



The Art of Judging Professional Nail Competitions

THE NAILYMPIA GUIDELINE FOR JUDGES & COMPETITORS 2025

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Professional competitions are the ultimate place for showcasing the highest level of expertise in nail cosmetology, manicure, pedicure, and nail sculpture using artificial materials. These competitions are not just events; they are drivers of the entire industry, providing a platform for professionals to express themselves and introduce the latest trends in aesthetics and nail fashion. Participating in a competition is a perfect step in advancing a career in the beauty industry. It's an opportunity not only to elevate one's professional skills but also to significantly enhance the value of your salon services. After all, a wall adorned with diplomas can impress clients, assuring them that they are in the hands of a true professional.

Victory and prize placement, while rewarding, are not the be-all and end-all of a professional competition. The true value lies in the preparation and participation itself, which serve as powerful forms of professional development. After each competition, nail professionals return to their salons with a renewed perspective, operating at a higher level. The study and training that precede these competitions allow them to approach all technical and aesthetic aspects of their work with greater professionalism and insight. The history of modern nail competitions began about 40 years ago, thanks to the legendary Vicki Peters. A former figure skater and champion, Vicki created a system of criteria for evaluating the professional work of manicurists. She gave new life to the industry, establishing aesthetic beauty standards in the nail field by developing a comprehensive set of criteria and a 10-point scoring system for professional

manicure work, regardless of style. Over the years, this system has evolved along with the complexity of professional techniques and the development of new products that expand a nail technician's capabilities. No matter how complex the evaluation and judging systems become, the fundamental 10-point scale remains at its core.

They say beauty is in the eye of the beholder. While this may hold true for your clients, for beauty professionals, beauty is about understanding the laws of creating shapes, lines, curves, and arches so that the final work is what your clients consider beautiful, aesthetically pleasing, and elegant - or provocatively bold, yet still aesthetically competent. The first conclusion we can draw is that beauty is governed by certain aesthetical laws that professionals understand. They know the clear criteria that distinguish truly beautiful work from unprofessional or merely amateur. So, let's dive into the world of competitions.

Judges

Judges of professional competitions are experts tasked with objectively evaluating the work of their peers according to established criteria and rules. Importantly, they must set aside their personal preferences for styles, trends, and directions in nail fashion. A skilled judge, first and foremost, recognizes the technical quality of the work, seamlessly combining it with aesthetic criteria and value.

As a judge, you hold the responsibility of assigning fair scores based on one or more

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criteria within the competition. Doing so, you are essentially determining the fate of the contestants, evaluating the results of their days of intense training and hard work. The scores you assign in just a few minutes will be analyzed repeatedly by the contestants as they seek ways to improve and perfect their works in the future.

Experience shows that some former world champions struggle to objectively evaluate the work of their peers in competitions. This paradox may seem surprising, but it often happens due to the judge's adherence to a particular style or technique. They might inadvertently score too harshly, nitpicking minor flaws that, in their mind, stand out. From this, we can draw a simple but vital conclusion: judging is a distinct professional skill that requires learning and constant refinement, even outside of the competition arena.

That's why it's crucial not only to avoid underestimating a score, but also to resist the temptation to overestimate it. Both actions can lead to a false impression of the contestant's abilities and talents. Judging is a significant responsibility - to yourself, your colleagues, and the contestants, regardless of their level. Mistakes made by judges can have lasting consequences, potentially damaging your professional reputation in the eyes of contestants and fellow judges. A professional competition judge is, first and foremost, a professional and a contestant themselves, albeit on the other side of the judging booth. It's essential for a judge to understand the concept behind the work, grasp the style or

trend, and remain unbiased, putting aside their own aesthetic preferences.

Does a judge need to be a champion themselves? Not necessarily. Some of the best professional judges are educators and former competition participants who possess their own opinions and visions. The most important quality of a professional judge is the ability to recognize excellence in the work, filter out mistakes, and accurately reflect these observations in their scoring.

Judging is a distinct skill, much like the talent of a good teacher who can nurture and train champions without being one themselves. Ideally, the professional evaluation system should be part of the education process in nail schools, where the 10-point system can be integrated into training and used to guide young professionals towards excellence. If every professional, whether a contestant or a judge, mastered this system for evaluating final work results, it could elevate the overall quality within the industry to new heights. Unfortunately, many professionals encounter the evaluation system and criteria for the first time only when they apply to compete and read the conditions.

Organizing a Modern Championship

The key principle of judging manicure competitions has always been and continues to be known as, 'blind' judging. This means that judges do not get to see the models during the

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competition or the judging process, except for the judges that are specifically assigned to the competition floor.

Judging booths are equipped with special windows and curtains, allowing judges to focus solely on the hands of the models. This setup helps judges concentrate on their work without distractions.

It's crucial that judges in the booths avoid appearing on the competition floor while contestants are preparing their work. The schedule of these competitions is usually too tight and runs like a fast-moving train, so professional judges must be extremely punctual. Make sure to arrive at the competition venue or the judging room 10–15 minutes before the championship starts. It's also important to know who the head judge of the competition is. Typically, the head judge is an expert who steps in to resolve disputes or when an additional opinion is needed on organizational matters. You can also address any organizational questions with the director or key organizer of the championship.

Judges should be well-acquainted with their personal schedule of competition categories they will be judging, or if they will be serving as floor judges where contestants prepare their models. Additionally, it's important to thoroughly understand the competition rules and the specific tasks for participants well before the event begins. A critical part of the competition rules includes a detailed description of each criterion within a category, along with the maximum possible score, which this manual will discuss in more detail later.

What a Judge Needs to do the Job of Judging

Beyond professionalism and knowledge of the competition rules, a judge may also need:

- A pen
- A magnifying glass
- A curette or wooden stick
- Disposable gloves (black are the best) or hand sanitizer
- A ruler or caliper

Often, these judging kits are provided by the competition organizers for all judges, or judges may bring their own supplies.

Judging on the Competition Arena – The Floor Judge

Judging on the competition floor is an incredible opportunity for any professional. It's not just about organizing competitions; it's a chance to gain valuable insights by observing the variety of techniques that participants bring to the table. Many of your fellow judges see this role as a unique masterclass, learning from the wide range of products and professional methods showcased by the competitors.

As a judge on the floor, you're an essential ally to the organizer. You're not just familiar with the competition rules; you know them inside and out. You're also well-versed in the approved tools, products, and techniques. Part of your job is to keep an eye out for any unauthorized tools or products being used. And it doesn't stop there—you're also responsible for keeping

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the competition on schedule, often signaling when it's time to start or to finish.

One of the most important aspects of being a judge on the competition arena is creating a calm and friendly atmosphere for the competitors. Your tact and professional support are crucial because every competitor is under significant stress, much like athletes in a high-stakes sporting event. When observing the participants, try not to linger too long at any one table to avoid adding to their stress. Also, it's your responsibility to prevent the beauty show visitors or other observers from distracting the competitors, as this not only disrupts their focus but also violates the rules.

If a competitor breaks the rules, it's your duty as a judge to step in and address the issue. Sometimes, you may even need to report the violation to the chief judge or competition director. Judges on the floor also play a role in preparing models for evaluation in the judging booths.

The Judging Process

Years ago, when competitions were smaller and the criteria were simpler, each judge would evaluate all aspects of the score sheet. However, as the technical complexity grew and the list of criteria expanded, the judging process needed to become more specialized and efficient. This led to the current system, where judges focus on just 1-2 or 3 specific criteria within a category.

This approach ensures not only quality and

impartiality but also speed - crucial for maintaining the competition's pace. Speed is a critical skill for a judge, and like any skill, it can be polished with practice. This manual will explore how to improve this in the section on developing professional vision.

The criteria are divided among the judges, usually numbered 1, 2, 3, and so on. As a judge, you'll know exactly which criteria you're responsible for in each category. To be fully prepared, focus exclusively on your assigned criteria and try to ignore the others to avoid distraction. Experienced judges often take a quick overview of all criteria, but this should never take time away from the competition's schedule.

At the biggest world competitions with many participants, the schedule is often tight. In such cases, the judging process needs to be even more coordinated and rhythmic, leaving little room for an overall review of all entries. You'll need to be particularly meticulous in your work. If necessary, you can take brief notes or call back specific models for a closer inspection to avoid any errors in judgment. This is often necessary during the top competitions where the quality is so high that it's difficult to make a fair and balanced decision at times. Ideally, if time permits, organizers will arrange two passes of models through the judging booths. The first pass is for an overview, and the second is for a detailed evaluation based on your specific criteria.

During the initial overview, judges **SHOULD NOT** touch the models' hands. At this stage, you're only assessing the overall quality of the work,

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not making detailed judgments. However, you may take notes on your first impressions. This step is important if it is available before diving into a more detailed evaluation. Don't be surprised if, after detailed judging, some models that seemed like frontrunners at first glance don't end up at the top after a full assessment. The time for the first pass is limited, and judges shouldn't spend more than 4-5 seconds on each model. The only exception might be the judge responsible for 'Overall Impression', who can spend more time with the models and is the only one to give an official score. However, this judge will also assess the work during the second pass.

During the main judging round, the model is seated, and you can carry out your detailed evaluation according to your assigned criteria. Your goal is to assess the work thoroughly and assign a score within 1 to 1.5 minutes. If you're evaluating complex aspects like the apex, c-curves, or balancing the pink & white sections in classic categories, you might need more time, which is acceptable. If you encounter challenges during judging that require a second opinion, don't hesitate to seek advice from the head judge or a colleague. Similarly, if you notice any clear violations of the competition rules, such as the use of prohibited products, be sure to inform the main judge, director, or a colleague immediately. These issues should be resolved during the judging process.

The 10-Point International System

The 10-point system for evaluating professional nail work is based on criteria that cover every aspect, from technical skills to aesthetic value and accuracy in fulfilling the competition's objectives. Regardless of the competition - whether it's acrylic or gel sculpture or nail art - the contestants perform their highest level of mastery, talent, artistry, and vision in line with modern nail aesthetics.

Though the system is fundamentally based on 10-points, it can be expanded to 20-points for specific criteria, allowing for a more thorough, precise, and fair assessment.

At first glance, it might seem like judges simply subtract points for each identified mistake or imperfection. However, professional judging doesn't work this way at major world competitions, as it can lead to unfairly low scores and misunderstandings among competitors, especially beginners. The 10-point system at the world's top championships is designed to objectively evaluate all aspects of the work, balancing technical performance with aesthetic value.

Judges use the following scale:

- 10-points: Flawless, perfect work in every aspect, including technique and aesthetics, where nothing can be added or improved. This score is rarely given, only when the work is truly impeccable.
- 9-points: Excellent work with very minor or subtle flaws. For example, this score might

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be given for brilliant technical skills but with slight aesthetic imperfections.

- 8-points: Good, professional work where minor errors are detected that are insignificant or easily corrected.
- 7-points: Satisfactory. This score indicates professionally done work with several flaws that need to be addressed. These works could score higher if it gets judged as standard salon work, but competition standards are stricter.
- 6-points: Acceptable average quality according to the criterion. Requires improvement.
- 5-points: The competitor completed the task but did not demonstrate the expected competition-level quality or aesthetic value. This score suggests that the artist needs to focus on further training and error correction.
- 4-points: Unacceptable level for a competition piece of work. The contestant made significant errors or did not handle the task well. Requires substantial correction.
- 3-points: Unacceptably low level of technical and aesthetics.
- 2-1 points: These are very low scores. Judges may use them, but ethically, they are usually avoided in criteria where the maximum score exceeds 5 points, as such low scores can discourage competitors and fail to indicate specific areas needing improvement. The aim is to highlight significant mistakes positively, encouraging competitors to improve.
- 0-points: This score is given when a task was not performed at all. For example, if you're judging the red polish application

and the competitor didn't apply it due to time constraints, you would give a zero for that criterion. However, if even one nail is partially covered, it must be scored using the scale provided above.

Variations of the Basic Scoring Scale

Some criteria require a shortened or, conversely, expanded range of scores, depending on the criterion's value, complexity, or importance for a competition piece of work. The technical and aesthetic value of each criterion reflects years of experience of many competitions worldwide. This system ensures balanced, accurate judging, highlighting the strengths and weaknesses of each contestant and reducing the chance of judging errors. For instance, while nail polishing is an important criterion, it is technically easier than creating a perfect smile line or flawless nail architecture. Thus, you may encounter a 5-point, 6-point, 9-point, or even 20-point scale in the criteria. However, even with these variations, we always refer to the 10-point system as the basic score scale. For example, a 5 in the five-point scale corresponds to a 10 in the ten-point scale, and so on. In this context, even very low scores of 1 and 2 are appropriate.

Judging Technique & Training Professional Vision

Have you ever wondered what sets a judge apart from an average person or client? It's not

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just about practical skills and techniques - it's about a trained eye that sees every detail. While our clients observe the finished work as a whole and instinctively categorize it as beautiful or not, professionals break down the result into various components, or criteria. Most technical quality criteria for nail work are nothing more than detailed descriptions of the geometric alignment of straight lines, parallels, curves, arches, angles, anatomical axes, and the natural curvature of the model's fingers. Understanding the laws of geometric composition is the key to creating aesthetically pleasing, harmonious work. This approach allows professionals to create beauty intentionally, based on the principles of geometric composition, rather than relying on intuition or subjective perceptions.

This method is not only the way to create beautiful, elegant nails but also to enhance the model's hands and fingers or visually correct some natural anatomical imperfections. The more skillfully a nail professional incorporates all criteria into their work, the more talented and flawless the results appear. Ultimately, this is the professional vision clients pay for - not just the ability to apply polish or decorate nails with glitter. Clients pay for the professional's ability to sculpt external beauty through the spatial geometry of nail design.

Understanding this, it's easy to see that the competition system and criteria are not only useful on the competition floor but also in daily salon practice and for training students and novice technicians. If these criteria and the practice of creating correct geometry and architecture, along with developing

professional vision, were mastered at the school level, there's no doubt that the quality of work in salons would be significantly higher.

The Professional Vision

As we've seen, unlike the average person, who focuses only on the overall picture, a nail professional must be able to automatically see lines, curves, arches, and other elements of the composition, break them down into corresponding criteria, and analyze them to determine whether the work is done correctly. The more accurately all criteria are performed, the more harmonious and beautiful the work will appear - this is how it will be perceived by others, regardless of their professional knowledge. This professional vision develops with experience, whether you're a competitor or a judge. For a judge, developing this automatic vision allows for efficient and accurate evaluation of the competitor's work.

Armed with the criteria of the best and most advanced international competitions, you can train this skill daily and bring it to near perfection. Subject your own work, your colleagues' work, and magazine photos to judging analysis. Ask yourself questions and, by answering them, determine how well each element of the composition and spatial geometry is executed. How appropriate is the curve of the arch? Are there side parallels - a key aspect of what makes nails elegant? How evenly aligned are the nails with the axes of the fingers, and do these lines form an angle with each other?

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Mastering these aspects will immediately help you spot and correct mistakes in nail architecture, allowing you to create beautiful work for any model's hands and fingers. For successful judging, it's important to familiarize yourself with the criteria of the category and envision the style of the final competition work. After reviewing the criteria, mentally assemble them into an ideal image of a perfect work, where all criteria would be scored at the highest level. While judging, constantly ask yourself how well the work meets this ideal image in your mind.

Choosing a Competition Model

Choosing the right model is another important aspect of competition performance that can significantly impact the overall result. Formally, the rules never specify requirements for models, so a competitor can work with any model regardless of the hands and nails' anatomical features. However, judging experience shows that the best and winning works are almost always done on 'ideal' models. So, what makes an 'ideal' competition model? An ideal model's hands should be narrow and elongated, with long, straight fingers. The nail beds should be long with well-defined parallel side lines. Finding such a model is usually a very difficult task, and once found, many competitors travel from competition to competition with the same model, forming a competitive duo.

the execution of the competition task and helps present the work beautifully for judging. A good judge always evaluates not only the nail architecture but also how the length and shape of the nails harmonize with the model's hands and fingers. It's important to note that judges do not evaluate the natural anatomy of the model's hands but assess the final result - the harmony of the nails created by the competitor in relation to the hands and fingers, and the competitor's ability to choose the most advantageous design for the model's hand type.

On the other hand, even without an ideal model, a competitor can demonstrate a high level of professionalism by visually correcting the model's hand imperfections with the nail shape, length and entire design.

Choosing the right model greatly simplifies

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Tips & Tricks

Let's dive into some professional tips by breaking down the key aspects of judging, using one of the most challenging competitions in acrylic/gel sculpture – Pink & Whites – as the example.

In this competition, participants need to showcase their best skills in acrylic or gel sculpture.

Finishing Techniques

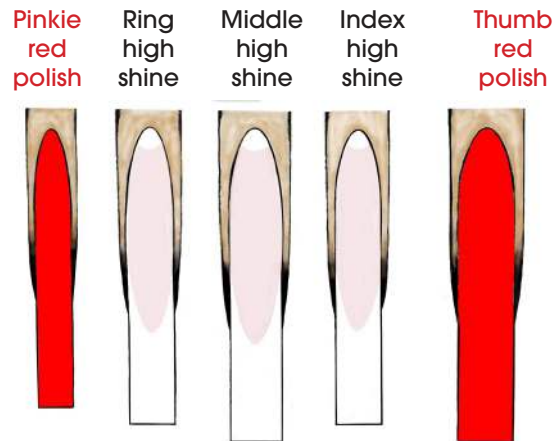
As a judge, you're going to be looking at finishing techniques like applying red polish, gel top coating, and, in the case of acrylic, polishing.

You'll be scoring up to 6-points for polish and up to 9-points for gel coating and polishing. What you're really focusing on here is the consistency of the application – a key sign of the professional technique. To catch any errors, you'll need to check the nails from every angle. If the coating is even, reflects light uniformly from the cuticle to the edge, and is applied cleanly without smudging onto the skin, then it's worth a perfect score. But if there's smudging, uneven thickness, or inconsistent shine, you'll need to dock some points based on the criteria we've discussed.

POLISHING

Polishing is a crucial skill that shows how well a nail tech can achieve that mirror-like shine and smooth surface across the nail. Any

unevenness or matte spots are considered as mistakes.



SCORE SHEET CONTENT - Competition Style Nails:

JUDGE 1

- **POLISH (6):** Only pinkie & thumb are to be polished consistently even, with 1mm space in the cuticle area, without any streaking in polish. Hair line, surface, sides & tip of edge covered. No polish on skin, under the nail or in concave.
- **TOP GLOSS (GEL) | HIGH SHINE (ACRYLIC) (9):** Index, middle & ring fingers are to be brought to a high shine over the entire surface of convex. There should be no visible file scratches, no matte spots on the surface due to unevenness & the work is to be performed using a high shine buffer (acrylic category) only. The use of top gel or polish top coat in gel category only. The 3 nails have to shine with a glass finish.

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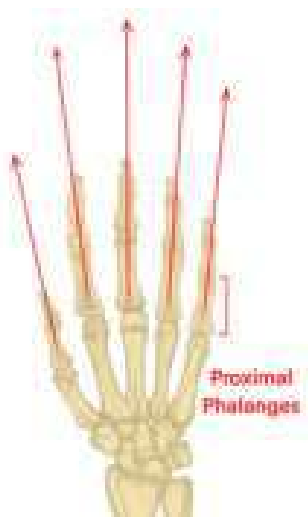
NAIL LENGTH & SHAPE

Getting the nail length and shape just right is key to the overall look. For a harmonious result, not all nails should be done in the same length. The most aesthetically pleasing result follows a specific pattern, which is outlined in the criteria. The visual length of the nail bed also impacts the overall impression. In order to judge this part, you might want to use a ruler or caliper for accuracy.

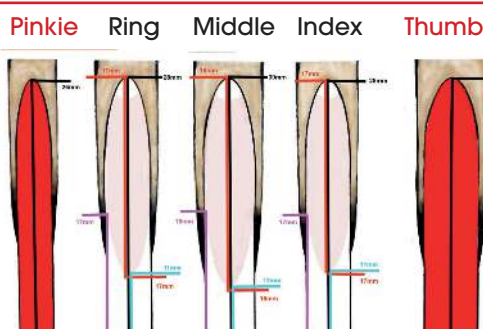
JUDGE 2

- NAIL LENGTH (20):** The length has to be consistent & in proportion

with the hand & the fingers on all 5 nails. The nails should be in line with the proximal phalanges & metacarpal head bones. The pinkie must be shorter than the ring & index finger. The ring & index finger have to be shorter than the middle finger & the thumb. The correct length of the competition nails is your choice and the extension should be min. 60 % & max. 80% of the nail bed.



- longest = thumb & middle finger
| index finger & ring finger shorter than middle and thumb | Pinkie shorter than ring and index

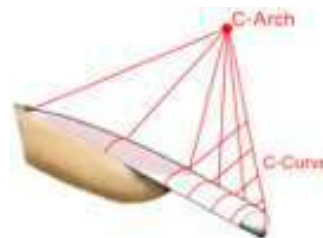


C-CURVE

Ever wondered what makes the perfect C-curve? It's all about consistency and symmetry. A more pronounced C-curve adds physical strength to the entire structure. The thickness of the nail should match the shape and be consistent throughout - the top surface (convex) and bottom surface (concave) should be symmetrical. Plus, the C-curve's curvature needs to be consistent across all nails.

JUDGE 3

- C-CURVE | C-ARCH (20):** C-curve should follow the shape of the nail down the entire length of the nail in convex & concave, this is the c-arch of the nail (tunnel view).



The c-curve must be symmetrical & even on all fingers. C-curve should be 30 - 50% (higher degree of difficulty at 50%) out of a circle from a 100% on all 5 nails. Don't mix, choose one!

EXAMPLE: If the competitor chooses 45% on the first nail, all nails need to have a 45% c-curve.



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APEX

The apex is another crucial aspect to consider. The apex is the second most important factor in the strength of the nail structure. The apexes on all nails should be consistently placed. These days, the apex shouldn't be too prominent, as that can make the nails look artificial. The 'double apex' effect - where two or more bumps are visible from a side view - is a big no-no, capping the score at 7, even if everything else is on point.

APEX (20): High point of apex & arch must be consistently placed on each nail with correct placement for the resulting nail. Not overly pronounced & must be elegant. The apex should be consistent & even on all nails. When viewed from the side, the apex should be between 25% & 50% of the entire nail bed.



HAIRLINE THICKNESS

This criterion, closely related to the C-curve, requires skill and experience. Here, you're judging the uniformity of the hairline's thickness, which shouldn't be too thick or over-filed. As with other criteria, consistency is key. If the hairline thickness is uneven, it's a serious error and should be scored no higher than 6-7 points.

JUDGE 4

- **HAIRLINE & FREE EDGE (10):** The nails must be consistently thin throughout the entire nail, be uniformly thin on each nail & no thicker than a business card. Thickness will be considered by the judges in the degree of difficulty (thinner & consistent being more difficult).



SYMMETRY WITH THE CONVEX & CONCAVE

Symmetry is a big deal here in the nail design. You're looking at how the top and bottom surfaces match up. The thickness and symmetry should be consistent, reflecting the standards you're scoring against.

CONVEX & CONCAVE (20): A consistent structure has to follow the shape of the entire nail down the entire length of the nail in convex & concave. It must be symmetrical & even on all fingers. Convex & concave lower side lines need to be as thin as the hair line or thinner, but even & consistent on both sides.



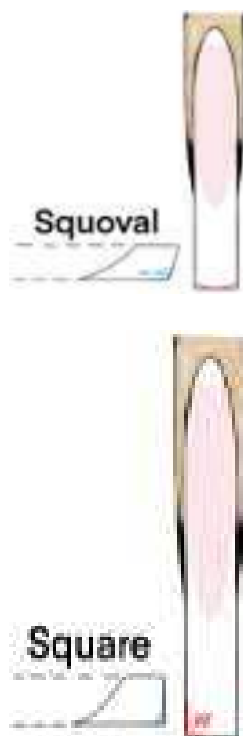
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NAIL SHAPE

When it comes to shape, international guidelines often give options like square or squoval. But even these shapes have specific technical requirements, especially concerning the necessary angles when viewed from the side. All nails should be consistent in shape. The squoval shape can add elegance, but it requires precise angles on both sides of each nail. Given its technical importance, this criterion can score up to 20-points.

JUDGE 5

- **NAIL SHAPE (20):** The shape of the nails looks consistent & uniform looking down from above the nail & from the model's perspective. Only square (90-degree angle from the side view) or squoval (75-degree angle from the side view) shape is allowed. Choose one, don't mix! The nails should be in line with the proximal phalanges & metacarpal head bones.



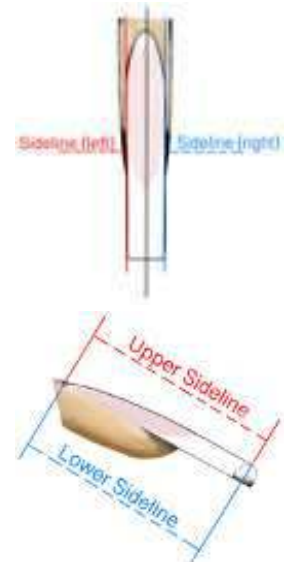
PARALLEL LINES

This is where structure meets style. You're not just looking at the nail itself but the lines that make the whole design elegant. Compare each nail to its neighbors - are there parallel lines? If the nail contour breaks away from these lines, it disrupts the overall architecture and counts as a mistake.

JUDGE 6

- **UPPER ARCH - UPPER SIDELINE (TOP & SIDE VIEW) (20):**

From the nail's side profile, the upper arch extension must be parallel to the lower arch of the nail & be even on all 5 nails. From the top view, side lines should not be wider than the natural nail lateral side lines or filed away. Top view; side lines may be coming out of the lateral sidewall straight or slightly tapered, don't mix choose one!



- **LOWER ARCH / LOWER SIDELINE (SIDE VIEW) (20):** The lower side lines should be even, neat & extend straight out from the lateral fold on both sides. They must be parallel to the upper arch from the side view. No step or ridges on sidewalls. When viewing the side lines from the view of the hair line/c-curve, they should end at the same height.

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SMILE LINE

The smile line is where technical skill meets artistry. It's one of the main elements that defines excellent competition work. Smile lines should be symmetrical, gracefully extended, and cleanly joined with the pink area. Different companies might have their own styles, from the V-shaped Chevron to the more complex U-shaped lines that mirror the cuticle. In this competition, a well-executed U-shaped smile line will score higher than a V-shaped one, as long as the technical difficulty is higher.

OVERALL IMPRESSION

This is where you take a step back and look at the work as a whole. Do all the elements come together flawlessly? Does it create a mood or a wow factor? This criterion is all about the overall aesthetic, not the nitty-gritty details.

JUDGE 7

SMILE LINE (15): Consistent shape on all 3 nails, evenly applied so tips match, no shadows, clean line & evenly aligned. Smile line can be V or U shape, flat or deep, (U shape and deep being judged as more difficult). Choose one, don't mix. Smile line of the index & ring fingers should have the same length measured from the cuticle area to the deepest point of the smile line & from the end point in the lateral folds to the hair line. Smile line of the middle finger & thumb (same) needs to be longer than the ring & index fingers (same). Smile line of the pinkie needs to be shorter than the ring & index fingers (same).



OVERALL IMPRESSION (10): Is the overall look the same on all 5 nails? Does each nail look the same in structure, except for 5 different sizes in length, smile line and nails bed?



COLOR HARMONY

These criteria show off the contestant's skill in balancing the white and pink parts of the nail, making sure they're in harmony. You also want to consider how well these colors match the model's natural skin tone, and how nice the overall look is.

JUDGE 8

WHITE EXTENSION /

APPLICATION OF WHITE (15):

Even application of product, no shadows, or bubbles, no pits & consistent across all 3 nails. Sharp division of colour at the smile line & no pink or clear on the white extension.



NAILBED / APPLICATION OF PINK/CLEAR/CAMOUFLAGE

(15): Even application of product, no shadows, or bubbles, no pits & consistent across all 3 nails. Sharp division of colour at smile line & a good blend to the nail bed towards the cuticle area. Choose transparent pink, clear or camouflage, just one for all nail beds! Nail bed of the index & ring fingers should have the same length measured from the cuticle area to the deepest point of the smile line. Pinkie nail bed needs to be shorter than the index & ring fingers. Nail bed of the middle finger needs to be longer than ring & index fingers & the same on the thumb. The colour of the nail bed needs to complement the skin tone.



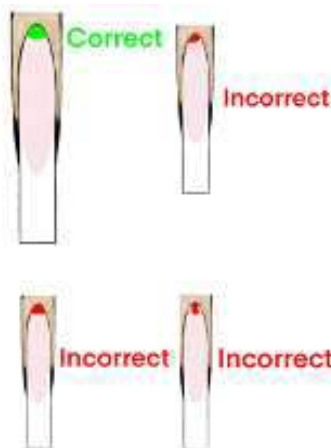
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LUNULA (MOON)

The lunula, or moon, is one of the trickiest elements, right up there with the smile line. Introduced into competitions in the early 2000s by the brilliant Tom Holcomb, the lunula adds a touch of natural elegance to the work. Unlike the smile line, the lunula is sculpted with a natural white product that mimics the real thing. The shape should look natural, too. Working near the cuticle can be tricky - it needs to be seamless, with no visible transitions or boundaries, while maintaining a uniform color. This element is scored up to 9-points. If the cuticle area is damaged, it can significantly lower the score, even if the lunula itself is perfect. Also, be aware of contestants using cuticle oil to mask imperfections. Don't be fooled - excessive oil makes the nails look messy and can be a reason to lower the score. Experienced competitors either skip the oil or use it sparingly, conditioning the skin and removing it before the judging process.

JUDGE 9

- **CUTICLE AREA (10):** No cuts or irritation around skin. Points will be deducted for any damage to the skin during the nail competition. Even product application with no ledge or missing product.
- **MOON (9):** Colour needs to be half of the white of the extension without shadows. Shape needs to match the cuticle area. Index & ring fingers the same, middle finger slightly bigger. They should look natural & consistent. Moons should be masterly blended towards the cuticle with no ledges or visible gaps.



PRODUCT RESIDUE & SURFACE SMOOTHNESS

These criteria are crucial for judging the contestant's technical skills in using both the product and the tools for extending nails, whether on forms or tips. You'll also be looking at the final quality of the product and how it all comes together visually.

JUDGE 10

- **FORM FIT | MATERIAL RESIDUE (10):** Exact fit of the sculpting form or tips (with tip application the contact area of the tip is to blend to transparency) is required without any adhesive residue, file dust & polish under the enhancement. There should be no injury to the surrounding soft tissue.
- **SURFACE SMOOTHNESS (10):** No file lines or indentations. Finished product is smooth without bumps, dips & no rough or dull spots.

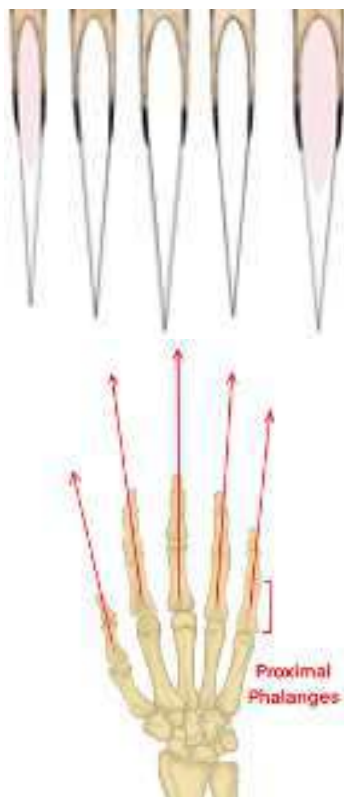
Remember, your keen eye & fair judgment not only shape the competition but also elevate the entire industry. So, judge with precision, passion, & pride. Happy judging, and good luck!

JUDGING GUIDE FOR STILETTO NAILS

JUDGE 1

• NAIL LENGTH (20):

The length has to be consistent & in proportion with the hand & the fingers on all 5 nails. The nails should be in line with the proximal phalanges & metacarpal head bones. The small finger must be shorter than the ring & index fingers. The ring & index fingers have to be shorter than the middle finger & the thumb. The nail measured from the cuticle area (top view) to the point of the stiletto (top view). The correct length of the stiletto should be 40:60. Example: Starting with the thumb French nail or the middle finger: 8mm nail bed + 12 mm extension = 20mm total length

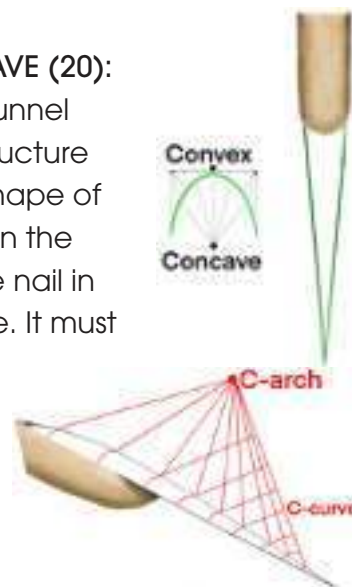


side, the apex should be between 25% & 50% of the entire length from cuticle to hair line.

JUDGE 3

• CONVEX & CONCAVE (20):

Looking from the tunnel view, consistent structure has to follow the shape of the entire nail down the entire length of the nail in convex & concave. It must be symmetrical & even on all fingers. Convex & concave lower side lines (looking from underneath) need to be thin & even on both sides. The nails must be consistently thin throughout the entire nail, be uniformly thin on each nail & no thicker than a business card. Thickness will be considered by the judges in the degree of difficulty (thinner & consistent being more difficult).



JUDGE 2

• **APEX (20):** High point of apex & arch must be consistently placed on each nail with correct placement for the resulting nail. Not overly pronounced & must be elegant. The apex should be consistent & even on all nails. When viewed from the



JUDGE 4

• UPPER ARCH – UPPER SIDELINE (TOP & SIDE VIEW)

(20): From the nail's side view, the upper arch extension has to run down to the point, meet the lower arch & be even on all 5 nails. From the top view, the side lines should not be wider than the natural



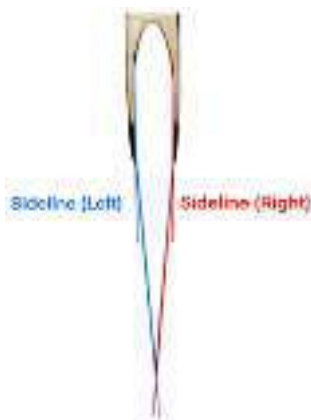
JUDGING GUIDE FOR STILETTO NAILS

nail fold & not filed away. Top view; the side lines at the extension have to come out of the lateral sidewall, taper into a triangle & end at the sharp point of the stiletto.

- **LOWER ARCH / LOWER SIDELINE (SIDE VIEW) (20):** The lower side lines should be even, neat & extend straight out from the lateral fold on both sides. They must meet the upper arch from the side view on the sharp end point of the stiletto. No step or ridges on the sidewalls. When observing the side lines from the side view, both should be at the same height.

JUDGE 5

- **NAIL SHAPE (20):**
The shape of the nails looks consistent & uniform looking down from above the nail, from the model's perspective & from the side view. A triangle needs to be created & the tip of the extension should end in a sharp point. The point needs to be in line with the proximal phalanges & metacarpal head bones.



JUDGE 6

- **DESIGN INVENTION (15)** Is the decoration/design on the 3 nails fresh & stylish? Evaluate the complexity.



- **CREATIVITY (15):** Are you seeing creative/skillful use of art media & techniques?

JUDGE 7

- **SMILE LINE | PINKIE & THUMB (10):** Consistent shape on both nails, evenly applied so tips match, no shadows, clean line & evenly aligned. The smile line of the thumb - measured from the cuticle area to the deepest point of the smile line & from the end point in the lateral folds to the hair line - need to match. (Note: total length of the thumb need to match the total length of the middle finger). The smile line of the pinkie - measured from the cuticle area to the deepest point of the smile line & from the end point in the lateral folds to the hair line - need to match. (Note: total length of the pinkie needs to be shorter than the total length of index & ring finger).



JUDGE 8

- **EXTENSION (10):** Even application of product, no shadows, or bubbles, no pits and consistent across all 5 nails.
- **NAILBED (10):** Even application of product, no shadows, or bubbles, no pits & consistent across all 5 nails. The colour of the nail bed needs to complement the skin tone on the 2 pink & white nails.

JUDGE 9

- **CUTICLE AREA (10):** No cuts or irritation

JUDGING GUIDE FOR STILETTO NAILS

around skin. Points will be deducted for any damage to the skin during the nail competition. Even product application with no ledge or missing product

- **TOP GLOSS | HIGH SHINE (10):** There should be no visible file scratches, no matte spots on the surface due to unevenness & the work is to be performed using a high shine buffer or the use of top gel. The 5 nails have to shine with a glass finish.

JUDGE 10

- **FORM FIT | MATERIAL RESIDUE (10):** Exact fit of the sculpting form or tips (with tip application, the contact area of the tip is to blend to transparency), is required without any adhesive residue, file dust & product under the enhancement. There should be no injury to the surrounding soft tissue.
- **SURFACE SMOOTHNESS (10):** No file lines or indentations. Finished product is smooth without bumps, dips & no rough or dull spots.

JUDGING GUIDE FOR SALON NAILS

JUDGE 1

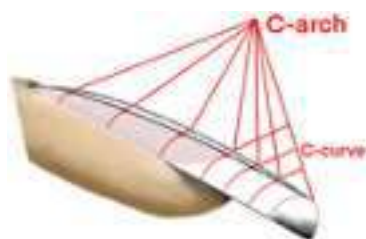
• NAIL LENGTH

(20): The length has to be consistent & in proportion with the hand & the fingers on all 5 nails. The nails should be in line with the proximal phalanges & metacarpal head bones. The small finger must be shorter than the the ring & index finger. The the ring & index finger have to be shorter than the middle finger & the thumb. The correct length of the salon nails should be max. 50 %of the nail bed. **EXAMPLE:** 50% = 10mm nail bed + 5mm white extension = 15 mm total length



JUDGE 2

- **C-CURVE (20):** C-curve should follow the shape of the nail down the entire length of the nail in convex & concave. The c-curve must be symmetrical & even on all fingers. C-curve should be 30 - 50% out of a circle from a 100% on all 5 nails. Don't mix, choose one. **EXAMPLE:** If the competitor chooses 45% on the first nail, all nails need to have a 45% c-curve.



- **APEX (20):** High

point of apex & arch must be consistently placed on each nail with correct placement for the resulting nail. Not overly pronounced & must be elegant. The apex should be consistent & even on all nails. When viewed from the side the apex should be between 25% & 50% of the nail bed from the cuticle to the free edge.



JUDGE 3

- **HAIRLINE & FREE**

EDGE (20): The nails must be consistently thin throughout the entire nail, be uniformly thin on each nail & no thicker than a credit card. Thickness will be considered by the judges in the degree of difficulty (thinner & consistent being more difficult).



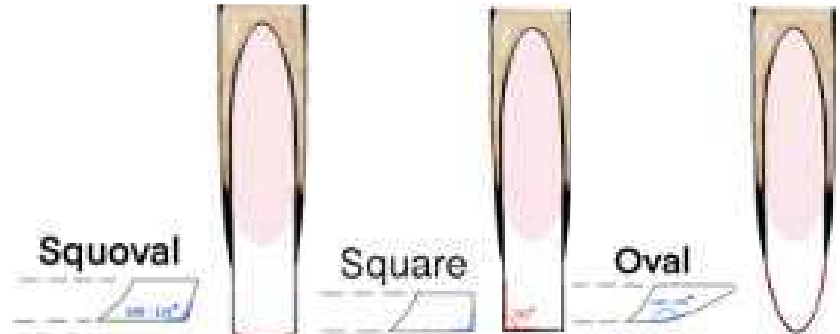
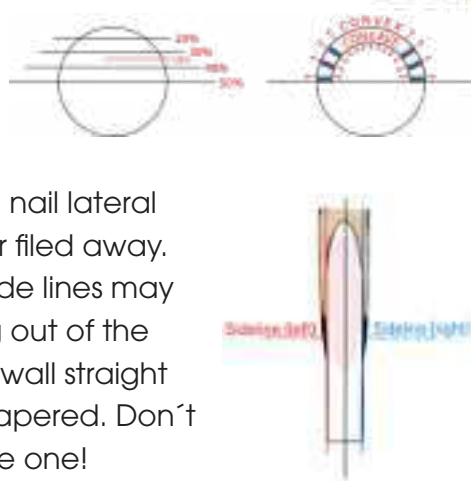
- **CONVEX & CONCAVE (20):** A consistent structure has to follow the shape of the entire nail down the entire length of the nail in convex & concave. It must be symmetrical & even on all fingers. Convex & concave lower side lines need to be as thin as the hair line or thinner but even & consistent on both sides.



JUDGING GUIDE FOR SALON NAILS

JUDGE 4

- **UPPER ARCH – UPPER SIDELINE (TOP & SIDE VIEW) (20):** From the nail's side profile, the upper arch extension must be parallel to the lower arch of the nail & be even on all 5 nails. From the top view side lines should not be wider than the natural nail lateral side lines or filed away. Top view side lines may be coming out of the lateral sidewall straight or slightly tapered. Don't mix, choose one!



- **SMILE LINE (10):** Consistent shape on all nails, evenly applied so tips match, no shadows, clean line & evenly aligned. Smile line of the index & ring fingers should have the same length measured from the cuticle area to the deepest point of the smile line & from the end point in the lateral folds to the hair line. The pinkie needs to be shorter than the index & ring fingers. Smile line of the middle finger needs to be longer than ring & index fingers & the same on the thumb. Smile line needs to be in balance & harmony with the hand, finger, shape & cuticle area.

- **LOWER ARCH / LOWER SIDELINE (SIDE VIEW) (20):** The lower side lines should be even, neat & extend straight out from the lateral fold on both sides. They must be parallel to the upper arch from the side view. No step or ridges on sidewalls. When viewing the side lines from the view of the hair line/c-curve, they should end at the same height.



JUDGE 5

- **NAIL SHAPE (10):**
The shape of the nails looks consistent & uniform looking down from above the nail & from the model's perspective. Any shape is allowed as long as you stay consistent across all 5 nails.

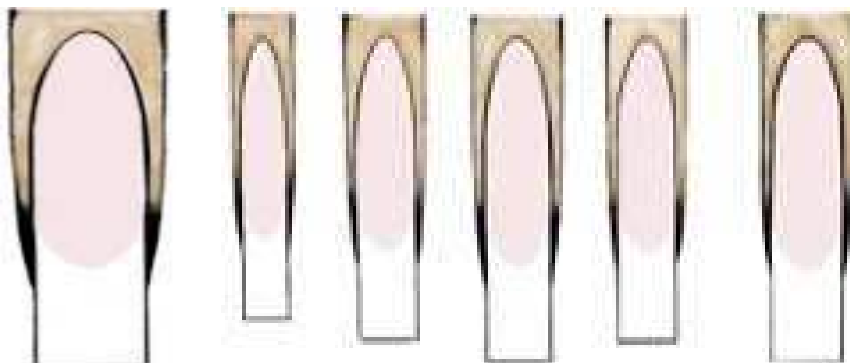
JUDGE 6

- **WHITE EXTENSION / APPLICATION OF WHITE (10):** Even application of product, no shadows, or bubbles, no pits & consistent across all 3 nails. Sharp division of colour at smile line & no pink or clear on the white extension.



JUDGING GUIDE FOR SALON NAILS

- NAILBED / APPLICATION OF PINK/CLEAR/CAMOUFLAGE (10):** Even application of product, no shadows, or bubbles, no pits & consistent across all 5 nails. Sharp division of colour at smile line & a good blend to the nail bed towards the cuticle area. Choose transparent pink, clear or camouflage, just one for all nails! Nail bed of the index & ring fingers should have the same length measured from the cuticle area to the deepest point of the smile line. Pinkie nail bed needs to be shorter than the index & ring fingers. Nail bed of the middle finger needs to be longer than ring & index fingers & the same on the thumb. Use transparent pink, clear or camouflage, for all nails! The colour of the nail bed needs to complement the skin tone for higher scores.



JUDGE 8

- FORM FIT / MATERIAL RESIDUE (10):** Exact fit of the sculpting form or tips (with tip application the contact area of the tip is to blend to transparency) is required without any adhesive residue, file dust & polish under the enhancement. There should be no injury to the surrounding soft tissue.
- SURFACE SMOOTHNESS (10):** No file lines or indentations. Finished product is smooth without bumps, dips & no rough or dull spots.

JUDGE 7

- CUTICLE AREA (10):** No cuts or irritation around skin. Points will be deducted for any damage to the skin during the nail competition. Even product application with no ledge or missing product.
- TOP GLOSS | HIGH SHINE (9):** All nails to be brought to a high shine over the entire surface of convex. There should be no visible file scratches, no matte spots on the surface due to unevenness & the work is to be performed using a high shine buffer or the use of top gel. The nails have to shine with a glass finish.