

As we all know from watching a camera club or CACCA competition judging, the scores are subjective and sometimes variable. A small amount of variability in the score of an image is understandable, after all photography is an art and with art there is no absolute, however for most images the variability between judge's scores should not be large.

Below I outline a "cheat sheet" to help club members understand how the scoring system is intended to be used.

Scores should range from 5 to 9 points per judge. Since there are 3 judges this means the total score will be range from 15 to 27. Recently some clubs and starting in 2023-24 CACCA will use half points for digital images.

When scoring an image, the entire image should be evaluated. Minor flaws or strengths should not unduly penalize or reward an image.

Let's start with a 6. This is often called a record shot. Basically, it is a snapshot. The subject is in focus and the exposure is correct. There is nothing interesting about the image and there is nothing wrong with it, either.

Next score to discuss is a 5. An image that receives a 5 will have a significant flaw such as the subject is out of focus, or the image is significantly under or over exposed by a stop or more. Shallow depth of field may be a flaw or may be an artistic treatment, you as judge need to decide this. Likewise, high-key and low-key images may be artistic or a flaw. Before giving an image the score of a 5, please ask yourself does this image work. If you answer yes, then the image should not receive a 5.

Stepping up from a 6, is an image with a score of 7, a stronger image. This is an image that is more than snapshot, it engages the viewer and shows that the photographer had intent.

The next score up is an 8. Images that score 8, have a wow factor. You look at the image and say to yourself, this image is good. I think it should receive an honor.

An even better image would receive a score 9. Such an image is great. Perhaps a double wow factor, or an image you wish was part of your portfolio. Images that score 9 are not perfect, just exceptionally strong images.