

The Japan Cup Contest Rules

1. The Purpose of the Contest

The Japan Cup Contest (TJCC) is a showcase for great close-up magicians. We believe that outstanding close-up magicians will entertain lay audiences as well as be recognized as masters by their fellow magicians. It follows that those magicians who are awarded top prizes at TJCC will be accepted as professional close-up magicians with exceptional talent and skills. It is hoped that these award-winning magicians will go on to compete in international close-up magic contests such as The World Championship of Magic (WCM) at FISM of which JCMA is a member.

After years of discussion with very knowledgeable magicians, we discovered that there were nearly as many definitions of close-up magic as there were magicians! Some stated that a table must be used, some stated that the props must include small items such as cards and coins, some stated that if an animal were produced the magic immediately became Stand-Up! However, we had to make a decision for TJCC. So, we have considered the size of the venue (about 25 people at each performance), the importance of the audience SEEING the magic (items that are so small or that are NOT displayed cannot be appreciated by the audience in this venue), and the rather subjective criteria by which we want to keep TJCC a “close-up magic contest” and NOT a “stand-up or parlor magic contest.” We now use a combination of objective and subjective criteria to decide if the acts we screen are considered “close-up magic”:

If the performance feels like close-up magic, it will be close-up magic.

In other words, if a particular performance, as viewed and judged by The Screening Committee, is experienced as close-up magic, and if it meets the other screening criteria used by The Screening Committee in terms of quality and excellence for the Contest, then it will be accepted. So, we are not listing any other “criteria” for a performance such as the use of a table, or what props are to be used, or whether the performer stands or sits. Consequently, please do not call or write to see if a particular effect you are thinking of doing or a particular presentation will “fit the definition.” We will not be giving any advice or suggestions to anyone.

2. Qualification for TJCC

(1) Any close-up magician, regardless of nationality or membership in any other magic society, can apply to be a contestant in TJCC.

(2) Acceptance as a TJCC contestant by JCMA is based upon a performance dvd sent to JCMA. The act on the dvd should be the exact act the applicant would perform at TJCC.

It is very important that the dvd be made in the correct FORMAT for Japanese dvd players. The dvd must be PLAYABLE on a dvd player, not just a computer. There is no charge for the application, but all costs of the video (production and postage) are the responsibility of the applicant. The dvd will not be returned, but JCMA will not show the dvd to any unauthorized person and will either discard it following TJCC or maintain it for the archive.

(3) Eight (8) or fewer contestants will be accepted to compete in TJCC.

(4) Past Gold Award winners at TJCC cannot compete in TJCC with the same act.

3. Awards at TJCC

(1) Two awards will be presented at the award ceremony: The Gold Award (First Prize) and The Mt. Fuji Award*. The winners of each award will be given a certificate.

*The short story about The Mt. Fuji Award: While traveling through Japan in 2008, Dr. Paul Critelli, our contest chairperson, was enjoying the wonderful scenery through the windows of a Shinkansen-(Bullet train). He was fortunate to be able to see Mt. Fuji. Of course he had seen many pictures and videos of Mt. Fuji, but the live sight of Mt. Fuji was beyond everything he had ever seen. It was so beautiful. However, as he was captivated by Fuji-san, he noticed that all of the other Japanese passengers didn't even look at this astonishingly beautiful sight. They were eating BENTO (boxed lunch) or reading. At first he was surprised, but he quickly realized that people who see such natural beauty on a frequent basis become accustomed to Mt. Fuji, and it almost becomes "invisible." Would this also happen in magic? Would magicians fail to appreciate the mystery and enjoyment because they see so much and know so much magic? Would "newcomers to magic" be as he, a "newcomer" to the exquisite beauty of Japan, see magic in a special way? What would happen if we magicians asked lay persons to be the exclusive judges for part of the magic contest? We were moved to hear his experience. We decided to create the Mt. Fuji Award.

(2) The winners of the awards of TJCC may use the title as follows.

The Japan Cup 2010 Gold Award Winner

(3) Special awards MAY be presented if they have been sponsored by an organization, company, or private person.

4. Judgment

(1) The Screening Committee of JCMA will select eight (8) or fewer applicants as TJCC contestants. Some “wait list” performers may also be selected. These MAY be asked to be part of TJCC if a contestant cannot perform for any reason.

(2) The Gold Award winner is decided by the five judges at the judges’ meeting. The scores will be the basis for the determination of the award. (A sample scoring sheet and the scoring criteria are attached with these rules). After TJCC, the chairperson of TJCC will conduct the judges’ meeting. The meeting will consider the scores given and a decision will be made as to whom will be awarded The Gold Award. If other special awards are being offered, the judges will determine the recipients of those awards.

(3) For The Mt. Fuji Award, the JCMA will select 21 additional individuals who are not magicians. These audience members will vote to determine the recipient of The Mt. Fuji Award. Each will cast one vote, and they will be given the most general criteria to help define what the Mt. Fuji Award symbolizes: The performer who has presented the most magical and entertaining act of the contest. Please note that both “magical” and “entertaining” are given equal weight in the definition, and the JCMA will NOT give additional criteria, and we will urge the non-magician judges NOT to discuss their thoughts during the contest or before they have cast their votes.

(4) Judges are selected by the board members of the JCMA. Judges are chosen from the participants at The Japan Cup.

(5) A contestant who presents an act that is obviously a copy of a complete act or is an act with significant parts of an act of another magician will be disqualified. A contestant who uses a confederate or “stooge” – someone who has been instructed to say a particular thing or act in a particular way – will also be disqualified.

5. Important aspects of the performance

(1) A contestant’s right to perform all effects is his or her exclusive responsibility. If permission is needed for one or more parts or effects of the act to be performed due to the creator of that effect having reserved the right to public performances, the contestant must be in possession of that permission during TJCC.

(2) If music is to be used, the following is required.

a. Music Copyrights

If music is used, and if there is a “playing fee” attached, this fee will be the responsibility of the performer. However, JCMA will act as intermediary with the copyright management organization. If music is to be used, the following details about the music must be attached to the application form: a) title, b) name of the writer and/or composer, c) name of the singer and/or player, d) performance time.

b. Media Rights

If the performer wishes to use CD's, tapes, or downloaded music, the performer must ask the company which produced the media (CD's, tapes, or downloaded music) if he or she can use the media. To do this, the performer should make contact with each of the companies or ask JCMA for details. All costs to obtain the right to use a particular medium are the responsibility of the contestant. If the performer cannot obtain permission to use any of the music, JCMA and the performer should discuss this problem. JCMA MAY ask the performer to use other music for the performance. The contestant should discuss the details, costs, and method of payment with JCMA beforehand.

(3) All devices needed to play music are the responsibility of the performer, and these devices must be carried and operated by the performer or assistants.

(4) In addition to (3) above, all props must be carried in and out of each room by the performer or the assistants. Assistants must be registered for The Japan Cup.

(5) There will be a close-up table in each contest room, The tabletop will be a semicircle with the distance from the edge to the mid-point being 80 cm, and the height of the table being 70 cm. If a contestant does not use the table, the staff of JCMA will remove it from the performing area. If the performer intends to use his or her own table, the performer or the assistants of the performer must carry it. Chairs for the performer and volunteers will be available.

(6) The length of the act must be between five (5) and ten (10) minutes.

(7) In the contest, the contestants must perform the same act four (4) times for four (4) audiences of 25 people each. The first half of the contest is 90 minutes and during this time the contestants will perform twice, once in each of two (2) different rooms. There will be a 30-minute interval before the second half of the contest, which is also 90 minutes in length. The second half will be the same: Each contestant will perform twice, once in each of two (2) rooms. There MAY not be more than 20 minutes for reset between the first performance and the second in each half.

(8) Timing will begin when the contestant appears at the performing area or the music starts.

(9) If the contestant goes past the time limit, the timekeeper will ask the performer to stop.

(10) The order of the performance is decided by the organizing committee of The Japan Cup.

(11) If the contestant needs electricity for any part of the performance, he or she should discuss this with JCMA beforehand. Since a power supply may vary with the venue, an electric outlet may not be available. JCMA recommends that performers have some alternative available, such as battery-powered devices.

6. Video and photo recording

(1) JCMA may record the contestants' performances by videotape or photography. Videotapes will be kept by JCMA, but they will not be shown to anyone without permission of the performer. Photography may be used in various media without any permission of the performers being obtained.

(2) Audience members will not be permitted to take photos or record video during the performances.

7. Registration for TJCC Contest

(1) Complete the application and send it to JCMA (by regular post or FAX) or copy and paste it in the email. The application is available at the JCMA web site. If the application is sent by email, the applicant's signature is not necessary, but the contestant must sign the application before the contest at The Japan Cup registration desk.

(2) A profile photo for The Japan Cup program book is needed with the application. If the photo is sent with email, the photo should be sent as a JPEG file.

(3) JCMA may make an official announcement of the contestants. If this does take place, a short profile of each contestant will be needed according to the application. The photo and the profile may be shown on the JCMA web site, in magazines, or in The Japan Cup program.

(4) The dead line for the application to TJCC is January 31, every year. All applications

and dvds must be in the possession of the JCMA by January 31. every year. The Screening Committee of JCMA will chose eight (8) or fewer performers who compete at TJCC by the end of February. There MAY be a “wait list” created.

(5) The competitors of TJCC do not have to pay a registration fee for The Japan Cup. However, the reserved seats will not be offered to the competitors. They will be given “standing room only” spots. If a competitor wants a reserved seat, he or she must pay the registration fee. “Wait list” competitors and assistants must pay the full registration fee. If the “wait list” competitor is selected to be part of the contest, he or she will have the registration fee refunded.

(6) Application forms should be sent and questions directed to:

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