

Florida State Taxidermist Association Official Competition Rules
(Subject to change)
Revised July 2023

There are five divisions in this competition: Masters, Professional, Commercial, Amateur, and Youth. Each division has a list of requirements and descriptions that must be understood by the competitor before he or she chooses how to enter for their best desired award. **The division you choose determines the level of critique your piece will receive.** All awards will be presented at the Shows banquet, so plan to attend in advance. Everyone is welcome. All the divisions are open to FSTA Members.

Note: new rule for registration! We are now requiring preregistration no later than December 31st to avoid a **registration late fee of \$50.00**. please make sure to preregister for the show. You can always add or delete pieces from your registration when you get to the show. It helps us forecast the success of the show more accurately, it also gets you into the seminars early and I promise you The Registration team really appreciates it!

Note: ***There will be no mounts accepted after 2 pm on Friday. There will also be no mounts excepted on Saturday!***

Division Descriptions

Please read to decide what division you want to compete in. Keep in mind certain awards can only be awarded to certain divisions entries. You may choose to be diverse, entering different categories in different divisions, this is acceptable. Please keep in mind that advancement to a higher division will improve your skill and elevate your award status.

1. **Youth** - This division is open to all FSTA Member's children that are under 16 years of age. Multiple ribbons – Best of Division Award- Comment score sheet – Points will not be accumulated – Special entry fee.
2. **Amateur** – This division is open to any member 16 years of age and up. Competitors of this division are qualified if their work is done in the Spirit of Taxidermy artistry only, not for any financial reward. Multiple ribbons -Best of Division Award – Commercial score sheet - points will not be accumulated. Blue ribbon, Best of Category winners are encouraged to compete in Commercial, Professional or Master Division the following year.
3. **Commercial Division** – This division is open to any FSTA member 16 years of age and up that wants to display and compete with work they feel best exemplifies their day to day customer or shop work. Multiple ribbons – Best of Division Award – judged for basic mechanics and aesthetics on a comment score sheet – no point accumulated. All ribbon winners are encouraged to compete in Professional or Master Division the following year.
4. **Professional Division** – This division is open to all FSTA members 16 years of age and up. This division is for the serious competitor that wants his or her work evaluated and scored (using a NTA approved score sheet) by a FSTA Board appointed Judge. Multiple ribbons – Best of Divisions Award – Special Awards –

all blue-ribbon winners and Best of Division are encouraged to enter pieces in the Master Division the following year. Points are accumulated in this division.

5. **Master Division-** This division is open to all FSTA Members 16 years of age and up. This Division is for the serious competitor that has either won a blue ribbon or Best of Division in Professional Division in a specific category, or feels the desire to compete at the toughest level of competition the FSAT has to offer, Multiple ribbons – Best of Division Awards – Special Awards – Points are accumulated in this Division.

Florida State Taxidermist Association Certification

How to become a FSTA Certified Taxidermist What does certified taxidermist mean – Taxidermists are professionals who are experienced in creating trophies and mementos using the remains of a deceased animal. These professionals work and recreate lifelike trophies for the customer. To be certified these professionals join the FSTA and compete in the annual Convention and Competition thus being judged for their performance. This competition enhances the knowledge and growth of the professional and with that acknowledgment of awards are given.

Rules and eligibility are as follows

1. Must be a Member of the FSTA in good standing
2. Members present copy of score sheet to verify their scores
3. Members must have earn a total of 12 points to earn certification in that category, ie deer, mammal, fish, bird, ect...
4. Points earned must be from a first or second place ribbons only. Blue Ribbon= 3pts. Red Ribbon = 2pts.
5. Must have at least One blue ribbon, One Best of Category.
6. Points earned must be in the Professional division or Master division ONLY.
7. If dues are not paid or kept current competitor needs to start over on the renewal process. It is the competitor's responsibility to stay current. If dues are not kept current the member will not be listed as Certified Taxidermist on web page.
8. Current members with certification will be posted on our website for customer verification.
9. Unethical practices on behalf of any certified member will bring just cause of removal from the FSTA. Once member receives eligibility of the required 12 points, the member will fill out the Certified Taxidermist paperwork and return with payment to the Secretary and /or Treasurer of the FSTA . \$120.00 for initial plaque and then pays \$40.00 annually to add the Medallion to which will be ordered. The certified Taxidermist will be added to the FSTA web page and will have the title and plaque.

AWARDS

1. **Best of Youth Division Award** – This award is chosen by judges collectively from mounts of all species in the Youth Division. Judges are not bound by numerical score. Must be FSTA member. *Sponsored by Allison Doty.*
2. **Best of Amateur Division Award**– This award is chosen by judges collectively from mounts of all species in the Amateur Division. Judges are not bound by numerical score. Must be FSTA member. *Sponsored by Charlie Lastella.*
3. **Best of Commercial Division Award** – This award is chosen by judges collectively from mounts of all species in the Commercial Division. Judges are not bound by numerical score. Must be FSTA member. It will be judged for aesthetics, not mechanics. Any species of a bird, fish, reptile, mammal, or combination can be mounted in a display and entered to be viewed and interpreted by the judges without use of a flashlight. *Sponsored by Travis Burge of Forgotten Coast Taxidermy LLC*
4. **Best of Professional Division Award** – This award is chosen by judges collectively from mounts of all species in the Professional Division. Judges are not bound by numerical score. Must be FSTA member. *Sponsored by Scott Staton The Waterfowl Studio*
5. **Best in Masters Division Award** – This award is chosen by judges collectively from mounts of all species in the Masters Division. Judges are not bound by numerical score. Must be FSTA member. *Sponsored by Scott Staton The Waterfowl Studio*
6. **Best Habitat Award** - \$ 25 Entry fee collected. Without a habitat, taxidermy entry would not have made such an impact. Habitat must show accurate habitat representation. Habitat must be proportionate to the mount. This award is chosen by the judges collectively from all entries. Ribbons are awarded in each Division, There is no critique for habitat. *Sponsored by Scenes of Nature*
7. **McKenzie Mammal Best of Category Award** -Open to all entries in the Professional and Masters Division. This award is the people's choice. *Award provided and sponsored by McKenzie Taxidermy Supply*
8. **McKenzie Fish Best of Category Award** - Open to all entries in the Professional and Masters Division. This award is the people's choice. *Award provided and sponsored by McKenzie Taxidermy Supply*

9. **McKenzie Whitetail Best of Category Award** – Open to all entries in the Professional and Masters Division. This award is the people’s choice. *Award provided and sponsored by McKenzie Taxidermy Supply*

10. **McKenzie Bird Best of Category Award** -Open to all entries in the Professional and Masters Division. This award is the people’s choice. *Award provided and sponsored by McKenzie Taxidermy Supply*

11. **People’s Choice Award** – Determined by the vote of FSTA members as their favorite competition piece, all entries. *Sponsored by Theresa and Barney Durham*

12. **Ducks Unlimited Award** – This is awarded the waterfowl mount with the best representation of the bird. This is not bound by numerical score or division. 1st 2nd and 3rd place awarded. Awarded by an FSTA member who is a representative and /or are affiliated with Ducks Unlimited. *Ribbons provided and sponsored by Ducks Unlimited, first, second, and third place Awards sponsored by Landon Blankenship and Steve Stocks*

13. **Best All Around Award** – \$50 entry fee is collected. Professional and Masters Division. Limited to Florida resident and FSTA Member. Member must be present at the convention. Competitors entering this special competition must first enter in four areas of competition. Birds, fish or reptiles, mammal, and Deer (large or small, shoulder mounts, game heads, pedestals, half-life sizes or life-size are included in this category). Entries in the required four areas may not include rugs, novelties, crustaceans, freeze dry or reproduction. Freeze dry and reproductions parts may be used as long as the competitor does all the work. The person with the highest total numerical score with four entries will win this award. Entries may be composed of mounts entered in both Professional Division and the Masters Division.

14. **Challenge of The Arts Award** - \$40 entry fee is collected. This is a judge interpretation division open to all species collectively. It will be judged for aesthetics, not mechanics. Any species of a bird, fish, reptile or mammal or combination of them can be mounted in a display and entered to be viewed and interpreted by the judges without the use of a flashlight, there will be a first, second, & third place. This is considered a very creative piece with a challenge that allows all work to be judged equally. Only an individual artist may enter. This Award is open to Professional and Master’s Division. This Category has 1st, 2nd, & 3rd place awards. Sponsored by Landon Blankenship and BWT

15. **Collective Artist Award** – \$40 entry fee is collected. This is open to all species. This award will be given to the group with the highest numerical score. Group must consist of more than one person. All members of the group must be a FSTA Member. One member of the group must be present to enter the piece and accept the award. Must specify all members of the group at time of entry. Note: this would be a great opportunity for parent or guardian to work with a youth.
16. **Father George Cummings Award (Best Hog)** – \$50 Entry fee is collected. Must be Florida resident and a FSTA member. This award is given to the competitor who has best succeeded with his or her efforts in the “Spirit of Taxidermy Competition” with an entry that reflects Father Georges great appreciation for the Florida wildlife by mounting a wild hog. Entry can be head mount, whole body, adult or piglet, or mixed in with other species in a piece. Recipient can be chosen from any category with any ribbon, to be chosen by current President.
17. **Martha Maxwell Award for Women-** \$30 Entry fee is collected. This award is open to all divisions, on one piece that an individual is competing with. Cannot be a combined effort and the award is not bound by numerical score. This award is chosen by judges collectively. You must be a Florida resident and a FSTA Member. *Award sponsored by Trina Pritchard.*
18. **Mount Off Competition** – \$35 Entry fee collected – chosen by judges collectively. Winner is awarded ½ of money collected. *Sponsored by Logan Blankenship of Blankenship Painting.*

Rules as follows:

- The mount off Competition will be held Thursday evening of the show 6-9pm.
- You MUST preregister for this event.
- The fee for this event is \$35.00.
- Each competitor will have 3 hours to complete their mount.
- On Friday 9 am -9:30am the mount off competitor will have time to do adjustments.
- Mounts will be judged as a commercial mount at least 5 ft away.
- Judges will judge collectively and pick the best mount.
- You MUST bring your own mounting stand, tools, and tarp to place underneath your work area.
- You may have the skin and manikin completely prepped.
- If doing a deer mount, Horns may be set on form, if your species requires ear liners they may be set on form as well.
- No parts can be in the skin, only prep work.

- Winner will be announced and presented an award at the awards banquet on Saturday
- Spectators are encouraged and welcome to watch and see how others mount and prep their work.

19. **Presidents Challenge Award** – \$75 Entry fee is collected. Winner receives ½ of money collected and \$250 cash prize. This is not bound by numerical score or division. Winner is chosen by current FSTA President. Every year an animal/theme will be chosen by the President for this award and the competitor must mount that animal in order to be eligible to win this award. Next years animal will be chosen after the convention. The chosen animal will be announced in the Newsletter, Website and social media. *Sponsored by Jeff Whittlock*

20. **Polytranspar Award** – This award goes to the most realistic application of Polytranspar Products and is the highest scoring Fish entered in Masters or Professional Division. Must be indicated on convention registration. The winner is chosen by the fish judge. *Award provided and sponsored by McKenzie Taxidermy Supply*

21. **PRO-1 Award** – Must be indicated on Convention registration. Awarded by the judges for the highest scoring piece in Professional or Masters division using PRO-1 Glue. *Award provided and sponsored by PRO-1.*

22. **Second 2 Nature Award** – Must be indicated on Convention registration. This award goes to the highest scoring mount on a Second 2 Nature manikin in Professional or Masters Division. This award is chosen by the judges. *Awards provided and sponsored by Second 2 Nature.*

23. **McKenzie Distinguished Taxidermists Award** – This award is chosen by the President, Officers, and Board Members of the FSTA. For their choice of a member that has shown great effort and sacrifice for the betterment of the FSTA. *Award provided and sponsored by McKenzie Taxidermy Supply*

24. **Van Dyke Award** – This award to chosen by judges collectively, is not to be bound by numerical score. This award is for the most original and creative presentation entry in Professional or Masters Division. *Award provided and sponsored by Van Dyke / McKenzie Taxidermy Supply*

25. **Mounted in Alaska Award** – Open to all FSTA members, this award is an artistic award. Presented to the piece that tells the best story. There is no entry fee. Must be in Professional Division or Masters Division. Chosen by Judges collectively. *Award bronze bear claw provided and sponsored by Knights Taxidermy Inc.*
26. **Brian Harness Memorial Award** –Overall merit of presentation of small mammal (coyote or smaller) or a turkey. The mount needs to reflect something Brian might have done. Open to Professional or Masters Division. Selected by mammal Judge. Not bound by numerical score. Must be a Florida resident and a FSTA member. *Award provided and sponsored by Ozark Woods Taxidermy Supply*
27. **Woody Award**- This award is awarded to the second highest scoring entry in the entire show. *Award provided and sponsored by Taxidermy Today Magazine.*
28. **Wasco Award** – Entries in all divisions are eligible. To be selected by the judges collectively as the most artistic entry. Includes a merchandise gift certificate. *Award provided and sponsored by McKenzie Taxidermy Supply.*
29. **Breakthrough Award**- (chosen from best of category winners) in making the selection judges are not bound by any numerical score. It is chosen by the judges collectively from all the best of category winners. *Award provided and sponsored by Breakthrough Magazine.*