



Colorado Medieval Festival 2026

Costume Contest Official Judging Guide
by Combat Recovery Foundation



How Judging Works

Each contestant is scored across **five criteria**, each worth **1 to 10 points**, for a maximum total of **50 points**. Criteria are tailored to each category so that judging reflects what makes each costume type excellent. The contestant with the highest total score in their category wins that award.

Scoring guide: 1-3 = Needs work | 4-5 = Good effort | 6-7 = Strong | 8-9 = Excellent | 10 = Extraordinary

Contest Categories & Criteria

Most Epic		
Visual Impact	Does the costume command attention from across the field?	__ / 10
Craftsmanship	Quality of construction, stitching, and finishing details.	__ / 10
Completeness	Head-to-toe cohesion nothing feels missing or out of place.	__ / 10
Wow Factor	Does it stop people in their tracks?	__ / 10
Character Presence	How fully does the wearer embody the look?	__ / 10
Total		__ / 50

Best Historical		
Historical Accuracy	Faithfulness to a real medieval or Renaissance period and region.	__ / 10
Craftsmanship	Quality of construction, stitching, and finishing details.	__ / 10
Materials	Authenticity of fabrics, metals, leather, and other elements.	__ / 10
Attention to Detail	Accessories, layering, and period-correct correctness.	__ / 10
Presentation	How confidently and naturally the wearer carries the costume.	__ / 10
Total		__ / 50

Best Fantasy

Concept Clarity	Does the fantasy world feel distinct and fully imagined?	__ / 10
Craftsmanship	Quality of construction, stitching, and finishing details.	__ / 10
Creativity	Originality and imagination of the overall design.	__ / 10
Completeness	Head-to-toe world-building every element fits the vision.	__ / 10
Character Presence	How convincingly does the wearer inhabit the fantasy character?	__ / 10
Total		__ / 50

Best Warrior

Armor & Weapons	Realism or sheer impressiveness of the gear.	__ / 10
Craftsmanship	Quality of construction, stitching, and finishing details.	__ / 10
Intimidation Factor	Does the costume command the battlefield?	__ / 10
Completeness	Full warrior silhouette from helm to boot.	__ / 10
Stance & Presence	Does the wearer carry themselves like a true fighter?	__ / 10
Total		__ / 50

Best Humorous

Humor	Is it genuinely funny? Does the crowd laugh?	__ / 10
Cleverness	Wit and originality is the joke smart and fresh?	__ / 10
Execution	How well is the gag pulled off from concept to costume?	__ / 10
Crowd Reaction	Audience engagement and visible response.	__ / 10
Renaissance Fit	Does the humor tie back to the festival theme?	__ / 10
Total		__ / 50

Best Couples

Couple Synergy	Do they clearly belong together as a pair?	__ / 10
Craftsmanship	Quality of construction across both costumes.	__ / 10
Creativity	Originality of the pairing concept.	__ / 10
Completeness	Both costumes are fully and equally realized.	__ / 10
Portrayal Together	Chemistry, coordination, and commitment as a duo.	__ / 10
Total		__ / 50

Best Group

Group Cohesion	Do they read as a unified, intentional ensemble?	__ / 10
Craftsmanship	Construction and finishing quality across all members.	__ / 10
Creativity	Originality of the group concept.	__ / 10
Completeness	Every member is fully and consistently costumed.	__ / 10
Overall Impact	How impressive does the group look together as a whole?	__ / 10
Total		__ / 50

Best Youth

Effort	Dedication and commitment relative to their age.	__ / 10
Creativity	Their own ideas and personality shining through.	__ / 10
Craftsmanship	Construction quality judged relative to age.	__ / 10
Enthusiasm	Joy, energy, and commitment on full display.	__ / 10
Completeness	Fully realized costume from head to toe.	__ / 10
Total		__ / 50

Best Creature

Creature Concept	Is the creature distinctive and believable?	__ / 10
Craftsmanship	Quality of construction, stitching, and finishing details.	__ / 10
Transformation	How fully does the wearer become a non-human being?	__ / 10
Movement & Behavior	Do they move and act like the creature?	__ / 10
Wow Factor	Does the creature leave an unforgettable impression?	__ / 10
Total		__ / 50

Most Creative

Originality	Is this truly unlike anything else at the festival?	__ / 10
Concept Strength	Is the idea clear, distinct, and compelling?	__ / 10
Execution	Is the concept realized with skill and care?	__ / 10
Surprise Factor	Is it unexpected, delightful, or thought-provoking?	__ / 10
Completeness	Does every detail serve and reinforce the concept?	__ / 10
Total		__ / 50

Grand Finale

Best Villain & Best Hero

The Grand Finale awards are not open to general entry. Instead, the **Best Villain** and **Best Hero** are chosen from among the winners of the ten contest categories above. After all category winners have been announced, judges will review the winners and select one to crown as the festival's ultimate Villain and one as its ultimate Hero.

Best Villain

Chosen from category winners whose costume best embodies a compelling, menacing, or theatrical villain.

Winner: _____

Best Hero

Chosen from category winners whose costume best embodies a noble, heroic, or inspiring hero.

Winner: _____

May the finest costumes in the realm be recognized and may the festival be legendary!