

SOP for Online Drill Competition

2020 Air Force Open Drill Nationals

Produced 18 March 2020

1. Purpose:

- 1) The purpose of this document is to provide supplemental information, regulations and procedures to the existing event SOP to transition the 2020 Air Force Open Drill Nationals from a traditional onsite military competition (herein referred to as “onsite competition”) to a competition that is hosted online and scored from same (herein referred to as “online competition”).

2. General Event Overview:

- 1) The online competition meet will parallel the conduct of the onsite meet and incorporate many of the same judging and scoring requirement as all past Air Force National competitive events.
- 2) **All events completed by the unit for scoring at the Air Force Nationals competition MUST BE performed by the teams officially by midnight Sunday, 17 May.** Units should plan for weather and other unforeseen events to ensure their events are completed during this timeframe. Know that we will work extremely hard to fit any schedule inside that window that works for you BUT also know that we do not have unlimited days to make this happen.
- 3) Teams in close proximity to each other have asked if they can get together and just have their events filmed “together” for simplicity. This is **NOT ALLOWED** because we are trying to have every school participate with a similar environment. **No cheering cadets, fancy graphics, just you doing your events.** In all cases however, ONLY your school may be participating at one time.
- 4) All costs to attend and what each cadet will receive are fully outlined in this official Air Force Nationals SOP under #4. Competition Event Specifics.
- 5) Random starting draw and many other aspects of the event **WILL STILL BE IN EFFECT** regarding judging the competition.
- 6) The specific regulations on ALL of these events are found below under, “Competition Event Specifics”.
- 7) An online live stream awards ceremony is currently scheduled to be held on Monday 1 June at 4pm EDT. It will be a fitting, exciting and competitive end to this drill season.

3. Competition Event Overview:

- 1) Hosting a meet of this caliber with great care in an online format can only be accomplished in an even-handed and meaningful way with teams working hard to compete *within the rules*. ALL events will require videotaping and uploading of footage. All events will be maintained in a “one time and done” format. All events will require a “monitor” or other non-partisan overseer. These and many other points of emphasis within the new format are specified within this document. Please read, understand, and act in accordance with the letter and the spirit of all rules written.
- 2) For each event of this competition, units must have a designated monitor, This monitor must be non-partisan and not connected to your school. Examples would be an instructor from a neighboring JROTC unit, or a local ROTC unit or a local recruiter. Feel free to suggest other options should these not be viable for your program. This person will be assigned by your Senior Instructor and must be on-site during the filming of the events.
- 3) Every event at this online meet is designed as a “You Get One Shot” just like at a traditional meet. Only for the most egregious and unforeseen circumstances would a team be permitted to execute a phase of this competition a second time. This call would be made ONLY by an event monitor in concert with SNI.
- 4) Because this meet will likely be unlike any meet you have ever attended, we expect some questions. **PLEASE CALL SPORTS NETWORK INTERNATIONAL DIRECTLY TO GAIN YOUR ANSWERS IN ADVANCE!**

4. Competition Event Specifics:

- 1) The costs to attend for teams previously registered to attend the AF Open Nationals will be unchanged (\$200 registration fee and \$20 per cadet package). Should new teams be accepted to replace dropped teams, they will pay the same \$200 registration fee and the same \$20 cadet package. Event procedures will follow the existing manual as written in every relevant case. However, the following modification will be put in place to accommodate the new event format.
- 2) **COLOR GUARD, REGULATION AND EXHIBITION EVENTS, ARMED & UNARMED:**
 - a) **The Inspection competition will not be held in this online format. The competition will maintain three events – Regulation Drill, Color Guard and Exhibition Drill largely under the same parameters as outlined within the event SOP.**
 - b) Your drill performance can be held EITHER INDOORS OR OUTDOORS – THIS IS YOUR CALL. All drill sizes listed on the event website remain in play – no changes. **Teams must carefully measure not only sizes, but entry placement and configuration to match the diagrams on-line.**
 - c) The drill area boundary must be visibly marked in some manner that can be viewed on the video. The boundary marker needs to be a traffic cone or some type of raised item (not just a mark on pavement). Each corner and the center point on each side must be marked.
 - d) Obviously, no Head Judge will be in place for these events. Teams will utilize an orange traffic cone or similar to represent the Head Judge position for the team and for the judges when scoring. This will be critical as the teams will Report-in, Report-out, as well as perform Eyes, Right/Left to this position (where applicable).
 - e) Spectators, other team members, etc., must remain SILENT before, during and after ALL performances.

5. Specific Event Video Information:

- 1) To make this meet as fair as possible, specific and often rigid guidelines will be in place for the filming of the color guard/drill portion of this event. This is done strictly for uniformity and to give every school an equal chance at success.
- 2) Schools will be encouraged to directly upload all performance videos to a private on-line channel that will be established for this event. Specific information on this channel and exact “how-to” directions will be maintained in your final mailing you will receive from SNI at the start of the filming window.
- 3) The camera person needs much practice WITH THE TEAM so that he or she KNOWS what is happening BEFORE it happens. The camera should be an extension of the eye and not appear to be “reactive” but “proactive” like an eye is.
- 4) All zooms and pans should be slow and smooth. Quick jerky movements make it impossible to have a critical eye on your performance.
- 5) **Because of filming limitations and having the best video to judge, all teams in Exhibition Drill MUST do two things:**
 - a) The team must place an orange traffic cone or similar at the point of the boundary tape where they plan to execute both Report In and Report Out. You still get to choose this spot.
 - b) **BOTH REPORT IN & OUT MUST BE EXECUTED TO THE CONE.** You may not have a different report in & out location. In either case, make your report in/out loud & clear.
- 6) For each event at the competition you are filming, here are the specific guidelines to follow:
 - a) **Teams are directed to start the camera and have your event monitor look into the camera, state the date filming is occurring, their name, position in the community and contact information. The camera person filming will then pan over and film the routine without turning off the camera. PLEASE DO NOT TURN OFF THE CAMERA AS SEEING THE MONITOR THERE WITHOUT A TIME CODE BREAK ENSURES THE ROUTINE WAS SEEN BY THE MONITOR ON THE DAY THE EVENT WAS PERFORMED AND THAT THE ROUTINE WAS A COMPLETE PERFORMANCE WITHOUT EDITS.**

- b) **Only in the case of video equipment failure etc., and if the assigned event monitor deems it necessary, a school may be allowed to execute a second video “take” in order to capture a unit’s drill event performance that is suitable for judging.**
- c) In all filmed events, the camera MUST be stable & stationary. The camera cannot move locations once filming has begun – it is **STRONGLY RECOMMENDED** to mount your camera to reduce shaking. For this reason the monitor should walk in front of the camera to film their introductory statement and then step out of the field of view for the performance to begin.
- d) The height of your camera may be from 5’ to 8’ in the air. In general, the taller the setting, the more the judge will see. It is your call exactly what height you wish to have your camera. (Note: the exact position will be covered under event specifics below)
- e) Ensure that your camera in use can pick-up volume of the Cadet Commander **EVEN WHEN** they are in the most distant report corner of the drill area to receive a maximum available score.
- f) Judges can only score what they can see and hear....don’t make them guess....that said, we do not need nor expect to have a perfectly filmed routine in a “we got one shot at this” format. **DO NOT PANIC** if your videographer has a cadet left out of a formation for a short time. During color guard and regulation, we expect to see the whole platoon 99% of the time. During exhibition drill, if the unit breaks apart and marches all over, what and how you choose to pan (moving left to right) and zoom (moving in and out from the subject) have much more latitude. All of these reasons are **WHY** is it essential that the unit **PRACTICE** their performance with the camera person several times in advance to maximize success before the official filming occurs.
- g) We at SNI understand it may be very hard to see a few short segments of the color guard, regulation and even exhibition routines, **BUT** for fairness it should be hard to see **EVERYONE** during a few of these parts! Therefore it is critical that your camera follow the performances in a smooth & consistent manner and give the judge plenty to score during the majority of the routine.
- h) Event Specific Guidelines - the position of the camera should be slightly different for each event. Here are specific items you will need to follow in **EACH** event to gain a max score:
- 1) **COLOR GUARD:** The camera should be located behind the location of the “Head Judge”, however the camera should be closer to 8’ back from the boundary line. This distance should give the videographer the ability to keep the entire color guard in the majority of the frame during all facets by panning back and forth. Pay special attention to your subject to ensure that the ENTIRE flag (to include finial at the end of the staff) and the shoes can be seen in the frame at all times but ESPECIALLY when at the carry during the bulk of the routine, as well as during “Eyes, Right / Ready, Front”.
 - 2) **BASIC DRILL:** Very similar to color guard, but you have very little “height” to worry about. The camera should be located at the location of the Head Judge, however the camera should be **roughly 10’ back from the boundary tape at a 45-degree angle from the Head Judge position** to the JUDGE’s RIGHT. Having the camera at an angle will allow the shooter to “look into the formation” a good bit during the stationary block commands. This distance should give the videographer the ability to keep the entire unit in the majority of the frame during all facets. Pay special attention to your subject to ensure that the ENTIRE Platoon can be seen (as much as possible) when they march by close and execute “Eyes, Right / Ready, Front”.
 - 3) **EXHIBITION:** As teams may choose to Report-in/out facing in any direction, the team may place the camera ANYWHERE OUTSIDE THE DRILL AREA to best display the routine they will be performing. Largely for this event, all teams are given a wide berth on the exact manner in which they wish to film. However, once your filming location is decided, **you may not move from this location during the routine.** All videographers must keep in mind while it is possible or even probable that you could have cadets move so wide they will be out of the framed shot on occasion, the team must think carefully of

how they wish to film their routine to have this happen infrequently. Filming from a WIDE zoom will allow everyone in the shot BUT very little detail may be shown. Filming too TIGHT may have too many cadet(s) leaving the frame and being unseen by the judges. Excessive use of tight camera angles that may exclude what many of your cadets are accomplishing in unison with others and will therefore be poorly thought of by the judges. Think about this carefully when designing your filming location and style.

6. Words of Advice:

- 1) It goes without saying but the ability for your school to compete well in these events may lie in the ability for your team to practice not only their competition drill, but also the FILMING of their drill! Therefore, all schools are STRONGLY ENCOURAGED to think about these factors:
 - a) If you have multiple cameras that you have access to from your school/cadets to film your routines, **please try ALL of them** to see which one gives you the cleanest and best video to view. Which has the smoothest ZOOMING (in & out) and panning (left to right) capability?
 - b) If you have multiple TRIPODS available to use, PLEASE try all of them. See which gives you the smoothest “panning”. The most steady and shake-free look? Then, make sure the camera you like best can connect to the tripod you like best.
 - c) Look at the light source... What time of day will work best for your camera to take the best pictures? Generally for outdoor filming, the higher the sun is in the sky, the better the result. Please try several practice “takes” with the sun in the sky where you will be filming.
 - d) Consider ambient background sound from highways, other students, wind, etc. – you want this video as clean as possible in all aspects.
 - e) When you shoot your test shots, look at the overall quality of the actual product you will be sending to SNI? You will be uploading directly to the private video channel we will have set-up for your school (generally preferred for the BEST Quality through 4K). In either case, look at the product you are producing and see if it shows off your talents well.

7. Event Judging & Scoring:

- 1) Procedures are being put in place to mimic as closely as possible the feel of a traditional meet. This will include: full judges briefing on SOP regs; a blind draw for the starting placements (i.e., the ORDER the judges will see the performances in), and Judging Director supervision of scoring (just as it is done on-site at an event).
- 2) When a school submits their videos and it is received by SNI, each school will be notified that all of their videos have been received and they are in process.
- 3) Judging in ALL AREAS of the online meet will be undertaken in a manner to best produce accurate results and that best reflect the talent on display in all areas. These aspects include the following:
- 4) **For the Color Guard / Drill Performances**
 - a) Air Force judges with solid backgrounds in the current drill manuals will be in use for all basic events. Individuals with SOLID specific backgrounds in Exhibition Drill will be obtained to judge these events.
 - b) As this is an online competition and all performances are filmed, the range and scope for acquiring these judges will be expansive!
 - c) All videos will be reviewed for compliance by Judging Director Justin Gates, and then placed in the cue for judging by subject matter experts obtained by SNI in Color Guard, Regulation & Exhibition Drills (both Armed & Unarmed).
- 5) Trophies will be presented for overall champion, runner-up and 3rd place finishes only. ALL SCHOOLS competing for an overall title will receive a wood & acrylic, 12” x 9” plaque that maintains their school name, service and, meet trophy award placements suitable for hanging in their JROTC program. Of course, original scoresheets and full division placements will be furnished.