



# COMPETITION OVERVIEW

Guidelines and format

## FOR COMPETITORS.

Be the first to Win!

The Woodstock Fingerstyle Guitar Festival Competition is being designed to be a unique contest which will give players more freedom both musically and technically, judges more discretion and reliance on their own expertise, and audience members a chance to actively participate in the outcome. This format has been created to be an entertaining, simple, transparent contest that encourages creativity, originality, as well as skill. Through the offering of meaningful prizes such as performance, recording opportunities, as well as recognition by their peers', competitors will be provided an opportunity advance or commence their careers. A Zoom meeting for all competitors will take place in August prior to festival.

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## Competition:

Will be a 3-round contest with each round taking place on each of the 3 festival dates. Round 1 will be on August 28<sup>th</sup>, at 10 am and will begin with a meeting in the green room area of the Woodstock Playhouse. All competitors and judges need to be present at 10 am meeting to participate. Round 2 will take place on August 29<sup>th</sup> at 11 am in the Woodstock playhouse theater. The final round will take place at the Playhouse Theater on August 30<sup>th</sup> at Noon. There will be 4 judges for round 1, 2 judges for round 2, and all 6 judges will participate in round 3. Each round may have different judges and judges will be selected from the Artist line up who are scheduled to perform at festival.

Competitors in the first 2 rounds will be asked to play seated, into a microphone, at center stage. One competitor at a time will take the seat at center stage and the order will be the judge's choice. In the final round all four finalists will take the stage one at a time and have the option of plugging into the sound board or using the microphone. There will be a 11am sound check. Grand prize winner will be asked to play as the opening to the Evening concert Sunday August 30<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm. At evening concert winner may use any equipment desired but must use an acoustic guitar.

## Format:

### Round 1

- Number of entrants will be divided into 4 groups \*\*.
- Each group will have a separate Judge (seated on stage across from players).
- Each judge and group will take the stage together; Each player will be given 8-10 mins playing time. (Judge may stop competitor at any time after 5 mins)
- Judge and audience will pick 2 from each group to advance to the 2<sup>nd</sup> round.

### Round 2

- 2 groups of 4 players.
- Each group will have a separate Judge (seated on stage across from players).
- Each player will be allotted up to 15 mins playing time. (Judge will only stop player if 15 mins is exceeded)
- Judge and audience will pick 2 from each group to advance to the 3rd and final round.

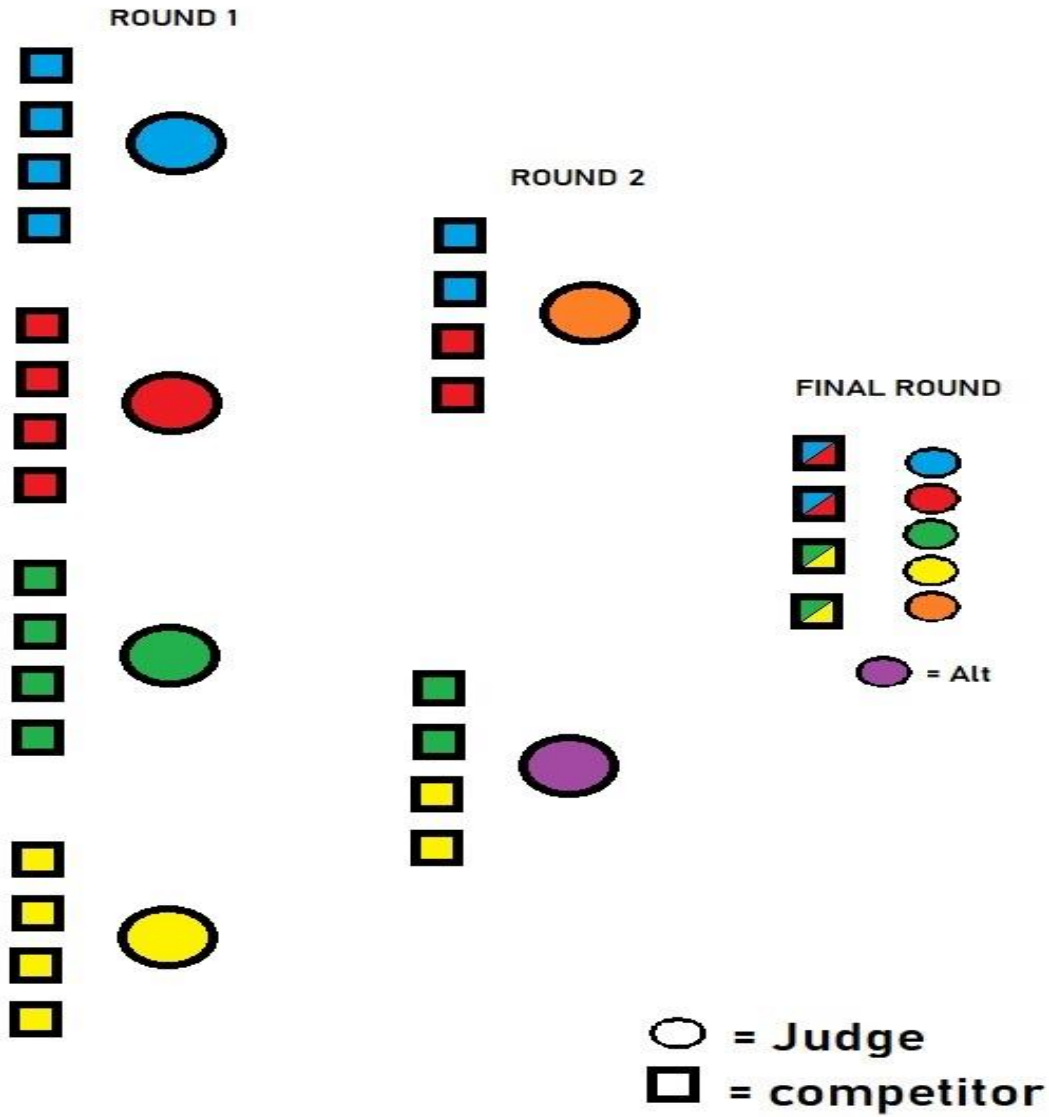
### Round 3

- 4 Players, each will take the stage one at a time (order will be randomly chosen by committee)
- All players will be judged by a panel of 5 judges (seated in audience with 1 alternate)
- Each player will be allotted up to 20 mins of playing time



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\*\*Round 1 is represented in this bracket as each group consisting of 4 competitors. In round 1 there may be as many as 8 or as few as 3 in each, and groups may not be of equal sizes, depending on enrollment. Round 2 and the final round will have 4 competitors per group.





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## Competitors:

May perform any music of their own choice and play as many, or as few, pieces as they wish within the allotted time in each round. Arrangements or compositions do not need to be original, but it is suggested competitors play what best represents their skill level, creativity, originality, versatility, and overall playing style. Players are welcome to use Acoustic Nylon or Acoustic Steel String instruments but may only bring one guitar on stage. Harp, Multi string and traditional guitars of at least 6 strings are permitted, however, only instruments commonly known as a guitar will be allowed to compete. All other instruments such as ukuleles, mandolins, banjos, lutes, ouds, or any other types of plucked instruments, or hybrids of such, will not be allowed. Thumb picks or fingerpicks are acceptable, but any flat picks or devices that need to be held by 2 or more fingers, in the plucking hand, are not recommended. Judge will determine if use of any such implement unfairly aids playing, compliments or hinders playing style, music quality or competition intentions. Any Competitor that is eliminated in the first round is encouraged to stay for the remainder of the festival and will be given a chance to participate in the audience voting in round 2. Competitors are asked not to address audience but may request that their sound level be adjusted while tuning and the Judge will relay such a request to the sound booth. Capos and all types of tuning's are permissible. Clip-on tuners, tuning forks and pitch pipes are allowed for tuning. Tuning time is deducted from your playing time. Competitors will not be allowed to sing, hum, or whistle. No electronics or effects in any of the first 2 rounds but finalists may plug in for the 3<sup>rd</sup> round. Winner may use any effects or electronic equipment in the evening concert.

## Judges:

Judges will use their own professional experience and expertise to evaluate competitors. There will be no point system or grading system for the judges to follow. Judges will not be required to write down anything regarding their decisions except for their own purposes. Judges will be encouraged to make their decisions based on originality, creativity, execution, presentation, versatility, and overall musicianship. Judges will decide which order players perform. After hearing assigned group, Judges will choose 2 players to advance from the first 2 rounds and submit their winning order of the 4 finalists in round 3. Judges' decisions will be submitted, confidentially, by entering their choices on the festival app within 30 minutes of the completion of all the competitors' performances.



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## Audience:

Will participate in the judging of the first 2 rounds but not the final round. Audience will consist of all attendees of the festival who have paid for either full 3-day festival passes, One day passes, vendors, or afternoon tickets and are present at the time of the competition in the theater. Competitors eliminated from the first round may vote in the second round but not in the first round or finals. Theater and festival staff may not vote. Judges may only vote for their assigned group and non-judging performers can vote with the audience. Audience decisions will be made by entering their choice on the festival app within 10 minutes of all the competitor performances. A complete set of rules and instructions for Audience will be made available at beginning of competition.

## Tabulation of Results:

In both rounds 1 and 2, Judges and Audience will each pick 2 players from each group to advance into next round. If more than 75% of the audience picks the same player that player will advance and the on-stage judge will only select the second player. If the audience does not make a unanimous decision, then the judges 2 choices will advance. Winner's order for round 1 and 2 will be announced at the intermission of the "Evening Concert" and final round prize winners will be announced at the "Winners Circle Showcase".



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## Prizes\*:

### First place winner

- Opening appearance at the Sunday Evening Headliners Concert 7pm August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026.
- An Appearance at the 2027 Woodchoppers Ball, Kent Stage, Kent Ohio.
- An Afternoon concert appearance, at the 2027 Woodstock Fingerstyle Guitar Festival.
- An opportunity to perform in 10 paid concert appearances during the 2027 Calander year within the USA supported by a Sponsor.
- Will receive an opportunity to record with one of the sponsoring recording Companies of the festival.
- Prize package provided by vendors and sponsors of the 2026 Woodstock Fingerstyle Guitar Festival.
- Reimbursement of festival pass
- More to come...

### Second place winner

- May be asked to fulfill any of the performance and/ or recording opportunities first place winner cannot participate in.
- Prize package provided by vendors and sponsors of the 2026 Woodstock Fingerstyle Guitar Festival.
- Customized plaque signifying accomplishment
- Reimbursement of festival pass

### Third and Fourth place winner

- Prize package provided by vendors and sponsors of the 2026 Woodstock Fingerstyle Guitar Festival.
- Customized plaque signifying accomplishment
- Reimbursement of festival pass

\* All Prizes are subject to change and/ or modification prior to time of competition. All prizes have no cash equivalent.

Enrollment will be limited to 30 sign-ups maximum and 12 contestants minimum. If there are fewer than 12 contestants enrolled at the time of competition, There will be an amendment to the format of the competition. Enrolled competitors may request a refund prior to August 28<sup>th</sup>, 2026, Refund may be subject to administrative fees. Contact director for details.



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## Quick Reference of Competition Rules

| <b>Allowed</b>   | <b>Not Allowed</b>                 |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <b>Acoustic Nylon/ Steel String Guitar</b>                     | Solid Body Electrics               |
| <b>Harp, Multi String Guitars</b>                              | Ukes, lutes, banjos, mando's, etc. |
| <b>Thumb picks or fingerpicks</b>                              | Flat Picks                         |
| <b>Sound Adjustment</b>  | Addressing Audience                |
| <b>Capo's</b>  | Electronic effects                 |
| <b>Original Compositions, arrangements, covers. Any Genre.</b> | No Accompaniment                   |
| <b>Clip-on tuners, tuning forks and pitch pipes</b>            | Plug in Tuners                     |
| <b>All types of tunings</b>                                    | No singing                         |

All rules are subject to the discretion of the Judges, Competition Committee and Festival Director. Other rules may be implemented based on circumstances and/or conditions at the time or place of the festival.