. Miller award. Individuals wishing to compete for the award(s) may do so by indicating on the unit registration form for each Spring Nationals, by signing in at the N-SSA secretary's office, or by signing in at the actual competition.

34.2.1 JUDGING PROCEDURE

- a. Judges are appointed at the discretion of the Uniform Committee Chairman or his designee and are normally N-SSA members who have previously won the Miller Award or are members of the NSSA with professional experience or a strong background in the Civil War military material culture, its history, or related museum field.
- b. Competitors shall be judged individually and sequentially. The judging procedure is structured to allow each competitor time to present the impression to the judges, and allow the judges to ask questions of the competitor.
- c. Competitors are to wear the same basic uniform conforming to their unit's bylaws that they wear while shooting in team events. The competitor is to represent his parent N-SSA unit, and the uniform is to be a replica or theoretical recreation of the uniform that was worn by the original unit at some point during the period 1861 – 1865. The use of original items from the period is prohibited.
- d. Only one award is given for the Rawls and or Peterkin awards during each Robert L. Miller Award competition (**Table 34.1**)

34.1.2 AWARD PRESENTATION

- a. The Jack Rawls and Ernest Peterkin awards consist of an N-SSA competitors medallion bearing the designation of either "The Jack Rawls Award for Most Authentic Confederate Skirmisher" or "The Ernest Peterkin Award for most Authentic Union Skirmisher."
- b. The winner(s) will be recognized on Sunday at the opening ceremonies before Company Musket Matches at the Fall Nationals following the competition.

34.3 MOST AUTHENTIC UNIT AWARD

- a. The Most Authentic Unit Award was created to encourage historical research, production, and the wearing of authentic Civil War clothing at N-SSA shooting events for public education of both participants and the general public. Most Authentic Unit Award is awarded to N-SSA units representing Confederate and Union units.
- b. The Most Authentic Unit Award competition is held during the Fall National Skirmish at 4 p.m. Saturday at Memorial Park.
- c. The Most Authentic Unit competition is open to any member organization in good standing.
- d. Competing units must have a minimum of five of their own members in good standing present in order to compete.
- e. Supernumeraries from other member organizations are not allowed to participate in the competition.
- f. Units wishing to compete for the award may do so by indicating on the unit registration form for each Fall Nationals, by signing in at the N-SSA secretary's office, or by signing in at the actual competition.

34.3.1 JUDGING PROCEDURE

- a. Judges are appointed at the discretion of the Uniform Committee Chairman or his designee and are normally N-SSA members who have previously won the Miller Award or are members of the NSSA with professional experience or a strong background in the Civil War military material culture, its history or related museum field.
- b. Competitors shall be judged individually and sequentially. The judging procedure is structured to allow each unit spokesman time to present the unit's history and impression to the judges, and allow the judges to ask questions of the unit's spokesman and other unit members.
- c. Competitors are to wear the same basic uniform conforming to their unit's bylaws that they wear while shooting in team events. The competitor is to represent his parent N-SSA unit, and the uniform is to be a replica or theoretical recreation of the uniform that was worn by the original unit at some point during the period 1861 – 1865. The use of original items from the period is prohibited.
- d. A specific judging point system is utilized by the judges. In order to win the Most Authentic Unit Award, a unit must receive at least 100 out of a possible 125 points. Only one Most Authentic Unit Award is given out to Confederate and or Union units competing (**Table 34.2**)

34.3.2 AWARD PRESENTATION

- a. The Most Authentic Unit Award awards consist of N-SSA competitor's medallions bearing the designation of either "The Award for Most Authentic Confederate Unit" or "The Award for Most Authentic Union Unit." Each participating unit member of winning unit(s) will receive the award.

- b. The winner(s) will be recognized on Sunday at the opening ceremonies before Company Musket Matches at the Spring Nationals following the competition.

Robert L. Miller Award Judging Form

Name: _____ Time _____ Presented: _____
 Unit: _____ N-SSA _____ Competitor _____ # _____

Item	Possible Points	Points Awarded	Notes and Comments
Hat	15		
Coat	30		
Trousers	25		
Footwear	9		
Shirt	15		
Suspenders	2		
Accoutrements	15		
Accessories	5		
Drawers	2		
Socks	2		
Interview	5		
Total Possible Points	125		

In the event of a tie, a run-off will be conducted using Hardee's tactics. This exercise will be given a point value of 10. If a tie still exists, the judges will then decide on an additional tie-breaking event. Greater consideration is to be given to competitors who have sewn or assembled their uniforms and equipment.

Table 34.1

Most Authentic Unit Award Judging Form

Unit Name _____

N-SSA #: _____

Time period represented: _____

Theater or army represented: _____

Number of members competing: _____

Starting Points: 100

Are there special things to consider about this unit, such as an unusual uniform, reputation or history?

Item	Points Awarded	Notes and Comments
Hat/Cap; Coat/Jacket		
Trousers and Footwear		
Accoutrements		
Firearms correct for time period represented		
Shirts (if visible)		
Five or more members standing inspection?		

Extra credit items:

Accessories (maximum 10 points)		
Interview/knowledge (maximum 5 points)		
Obvious extra effort (maximum 5 points)		
Military drill/bearing/appearance (maximum 5 points)		
Total Extra Points		
Total Possible Points		

Accoutrements consist of leather gear (belt, cartridge box, cap pouch, bayonet scabbard), haversack, etc. Accessories are non-uniform items such as poncho, blanket shelter half, etc. In the event of a tie, a run-off will be conducted using Hardee's Tactics. This exercise will be given a point value of 10. If a tie still exists, the judges will decide on an additional tie-breaking event.

Table 34.2

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SECTION 35: COSTUME COMPETITION

35.1 ELIGIBILITY

Competitors may be males or females of any age. All participants in costume competition must be one of the following:

- a. Members in good standing of the N-SSA
- b. Dependents of members in good standing of the N-SSA
- c. Non-members sponsored for competition by two members in good standing of the N-SSA.

35.2 REGISTRATION

- a. Costume competition participants must file an application with the competition registrar on the form provided for that purpose.
- b. Applications must be accompanied by signatures and/or N-SSA membership number as requested on the form.
- c. If the individual is a current, dues-paying N-SSA member, the N-SSA competitor number and the competitor's signature are required.
- d. If the individual is not a member of the N-SSA, but is a family member of a current, dues-paying N-SSA member, the N-SSA member's name, competitor number, and signature are required.
- e. If the individual is neither a member of the N-SSA nor a dependent of a member of the N-SSA, his or her application must include the name, competitor number and signature of two members in good standing of the N-SSA who are willing to serve as sponsors.
- f. Application for competition may be submitted by mail. Applications and fees, if required, submitted by mail must reach the registrar no less than five days prior to the first day of the National Skirmish in which the applicant wishes to compete.

35.3 FEES

(amended 01/2008, 01/2023)

- a. Competitors entering under the terms of **rule 37.2(c)** shall pay an entry fee upon registration for costume competition.
- b. The fee for member child participation shall be \$3.
- c. The fee for member adult participation shall be \$5.
- d. The fee for non-member adult participation shall be \$10.
- e. The fee for non-member children under 16 years of age shall be \$5.00.

35.4 SPECIAL NEEDS

35.4.1 SCHEDULING

Competitors with special scheduling needs must inform the Operations Coordinator of these needs prior to the start of the competition.

35.4.2 PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS

Competitors whose physical condition may limit their ability to participate are encouraged to inform the Operations Coordinator or the Committee Chair of such limitations prior to the start of competition.

35.5 ELIGIBILITY OF COORDINATORS

- a. Appointed coordinators of the costume committee shall be permitted to enter competition, provided the smooth running of the competition is not sacrificed, and the objectivity of the judging is not affected.
- b. Coordinators who wish to enter will be expected to arrange for an N-SSA member to perform their duties, and to obtain the approval of the Operations Coordinator to the proposed arrangements.

35.6 ELIGIBILITY OF GARMENTS

All garments entered in N-SSA costume competition must be reproductions of garments worn during the years 1861 through 1865.

35.7 COMPETITION CATEGORIES (Amended 01/2023)

- a. Each competitor is responsible for choosing the category in which she or he will compete.
- b. Competitors may request the advice of the registrar or other committee staff members.
- c. Competitors may compete in one or more of the following categories:

Children	Best Visual		Age
Infants		Regular	0-2
Children		Regular	3-5
Girl's Informal		Regular	6-11
Girl's Semi-formal		Regular	6-11
Boy's Civilian		Regular	6-15
Young Ladies	Best Visual		
Informal		Regular	12-18
Semi-formal		Regular	12-18
Formal		Regular	12-18
Civilian Men	Best Visual	Intermediate	Regular
			16+
Adult Ladies	Best Visual		
Informal		Intermediate	Regular
Semi-formal		Intermediate	Regular
Formal		Intermediate	Regular
Judges		Intermediate	Regular
Specialty Dress		Intermediate	Regular

Special

- Young Seamstress and Costumer (Fall National only)
- Elmer Venskoske (Fall National only)
- Becky Wood (Spring National only)
- Delaney (Fall National only)
- Susan Brisbin Special Projects
- Rosaleen Hulshart (Spring National only)
- John Elton Children's Award of the Potomac Region (Spring and Fall)

35.8 JUDGING (Amended 01/2023)

- a. With the exception of the Becky Wood Award, all categories shall be judged by individuals selected by the Judges Coordinator.
- b. The Becky Wood Award shall be judged by members of the 3rd Maryland Artillery.

35.8.1 POINTS

- a. All competitors shall be judged according to a point system established by the Costume Committee.
- b. Copies of the point system specifications are available, upon request, from the Operations Coordinator and the Judges Coordinator.

35.8.2 JUDGES

- a. Judges shall be chosen by the Judges Coordinator.
- b. Individuals shall be deemed qualified to serve as judges by virtue of their success in regular competition and/or their study of Civil War period clothing.
- c. Judges shall not judge categories in which members of their own family, garments they made, or garments they helped to make are entered for competition. In such cases, the judge shall be replaced by the Judges Coordinator or by a suitable alternate for that particular category.
- d. Judges are requested to wear appropriate costumes of the Civil War era since their attire is a visible reminder to the spectators of their qualifications.

35.8.3 SUBSTITUTE JUDGES

- a. Should the Judges Coordinator wish to compete, only a member in good standing of the N-SSA may assume his or her duties during the competition.
- b. The substitution order for the Judges Coordinator shall be:
 1. Operations Coordinator
 2. Assistant Operations Coordinator
 3. Costume Committee Secretary
 4. Registration Coordinator
 5. Trophies Coordinator
 6. Costume Committee Chair

35.8.4 JUDGING PROCEDURE

- a. The three judges for costume competition shall be seated together and may only be approached by the Judges Coordinator or Operations Chair.
- b. When each category is called, the entrants in that category shall line up and approach the judges individually.
- c. A time limit shall be set, and efforts made to ensure that all entrants have the same amount of time before the judges.
- d. After judging, competitors are encouraged to make themselves available for presentation to the audience.
- e. Judging may proceed on additional categories before results are announced in the prior category.
- f. Once results are announced, winners shall be directed to a photographer to have pictures taken for publication in *The Skirmish Line*.

35.8.5 PROTESTS

Protests may be made to the Costume Committee Chair or the Operations Coordinator up to one hour after the official closing of Costume Competition.

35.8.6 COSTUME INSPECTION

(added 01/2014)

- a. All costumes entered into a “Best Visual” category are judged at a distance of no closer than five (5) feet from the panel of judges. Judges will not question and/or make comments to competitors or touch a garment worn by a competitor who has entered into these categories.
- b. All costumes entered into competition, except those identified in 35.8.6.a, will be closely inspected by the panel of judges and/or the Judges Coordinator. Competitor may be questioned about construction techniques; overall appearance; documentation; choice of style, fabric and trims; etc., by a member of the panel of judges and/or Judges Coordinator during the judging of the garment and associated accessories. Additionally, the entire costume, including undergarments, will be “touched and closely inspected” by the panel of judges and/or Judges Coordinator. Close inspection is essential in order to make certain period construction techniques were utilized in the sewing of the garment and associated accessories. It may require the lifting of under-garments, skirts and opening of bodices, shirts, pants, blouses, etc. Where appropriate, the judges may request the removal jackets, vests, coats, outer-wear, etc. Members of the judging panel at all times will exercise discretion, tact, diplomacy and professionalism during the inspection of contestants.

35.9 AWARDS

Awards are chosen by the Trophies Coordinator, subject to approval by the coordinators of the Costume Committee.

35.9.1 NUMBER OF AWARDS

(Amended 01/2023)

- a. Awards shall be presented for first place, second place, and honorable mention in each competition category.
- b. First and second place awards shall be presented to individuals meeting the minimum point standards.
- c. Honorable mention awards may be presented to all competitors meeting specified point standards in each category.

35.9.2 PRESENTATION OF AWARDS

- a. Awards shall be presented at each National Skirmish Costume Competition.
- b. When this is not possible, awards may be either mailed to the recipient or saved for presentation at the following National Skirmish.

35.9.3 TROPHIES

- a. Revolving trophies shall be presented at National Skirmishes only.
- b. Trophy recipients shall be photographed with the trophy.
- c. At the conclusion of the competition, trophies shall be returned to the N-SSA Historic Center and shall not, under any circumstances, be removed from the property at Fort Shenandoah.

35.10 COSTUME RETIREMENT

- a. Competitors who win first place awards in regional costume competition shall be eligible to compete in that same costume in National Skirmish Costume Competition.
- b. Once a costume wins first place in national competition, however, it must be retired for a period of two years unless it is substantially altered to give it a completely different look.
- c. After the 2-year retirement, a costume may be re-entered in competition without alteration.

35.11 REGIONAL COSTUME COMPETITION

Regions holding costume competitions shall be free to establish their own rules concerning costume retirement.