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# **Model Contest Judging: Eliminating the Mystery**

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# Achievement Program & Contests

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- The purpose of the Achievement Program is to recognize and reward good model-building
- The purpose of the Model Contest is to choose the winning models in each category.
- The purpose of the Modeler to participate in the Contest should be:
  - to challenge their self
  - to improve their own modeling skills
- The purpose of NMRA judging guidelines are to:
  - Help the Judges determine the winning entries
  - Judge the models in a consistent scoring process
  - Evaluate the models in a manner that provides positive and constructive feedback to the modeler.
- The primary questions a Judge uses (in each category) are:
  - What is the modeler trying to do?.
  - How well did the modeler accomplish their goals?



# Regional Convention Model Contests

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- In general, Judges are set up in teams of two, with at least one experienced judge, for each category:
  - Construction
  - Details
  - Conformity
  - Finish & Lettering
  - Scratch-building
- Each Judging team review these classes: motive power, cars, and structures
  - Each class is judged one at a time for consistency
  - Different scales are judged alike
    - Difficulty is generally applied to size of parts & materials, not scale
  - Each judge determines a preliminary score, discusses with each other, then adjust score if necessary and average both scores for final score.
  - Comments are written to contest forms for positive and constructive feedback.



# Regional Convention Model Contests

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- Challenges facing Judges
  - Unfamiliarity with model prototype
  - Unfamiliarity with modeling technique
  - Unfamiliarity with description
- Judges are normally NOT experts (but are normal, air-breathing fellow modelers, themselves.) They are typically a mixture of advanced to good modelers.
- Judges have to rely primarily on the contest form to describe what you are trying to do, and look at the model in how well you did it.
  - If the information isn't available on the form, it is hard for the Judge, experienced or otherwise, to make an assumption or judgement on the model.
- AP judges are required to review all supporting documentation; however, Model Contest Judges are not required to read all supplemental information.
- Model Contest forms need to be filled out concisely with the goal in mind to make it easy for Judges to determine what you wanted to do.



## Detail (0-20 Points)

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- Judges' primary assessments:
  - **HOW MANY DETAIL PARTS ARE ADDED TO OR INCORPORATED IN THE MODEL?**
  - **HOW COMPLEX WAS THE DETAILING JOB?**
- Details that are integral parts of the prototype (parts that are necessary for the prototype to hold together and function) receive more weight than details that are added for appearance (such as tools on a locomotive or clutter around a structure).
- Working details (sliding doors, functional brake gear) should receive more points than non-working details of the same type.
- Ordinarily details are separate parts, but detail added to masters or patterns for castings or photo-etchings for the model are also considered.
- It makes no difference if the details were scratchbuilt, included loose in a kit, or purchased separately, focus is on the detail added to the model, including details that have been added to replace cast-on versions
- The model is examined for any added details not listed on the entry form



# Detail Pondering Points (0-20 Points)

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- **Amount and complexity of the detail and the number of subordinate parts added.**
- Refinement of the model
- Quantity of detail and not quality
- Amount of underbody detail, air lines, brake rigging, brake cylinders, etc.
- Coupler cut lever detail and are there appropriate safety devices
- Board-by-board construction instead of scribed siding
- Fascia boards, eaves, troughs, downspouts, gutters
- Bolt heads, nail heads, door knobs
- Accuracy, completeness and placement of both the colors and the lettering on the model

# DETAIL JUDGING POINTS MATRIX



Complexity Of detail	Little Added			A few details				Moderate detail				More extensive		Extensive & Complete		
Simple	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
Easy to add	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
Hard to Add	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Complex	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20



# DETAILS Form

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- If possible, have a sheet dedicated to Detail
  - This simplifies the process for the Judges who can review ‘at a glance’.
  - Some of this information may be repetitive for the other categories such as Construction and Conformity; however, you are trying to maximize your points and make it easy on the Judges.
- Give a complete listing of parts added / removed / replaced
- Note any working detail parts
- Add a description for any parts made
- Describe any difficulty/cautions/concerns in assembly
- Add photo(s) of the model or prototype to point out any specifics or some details possibly not readily apparent





# Conformity (25 Points)

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- Judges' primary assessments:
  - **HOW WELL DOES THE MODEL REPRODUCE THE PROTOTYPE?**
- Conformity deals with achieving prototypical appearance or following prototype practice in construction and application of parts
- Efforts made to replicate prototype features, including adherence to dimensions, simulation of actual construction materials and practices, choice of components, and arrangement of details.
- Conformity can be achieved through scratchbuilding, through kitbashing, or through adding and replacing details.
- For models selectively compressed from a large prototype, how well the compression has captured the features of the original is considered.
- The trouble taken to determine, achieve, and demonstrate conformity is considered.
- High scores ordinarily require the support of reference photos and/or plans.
- Prototypical models lettered for fictitious railroads ("proto-freelanced") should be supported with references to the corresponding prototype.



# Conformity (0-25 Points)

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- Freelanced models of imaginary prototypes, including structures, should be supported with evidence of conformity to prototype practices (such as photos or drawings of prototypes with similar features) to be awarded more than a few points.
- A modeled load it should have an accompanying plan or photograph.
- **The work accomplished, the effort made, and the steps taken beyond what may have been done by a manufacturer or provided in a kit are what counts toward conformity.**
- While the judge can and should ask other judges who may have the needed knowledge, it's up to the entrant to explain and demonstrate conformity.
- **Couplers for cars and locomotives are exempt from conformity judging. No points are to be given for the presence or absence of any style of coupler.**
- **Wheels and axles for cars and locomotives are also exempt from conformity judging. No points are to be given for insulated or properly gauged wheelsets or for correct wheel contours.**
- **In judging trackwork, no points are to be given for adherence to prototypical dimensions.**
- **Operational aspect of the model are not considered in judging Conformity.**



# Conformity Points (0-25 Points)

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- **LOCOMOTIVES:** Overall conformity, scale, logical piping and placement of components with respect to the prototype.
- **CARS:** Proper roof section, number and spacing of windows, trucks, brake rigging, interiors, out-of-era parts such as K-1 brake systems on a 60' bulkhead flat car, or Timken roller bearing trucks on a narrow gauge car, etc.
- **STRUCTURES & DISPLAYS:** Consider architectural practices of construction, scale thickness of exposed walls, window and door construction.
- **BRIDGES:** Consider the size of members, proper span lengths, bracing and support details.
- **A maximum of 15 points is suggested for models that do not have any Conformity documentation such as plans or photographs.**

# Conformity Judging Points Matrix



Conformity	Partly Prototypical										Largely Prototypical										Completely Prototypical				
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20				
Minimal																									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21				
	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22				
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23				
	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24				
Extensive	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25				



# Conformity Form

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- It is **EXTREMELY IMPORTANT** to include prototype photos / drawings / diagrams of what you model, even if it is a free-lanced model.
- The free-lanced model must be **logically** based on some prototype or standard method (of construction) to fit the era and locale.
- List modifications **you** made to the model to make it more prototypical.
  - This simplifies the process for the Judges who can review ‘at a glance’.
  - Some of this information may be repetitive for the other categories such as Construction and Detail; however, you are trying to maximize your points and make it easy on the Judges.
- Describe any special work / difficulty making the modifications.
- List research you did for the model.
- Judges often rely on looking at what you say you did to make it more prototypical and compare this to the photo of the prototype to see if this affect was achieved.

# Contest Judging Guidelines

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- You can find “buried” on the NMRA site the Contest Judging Guidelines under convention/contests or go to:

<http://www.nmra.org/education/achievement/pdf/2006-judging-guide-lines.pdf>