



## The Central Delaware Blues Society

A non-profit arts organization \* Magnolia, Delaware

*You don't play the Blues, you let it out!*

PO Box 155, Magnolia DE 19962 \* [www.centraldelawareblues.com](http://www.centraldelawareblues.com)

### International Blues Challenge (IBC) Act Entry Form and Guidelines (EFFECTIVE 6/10/2026)

The International Blues Challenge represents the worldwide search for those Blues Bands and Solo/Duo Blues Acts ready to perform on the international stage, yet just needing that extra big break. Each Affiliate of The Blues Foundation has the right to send a band and a solo/duo act to represent its organization at the IBC. Affiliated organizations are required to stage an open, judged, live music competition during the year leading up to the IBC, with the winner of that event representing the organization in the International Blues Challenge held annually in Memphis, TN along historic Beale Street. While Affiliated Organizations are encouraged to follow The Blues Foundation's structure and rules during their local challenges, each organization is free to structure its preliminary rounds as it sees fit, as long as a true challenge between multiple acts takes place resulting in a single band and/or solo/duo act being identified. CDBS has developed a complete set of guidelines for its Local/Regional IBC Challenge (part of the entry forms), and these guidelines and any updates or additions, are made available to its members and the public via the CDBS Website, social media, newsletters and email blasts. Please see the [BLUES FOUNDATION IBC WEBSITE](#) for complete information on The International Blues Challenge.

#### Schedule

- CDBS IBC Act Competition Date and location: **Sunday, October 11, 2026, at the Delaware Veterans Post 2, 720 Pear Street, Dover, DE 19904.**
- **Application Deadline for Acts: September 27, 2026 and should be emailed to [IBC@CentralDelawareBluesSociety.org](mailto:IBC@CentralDelawareBluesSociety.org).**
- Deadline for submission of Acts to The Blues Foundation: As published on their website.

**Instructions for entering: Please review the following rules, guidelines and instructions for the local CDBS IBC Act competition and the information at the Blues Foundations International Blues Challenge BEFORE completing this entry form.** Print and fill out the Central Delaware Blues Society IBC website download material or copy and print this page with the band's representative signature at the bottom. (Please print clearly.)

## Eligibility Criteria

The winner is obligated to attend the IBC competition in Memphis. Failure to do so negates this contractual agreement.

- This competition is open to Blues Acts.
- Acts must submit the IBC Entry Form and Agreement, along with all required items listed on the Entry Form, by the published deadline. The Entry Form should be submitted to [IBC@CentralDelawareBluesSociety.org](mailto:IBC@CentralDelawareBluesSociety.org) by the deadline.
- At least one member of the Act must be a member of the CDBS prior to submitting an Entry Form package.
- Acts must never have received a Blues Music Award Nomination.
- Acts must be located within a 150-mile radius of the CDBS base of Dover, DE.
- Acts are limited to two (2) consecutive appearances at the IBC in Memphis and must then sit out at least one (1) year before being eligible to compete again. An act under the same name will not be allowed to compete for three (3) consecutive years. No Act may compete more than a total of three (3) years.
- Acts may be invited to participate in the local challenge, but may not be pre-selected, and must compete in an open competition.
- An individual may not compete in more than one act in any capacity.
- No other entry restrictions apply. This means that management contracts, booking agent contracts, recording contracts, performance contracts (even those that include regular television or radio broadcasts) and nationally distributed recordings have no bearing on eligibility

## Submission Requirements

Please submit the following items:

- A completed, signed “Central Delaware Blues Society International Blues Challenge (IBC) Act Entry Form and Guidelines” with confirmation that at least one of the band members being in good standing as a member of the Central Delaware Blues Society. (See: “How do I become a member” on the CDBS Website or email us at [ibc@CentralDelawareBluesSociety.org](mailto:ibc@CentralDelawareBluesSociety.org) ) All entries along with supporting materials must sent to [IBC@CentralDelawareBluesSociety.org](mailto:IBC@CentralDelawareBluesSociety.org) by the deadline.
- Confirmation that all band members have read the Entry Form Agreement, Eligibility Criteria, Scoring Criteria, Penalty Points and Equipment and Sets. An authorized signature by a representative of The Act is required at the bottom of this agreement to show compliance.
- Official band name and a short band bio (200 words or less).
- A digital color or B&W band photo with at least 300-dpi resolution.
- A link to the band’s website or Facebook page (or any other social media accounts related to the Act).
- A stage plot to assist our sound crew in making a quick and correct setup for your requirements.

Failure to send all the required items may forfeit eligibility. Please include everything for the submission in one email sent to [IBC@CentralDelawareBluesSociety.org](mailto:IBC@CentralDelawareBluesSociety.org) by the deadline.

Questions can be sent to [IBC@CentralDelawareBluesSociety.org](mailto:IBC@CentralDelawareBluesSociety.org).

## **Scoring Criteria (also see the Scoring Sheet on the IBC page at CentralDelawareBlues.com)**

The following scoring criteria reflect in large part the Blues Foundation recommendations as they apply to the International Blues Challenge. Categories include Talent, Blues Content, Stage Presence and Originality.

1. **Blues Content:** Everyone has his or her own interpretation of what is and is not Blues. Thus, any given judge panel will include members with varying opinions of Blues, covering the spectrum of Blues whenever possible, from the most traditional to soul/blues and rock/blues. Bands should pick material carefully. At the Memphis semi-finals and finals, the judges are Blues professionals, not a bar crowd, and are likely to be unimpressed with song selections that are uninspired. (Call this - with all due respect to Sir Mack Rice and Wilson Pickett - the “no Mustang Sally rule.”)
2. **Vocals:** The act's vocal skills
3. **Talent:** This category is self-explanatory - the act’s overall vocal and/or instrumental skills.
4. **Originality:** Original work is encouraged. Cover tunes are allowed but playing the recorded rendition lick by lick is discouraged; will not be looked upon favorably by the judges; and will be reflected in scoring.
5. **Stage Presence:** Over the years, the quality of talent has risen so dramatically that the IBC no longer considers this an “amateur” competition. Most contestants have performed on stage enough to know that they are not simply playing music but putting on a show. This category rates how “sellable” a band may be.

## **Weighted Scoring (also see the Scoring Sheet on the IBC page at CentralDelawareBlues.com)**

To reflect the relative importance of each category in the success of a band, a band’s score in each category is weighted. Raw scores for Blues Content are multiplied by 4. Talent is multiplied by 3. And Originality and Stage Presence are multiplied by 2. The total in each category represents the Weighted Score for that category. Total possible weighted score is 110 per judge. The band with the highest sum of Net Weighted Scores is the winner.

***In keeping with the Blues Foundation IBC Guidelines, participants may request and receive copies of individual score sheets for their act, plus a composite score sheet with the aggregate total of all scores for each category.***

## **Penalty Points**

These items demonstrate professionalism and seriousness about the competition. An act will be penalized one point from its Total Weighted Score for each of the following:

- Missing the online application deadline or not completing the online application completely or accurately by the deadline.
- Act is not checked in at the “Band Check-In” counter on or before the final check-in time of 12:30 on the day of the event. All bands must be checked in by 12:30, no exceptions permitted.
- Failing to acknowledge that a song is a cover and/or not giving credit to its originator.
- Every ten seconds that an Act runs overtime during a competition performance.
- Finishing 3 or more minutes before the allotted performance time expires.
- Act is not ready to perform at proper time. In the event that a band scheduled to play in a specific slot is not able to perform for whatever reason, the Central Delaware Blues Society will have the authority to deduct a point from the band’s overall weighted score for that competition. The next band scheduled to play will be asked to step into that slot. Should that band, for whatever reason, not be able to perform when asked, the CDBS Competition Coordinator (CC) has the authority to deduct a point from that band, and so on. With that in mind, The Central Delaware Blues Society strongly suggests that after a band has met with their CC for their required check-in, they stay in the venue and are available to perform at the CC’s direction, regardless of which slot they are scheduled to play. Bands that have missed their designated slot will be allowed to perform later but will still suffer the loss of a point on the weighted score.

## **Judging**

The IBC in Memphis is judged by blues professionals from across the world who have years of experience in listening to, producing, and creating blues music. In a similar manner, CDBS makes every effort to secure the most experienced, knowledgeable, and impartial judges possible from in and around the region. There will be a minimum of three (3) judges and no more than (5) judges for each of the Band, Solo/Duo, and Self-Produced CD Challenges. Where possible, the same judges will be used for each competition. Judges will ***remain anonymous and must sign a disclosure form*** (attached to these guidelines) indicating their credentials for being able to judge a Blues competition, and their relationship to the competitors if applicable. Judges with obvious conflicts of interest such as personal or professional relationships with any act will not be seated to evaluate any of the competitors. Judges are not compensated for their services but may be given a token of appreciation for their time. CDBS aims to keep a list of qualified judges on hand in the event an alternate judge is needed. Judges will be made aware of the scoring criteria in advance. The acts will be evaluated according to the scoring criteria, not compared with the other competing acts.

## **Minimum Number of Acts Required at the Local Level**

The minimum number of Acts required at the local level is **TWO (2)**.

## **The Day of the Competition**

All Acts must check in with the IBC Coordinator no later than 12:30 PM on the day of the competition. The winning Act will be announced at the end of the competition. Each band will have thirty (30) minutes to perform their selections. To assist The Act in their timekeeping, a PC displaying your remaining time will be visible to all band members. It is the Act's responsibility not to run overtime. There is a 15-minute changeover period between sets. (The oncoming band has ten minutes to set up and the outgoing band has five minutes to tear down.) If a band exceeds the 30-minute performance time or the 15-minute changeover a penalty point is assigned for each 10 seconds exceeded. Please see Penalty Points section for more details.

## **Equipment and Sets:**

- The Central Delaware Blues Society will provide the PA system and limited backline. The setup on stage will include a drum kit with snare drum and amps. Vocal microphones must be provided by the competing talent. Drummers should bring their own cymbals and kick pedals (Yes, you will need your cymbals, you might want to bring your own snare too) and Harmonica players CAN (but are not required to) bring their own harp amp. Keyboard players should bring their own keyboards and keyboard amp.
- Musicians must include on this registration form any additional or special equipment needed.

## **Prize**

The winning band wins (at least) \$2500.00 to be used toward their trip to Memphis in January, to be paid at the IBC Fundraiser held prior to the IBC. The winning band **MUST** register with the IBC by the deadline published by The Blues Foundation and attend and compete in the IBC in Memphis to receive the award for winning. The prize will be awarded at the CDBS Fundraiser in early Jan 2026

## **Central Delaware Blues Society International Blues Challenge (IBC) Act Entry Form agreement:**

The undersigned hereby attests that he/she is 18 years of age or older; and is the responsible spokesperson for the individual(s) listed elsewhere on this form and identified below by real or stage name, and herein referred to as The Act.

- 1. The undersigned has read, reviewed and agrees to the Central Delaware Blues Society Local Guidelines (included on this entry form) for The International Blues Challenge (IBC), including the attachments, BEFORE completing this entry form.**
2. It is agreed by the spokesperson that he/she and each member of The Act, do hereby exempt from all liability, The Central Delaware Blues Society and The Blues Foundation and all persons, organizations and companies that are directly or indirectly associated with the International Blues Challenge.
3. It is further agreed by the spokesperson that he/she and each member of The Act do hereby accept full responsibility for all taxes and restrictions relating to contest prizes received by The Act; further, each member of The Act, listed on the Entry Form, here-within permits The Central Delaware Blues Society the right to make use of his/her/their names, voices, pictures, visages and other likenesses of The Act for the purpose of advertising, publishing and promoting the Blues Challenge through media, including entertainment and music syndicated radio, film and/or television shows presented or produced by The Central Delaware Blues Society or its partners or assigns. In addition, the spokesperson and each member of The Act hereby agrees that The Central Delaware Blues Society will retain total ownership of the program(s), the right to edit the program(s), the right to broadcast the program(s), the right to copyright the program(s) and the right to license others to use these rights.
4. The winning act will be required to register online at the Blues Foundation's website for the Blues Foundation's International Blues Challenge (IBC) at least two weeks prior to the official registration deadline or may forfeit their prize monies and the right to represent The Central Delaware Blues Society at the International Blues Challenge in Memphis. After registration with the Blues Foundation, it is the responsibility of the Act to communicate with CDBS to acknowledge that Blue Foundation IBC registration was completed (email to [IBC@CentralDelawareBluesSociety.org](mailto:IBC@CentralDelawareBluesSociety.org)). If the winning Act fails to register, the second-place act will become the representative contestant. This ensures that the winning act both abides by IBC eligibility rules and shows true intent of traveling to Memphis to compete.
5. Prize monies will be paid to the winning band only, in the form of a check written to one designated representative of the act. An IRS W-9 form will be required to be filled out by the

person receiving the check. Failure to meet all eligibility and appearance requirements at the International Blues Challenge will result in forfeiture of prize monies.

6. The winning act agrees to perform at the CDBS IBC Fundraiser Sunday, January 4, 2026 and the act agrees host one of CDBS Thursday Jams in 2026 with the date to be negotiated with the Act and CDBS.
  
7. The undersigned spokesperson hereby acknowledges that each member of The Act is knowledgeable of and agrees to abide by the terms of the Official Rules and Eligibility Criteria and this document, as set forth by The Central Delaware Blues Society.

**Applicants' Printed Name and Signature**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Band Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

**Special Equipment Requirements:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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