



**BSO's Nebraska Blues Challenge 2024-2025**  
**Registration Deadline: September 20, 2024**  
**Open to all Blues Acts in the State of Nebraska\***

**OFFICIAL RULES**

Entrants must provide ALL the information needed on the official [entry form](#) by the deadline of September 20, 2024, AND send a photograph of the act. Photo must be 900 x 600 pixels (horizontal or vertical) and 300 dpi of the entrant (solo/duo or band – current members only) in an electronic format (.jpg preferred) to [NebraskaBluesChallenge@omahablues.com](mailto:NebraskaBluesChallenge@omahablues.com) by Sept. 20, 2024.

**All entries must be received by midnight Friday, September 20, 2024.**  
**Contact [NebraskaBluesChallenge@OmahaBlues.com](mailto:NebraskaBluesChallenge@OmahaBlues.com) for all questions.**

**Eligibility Criteria:**

- \*All Nebraska bands and solo/duo acts are eligible to enter that have performed at least four live shows at venues in the last calendar year. Acts must include one member who is a current member of the Blues Society of Omaha. In regards to Western Iowa acts, any Iowa act must have 50% of its members living in Nebraska OR within a 50-mile radius of Omaha.
- Any act, band or solo/duo act that has won 1<sup>st</sup> place at the IBC in Memphis may not enter a challenge in that same category in the future.
- An act is eligible as long as it, or any member of the act, has never received a Blues Music Award nomination from the Blues Foundation.
- An act may enter the IBC a maximum of three times, after which they are no longer eligible. They may not participate in the IBC in three consecutive years, i.e., there must be a break of at least one year after competing in a first or second IBC. An act not eligible for the IBC in a given year for these reasons also will not be eligible for the Nebraska Blues Challenge in the same year.
- A musician may not compete in the band category and the solo/duo category in the same year even if that musician represents a different affiliate (blues society) in each, per IBC rules.
- An individual may not compete in more than one act in any capacity, per IBC rules. • All musicians in the winning acts must remain the same musicians for the entire NBC competition and for the entire IBC competition. In the case of an emergency, BSO's board must approve any substitution prior to the performance date(s). (*See more information below.*)
- The act must arrive at the competition location on time for their scheduled performance slot or risk disqualification.
- All scheduled performance times are approximate. Acts should arrive at least 45 minutes prior to their scheduled performance. Cancellations or other factors may accelerate the schedule. If for any reason an act is not ready to take the stage following the previous competitor's performance, the act will forfeit its right to perform and the competition will proceed to the next act.

You will be notified of your actual NBC performance date & location after the entry period has ended. The NBC committee will do our best to accommodate your schedule, however, failure to perform due to other performance conflicts results in immediate disqualification of your act. Venue sound system and sound person for all rounds will be provided.

All decisions of the judges are FINAL. Judges for the Nebraska Blues Challenge will use the same judging criteria that are used by the International Blues Challenge. See <https://blues.org/international-blues-challenge/> for details on the International Blues Challenge.

If the NBC winning band or solo/duo act is not able to perform at the International Blues Challenge (IBC) competition in Memphis on January 7– January 11, 2025, your travel expense money is forfeited. If the First Place NBC winner cannot compete in Memphis at the IBCs, the Second Place NBC act will have the opportunity to perform if IBC deadlines can be met. The acts competing in Memphis at the IBCs are responsible for completing all registration materials in conjunction with the IBC's in a timely manner and according to IBC deadlines and rules.

Your electronic entry submission is a guarantee you and your entire act are able and willing to make the 2024 NBC performance date and to travel to Memphis for the IBC's January 7-January 11, 2025 and participate in all dates on which you qualify to compete. Any band member substitution due to an emergency or unavoidable schedule conflict must be approved by the Blues Society of Omaha by 12/31/24. After that date, emergencies (medical/family, etc.) should be communicated to the Blues Society of Omaha as soon as known. Per the Blues Foundation's rules, no more than one member of any band may be replaced.

### **Competition Information for All Acts:**

The highest scoring band in the NBC **AND** the highest scoring solo/duo act in the NBC will be selected to represent Blues Society of Omaha (BSO) at the International Blues Challenge (IBC) January 7 – January 11, 2025, in Memphis, Tennessee.

The winning acts will be required to register online at the Blues Foundation's website for the International Blues Challenge at least one week prior to the official registration deadline or may forfeit their travel stipend monies and the right to represent the Blues Society of Omaha at the 2025 International Blues Challenge. The winning act in a particular category in the NBC must enter in that same category for the IBC. Notification of IBC open registration and assistance will be provided by BSO. In case of forfeiture, the second-place act in the same challenge category will become the representative contestant. This ensures that the winning acts abide by IBC eligibility rules and show true intent of traveling to Memphis to compete.

Nebraska Blues Challenge travel stipend monies for Memphis travel expenses will be paid in the amount of \$1875 to the winning band and \$500 will be paid to the winning solo/duo. Payment will be in the form of a check written to one representative of the act. The travel stipend will be paid one week prior to the 2025 International Blues Challenge. Failure to meet all eligibility and appearance requirements at the 2025 International Blues Challenge will result in the forfeiture of the monies.

### **Scoring Criteria:**

**The scoring categories & definitions for all acts are:**

**1. Blues Content (weighted x 4):** The sound and feel of the music should be true to any of blues sub-categories: traditional blues, country blues, soul blues, blues rock and/or contemporary blues. Judges will be listening for inspired and original song selections or new

takes on blues standards. Creative reach is encouraged.

**2. Originality (weighted x 3):** Original work is encouraged. Cover tunes are allowed but playing the recorded rendition lick by lick is discouraged, will not be looked upon favorably by the judges, and will be reflected in the scoring. Acts must indicate if their songs are their own original material (this can be done at the start of the set or before each song as appropriate) and/or identify the covers that they are playing and acknowledge the originator.

**3. Vocals (weighted x 2):** The act's vocal skills, including concepts of tone, musicality, meaning, and expression.

**4. Instrumental Talent (weighted x 2):** Ability level on all instruments featured within the act.

**5. Stage Presence (weighted x 2):** The ability to command the attention of the audience by the impressiveness of one's manner and appearance on stage. Judges will consider how an act connects with and engages the audience in the music. Proper use of microphones and amplification will be considered.

To reflect the relative importance of each category in the success of an act, a judge's scores for the act in each category are weighted by scorekeepers. Raw scores for Blues Content will be multiplied by four, raw scores for Originality will be multiplied by three, and raw scores for Instrumental Talent and for Vocals and for Stage Presences will be multiplied by two. That is, the weighted multipliers will be Blues Content (4); Originality (3); Instrumental Talent (2); Vocals (2); and Stage Presence (2). The total in each category represents the Weighted Score for that category. The possible Total Weighted Score is 130.

### **Penalty Points (in accordance with International Blues Challenge**

**Rules)** One point from the act's Total Weighted Score for each of the following: •

Showing up late and/or not being ready to perform on time.

- Failing to acknowledge that a song is a cover and/or not giving credit to its originator.
- An act is penalized one point from its Total Weighted Score (see below) for every ten seconds the act runs overtime.
- Finishing 3 or more minutes before its allotted performance time expires.

## **Scoring System for Judges**

1. All categories and weightings are as previously stated.

2. Each judge will indicate his or her Raw Score (a whole number between 1 and 10, with 10 being the highest and 1 being the lowest) in each category and turn that information over to a scorekeeper.

1-3 Typical of a beginning blues band.

4-5 Typical of a local weekend band.

6-7 Typical of an advanced local band but not yet ready to headline a major blues club.

8-9 Typical of the quality of blues artists who headline major clubs.

10 Typical of those who play the main stage at major festivals.

3. The scorekeeper will multiply the Raw Score in each category by the established multiplier to get each judge's Weighted Score in each category for each act.

4. The Weighted Scores in each category for an act are added together to determine each act's Total Weighted Score for each judge.

5. Any penalty points will then be deducted to obtain the act's Net Weighted Score for each judge.

6. The Net Weighted Scores from all judges will be added together for each act to determine a combined Net Weighted Score for each act. The act with the highest combined Net Weighted Score will be the winner.

7. In the case of a tie, the Weighted Scores for each category for each tied act will be considered. Tie breakers will follow the numerical order of the Scoring Categories. The scorekeeper will select as a winner the act scoring highest in Blues Content, which is the category with the greatest assigned weight. If there still is a tie, the scorekeeper will move to Originality. If there still is a tie, the scorekeeper will move to the next categories in order; Vocals, Instrumental Talent, and Stage Presence.

Please make yourself and your band available for the entire afternoon once the day of the challenge is announced.

### **Equipment and Sets:**

The Blues Society of Omaha or the venue will provide the PA System, Microphones, and Drum Kit. Drummers ARE required to bring their own sticks. For purposes of efficiency with change-over, Artists may not substitute their own Drum Kits, they will be required to use the equipment provided. Acts will provide their own amplifiers for all instruments requiring amplification.

Sets will be 25 minutes in length. A time card will be held up at the 5, 3 and 1 minute marks. An act is penalized one point from its Total Weighted Score (see above) for every ten seconds the act runs overtime. An act is also penalized one point for finishing 3 or more minutes before its allotted performance time expires. Only in the case of a significant equipment failure will the time be stopped. Time will resume once the equipment is fixed.

Performance date and order of performances are determined by a number of factors including random selection and efforts to accommodate schedules as much as possible.

### **Arbitration of Eligibility Disputes:**

The Blues Society of Omaha will stand as the final arbiter of any disputes. Each entrant was required to sign an affidavit stating that the act meets eligibility requirements. Bands found to be ineligible will be disqualified from the competition