

# AMERICAN ACCORDIONISTS' ASSOCIATION

## 2026 Competition – Rules and Required Composition List

Categories include Standard & Open solos, Standard & Open duets, and Open Ensembles & Bands. Contestants in Standard categories must choose a selection from the Standard music list. All other categories are Open, which means you can play anything you wish, except in the Ethnic, Pop, and Jazz categories, where the style of music is designated.

<b>MUSIC LIST FOR STANDARD CATEGORIES (with stock numbers)</b>		
<p><b>STANDARD SOLOS</b></p> <p><b>Standard Solo Prep</b> Frogs and Frills (ED86) Captain Kangaroo (MO12B)</p> <p><b>Standard Solo Elementary</b> Turnpike Polka (MO6C) Silv'ry Moon Waltz (MO11C)</p> <p><b>Standard Solo Intermediate</b> Twin City Polka (MO45A) Salute to Notre Dame (MO57A)</p> <p><b>Standard Solo Advanced</b> Trickling Keys (ED471) Study in Hi Fi (MO85A)</p>	<p><b>STANDARD DUETS</b></p> <p><b>Standard Duet Elementary</b> Western Round-Up (MO1C) Junior Polka (ED803D)</p> <p><b>Standard Duet Intermediate</b> My Wild Irish Rose (AR5001) Campus March (AR6001/11)</p> <p><b>Standard Duet Advanced</b> Skaters Waltz (AR5003) Gypsy Love Song (AR6002/2)</p>	<p><b>ORDERING MUSIC</b></p> <p>All titles are available from <b>Ernest Deffner Publications.</b> To order or inquire, please email <a href="mailto:frank@bussomusic.com">frank@bussomusic.com</a>.</p>

<b>COMPETITION CATEGORIES AND TIME LIMITS</b>		
<p><b>OPEN CATEGORIES</b></p> <p>Evaluation Solo - 6 min.</p> <p>Open Solo Juniorette (up to 9) - 3 min. Open Solo Junior (up to 12) - 5 min. Open Solo Intermediate (up to 15) - 6 min. Open Solo Senior (16+) - 8 min. Open Solo Adult Hobby - 6 min.</p> <p>Founder's Solo Juniorette (up to 9) - 3 min. Founder's Solo Junior (up to 12) - 5 min. Founder's Solo Int. (up to 15) - 6 min. Founder's Solo Senior (16+) - 8 min. Founder's Solo Adult Hobby - 6 min.</p> <p>Ethnic Solo Juniorette (up to 9) - 3 min. Ethnic Solo Junior (up to 12) - 4 min. Ethnic Solo Intermediate (up to 15) - 5 min. Ethnic Solo Senior (16+) - 6 min. Ethnic Solo Adult Hobby - 5 min.</p>	<p>Pop Solo Juniorette (up to 9) - 3 min. Pop Solo Junior (up to 12) - 4 min. Pop Solo Intermediate (up to 15) - 5 min. Pop Solo Senior (16+) - 6 min. Pop Solo Adult Hobby - 5 min.</p> <p>Jazz Solo Junior (up to 15) - 5 min. Jazz Solo Senior (16+) - 6 min. Jazz Solo Adult Hobby - 6 min.</p> <p>Open Duet Juniorette (up to 9) - 3 min. Open Duet Junior (up to 12) - 5 min. Open Duet Intermediate (up to 15) - 6 min. Open Duet Senior (16+) - 8 min. Open Duet Adult Hobby - 8 min.</p> <p>Open Mixed Duet - 6 min.</p> <p>Open Junior Ensemble (up to 12) - 6 min. Open Senior Ensemble (Pro/Am) - 12 min.</p> <p>Evaluation Ensemble - 6 min. Evaluation Band - 6 min.</p>	<p>Open Junior Band (up to 12) - 8 min. Open Senior Band (Pro/Am) - 12 min.</p> <p>Festival Band (Pro/Am) - 15 min.</p> <p>Entertainment AAA - 15 min.</p> <p>Honors Solo Jnrette. (up to 9) - 5 min. Honors Solo Junior (up to 12) - 8 min. Honors Solo Int. (up to 15) - 12 min. Honors Solo Senior (16+) - 15 min. Honors Solo Virtuoso (up to 32) - 20 min. Honors Solo Adult - 15 min.</p> <p><b>STANDARD CATEGORIES</b></p> <p>Standard Solo Prep Standard Solo Elementary Standard Solo Intermediate Standard Solo Advanced</p> <p>Standard Duet Elementary Standard Duet Intermediate Standard Duet Advanced</p>

**Honors categories for USA students only; all others open to all students**

Age cutoff date: June 1, 2026

Entry Form submission deadline and Entry Fee payment deadline July 1, 2026

### GENERAL RULES

Entry forms and additional information will be posted online at [ameraccord.com](http://ameraccord.com).  
For additional information, please contact Joanna Darrow at [acmeaccordion@gmail.com](mailto:acmeaccordion@gmail.com).

<p><b>EXCEPTION:</b> The Honors, Bands, and Ensembles categories.</p> <p><b>REGISTRATION:</b> Contestants 18 and over must purchase a festival registration. Contestants 17 and under receive 2 complimentary registration badges for parents/guardians.</p> <p><b>CLOSING DATE for entries (age cutoff): June 1, 2026</b></p> <p><b>ENTRY REQUIREMENTS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Contestants who are studying accordion must be entered by their music teacher or the music school where they study. If the teacher is not a full AAA member, a fee equal to membership dues (\$65) must accompany the applications and entry fees. Contestants who are not currently studying with an AAA member/teacher may enter themselves provided they (the contestant) are AAA members or have paid a fee equal to membership annual dues (\$65) in addition to entry fees.</li> <li>2. Entries must be accompanied by the appropriate entry fees, which are nonrefundable. Payment for entry fees must be submitted by the sponsoring teacher on ONE check for the entire amount made payable to "AAA". Individual student checks will only be accepted if the student is a member of AAA as stated in #1 above.</li> <li>3. If possible, the Contest Committee will accept late entries, provided they are accompanied by a \$10.00 late fee per entry.</li> </ol> <p><b>ANY ENTRY FORM NOT FULLY COMPLETED WILL BE REFUSED.</b></p>	<p><b>RESTRICTIONS</b> – Contestant may not repeat any selection(s) with which they won first place in a national AAA Competition in a standard or open solo category during the past two (2) years.</p> <p><b>CATEGORIES</b> – The Contest Committee reserves the right to combine or divide similar categories, as may be warranted by number of entries.</p> <p><b>JUDGING</b> – The following criteria are considered in judging a performance: correct tempi, coordination of both hands, time values, accuracy of notes, phrasing, right &amp; left hand technique, articulation, interpretation of music, dynamics, musicianship, overall performance, and memorization (where required). The decision of the Judge(s) is final.</p> <p><b>PENALTIES</b> – Failure to comply with the rules for any category may result in: A. Disqualification; B. Loss of points; C. Forfeiture of award; D. Other as the occasion demands.</p> <p><b>COMPLAINTS AND PROTESTS</b> – A signed letter by the complainant must be submitted to the Contest Chairperson within ten (10) days after the announcement of the awards. A protest fee of twenty-five dollars (\$25.00) must accompany the letter.</p> <p><b>SUPERVISION</b> – Festival and competition are under the auspices of the American Accordionists' Association. The competition is governed by the Contest Committee of the American Accordionists' Association, which shall have final jurisdiction over any question.</p>
<b>DEFINITIONS</b>	
<p><b>ACCORDION BAND</b> – At least eight (8) accordionists are required. In addition, percussion, amplification, and electronic accordions are permitted.</p> <p><b>ACCORDION ENSEMBLE</b> – At least three (3) and not more than seven (7) accordionists are required. In addition, amplification and one (1) percussionist are permitted.</p> <p><b>AGE LIMITS</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Adults may enter all categories except those indicating age restrictions.</li> <li>2. Solo and Duet contestants may not be older than the age limit stipulated for the category as of June 1, 2026. For Band and Ensemble categories, the contestant's age is determined as of January 1st of the contest year.</li> <li>3. Contestants are permitted to enter any category over their age, providing the entry is in conformity with the contest rules, but not two (2) categories of the same type.</li> </ol> <p><b>AMATEUR</b> – One who does not earn his/her living through playing or teaching the accordion and/or who is not a member of the Musician's Union.</p> <p><b>AWARDS</b></p> <p>Awards for all Solo and Duet categories will reflect a merit award system. Contestants will be scored on the Individual's performance only. Judges will take into consideration the age of the contestant, years of study, and overall musical excellence. Music chosen must be in compliance with the rules for the category entered. Competitors achieving a score of 95-100 will receive a Superior award, those achieving 90-94 will receive an Excellent award, and 85-89 will receive a Very Good award. Each performer will receive a participation award in the form of a trophy/medal as described above. Results will be on the merit of the performance only.</p> <p>Each member of duets and ensembles will receive a trophy or medal as described above. A single award will be given to Band conductors. Awards will be presented at the Awards Concert.</p> <p><b>EXCEPTIONS:</b> Honors, Band, and Ensemble categories. See separate rules on page 3.</p>	<p><b>OPEN CATEGORIES</b> – Contestant may choose the music:</p> <p><b>OPEN SOLO</b> – Contestant may play anything they wish except Ethnic, Pop, or Jazz selections.</p> <p><b>FOUNDER'S SOLO</b> – Any composition written by Magnante, Biviano, Deiro, Von Hallberg, Gart, Frosini, Galla-Rini, or Nunzio.</p> <p><b>OPEN ETHNIC SOLO</b> – Any polka or ethnic selection.</p> <p><b>OPEN POP SOLO</b> – Any current or "traditional" pop selection. This category is not for Jazz.</p> <p><b>OPEN JAZZ SOLO</b> – Any current or traditional "Jazz" selection.</p> <p><b>OPEN DUET, ENSEMBLE, BAND</b> – Contestants may play anything they wish.</p> <p><b>MIXED DUET</b> – Must consist of accordion and any other instrument or voice.</p> <p><b>STANDARD CATEGORIES</b> – Contestant must play music from the Music List for Standard Categories. Honors category contestants may NOT enter any Standard Categories.</p>

## CATEGORIES – Awards, Fees, Music, and Performance Requirements

Memorization for all solos is required, except for Evaluation Solo. Memorization not required for duets/ensembles/bands.

### STANDARD SOLOS

Entry Fee – \$30.00 per category

*Music and Performance Requirements*

1. Contestant must perform a selection from the Music List for Standard Categories for each category entered.
2. Contestant must provide a clean copy of published music for the Judge(s).
3. Memorization for all solos is required.
4. Repeats are optional, unless specified in the Music List.
5. Standard Solo contestants MAY enter the Open Ethnic, Open Pop, Open Jazz, and Evaluation categories as there are no Standard categories for these selections. They may NOT, however, enter the Open Solo, Founder's Solo, or Honors categories.

### STANDARD DUET

Entry Fee - \$18.00 per member (\$36.00 per entry)

*Music and Performance Requirements*

1. Contestants must perform a selection from the Music List for Standard Duets.
2. Contestants must provide a clean copy of music for the Judge(s).
3. Memorization not required.
4. Repeats are optional, unless specified in the Music List.
5. Standard Duet contestants may NOT enter the Open Duet Category.

**OPEN SOLOS** – Open Solo, Founder's Solo, Open Ethnic, and Open Pop. Each Open Solo Category is based upon the contestant's age. *See Age and Time Limits.* (Juniorette - up to 9 years of age; Junior - up to 12; Intermediate - up to 15; Senior - age 16 and over.) Contestant may enter any or all Open Solo categories provided the age is appropriate. They may NOT enter Standard Solo or Standard Duet categories.

Entry Fee: - \$30.00 per category

*Eligibility:* Competitor may not be older than the age limit of his/her Category on the closing date of entries. It is permitted for a Contestant to enter a Category of a higher age than he/she is, but not both.

*Music and Performance Requirements*

1. Contestant may choose the music he/she will perform.
- OPEN SOLO** – Contestant may play any classical, traditional or contemporary accordion selection they wish, except Ethnic, Pop, or Jazz selections.
- FOUNDER'S SOLO** – Contestant may play anything they wish that was written (not just arranged) by one of the AAA Founders - Magnante, Biviano, Deiro, Von Hallberg, Gart, Frosini, Galla-Rini, or Nunzio.
- OPEN ETHNIC** – Any polka or ethnic selection.
- OPEN POP** – Any current or "traditional" pop selection. This category is not for Jazz.
2. Memorization for all solos is required.
  3. Contestant must provide a clean copy of published music for the Judge(s); unpublished compositions or arrangements may be submitted in manuscript form. Music or lead sheet optional for Pop Solo.
  4. Open Solo Contestants may NOT enter any Standard Solo Category. They may enter any or all Open Solo Categories. Anyone may enter Evaluation.
  5. Contestants playing more than 30 seconds past the time limit will be subject to a point penalty to be determined by the Contest Committee.
- See Age and Time Limits (maximums).*

**OPEN JAZZ SOLO** - Two divisions: Junior (up to and including age 15) and Senior (16 and over)

Entry Fee - \$30.00 per category

*Eligibility:* Competitor may not be older than the age limit of his/her Category on the closing date of entries. It is permitted for a Contestant to enter a Category of a higher age than he/she is, but not both.

*Music and Performance Requirements*

1. Contestant may choose the music he/she will perform. See guidelines under "Definitions."
2. Memorization for all solos is required.
3. Music or lead sheet provided for the Judge(s) is optional for Jazz Solo. *See Age and Time Limits (maximums)*

### AAA HONORS CATEGORIES

**Fees:** Each contestant must be sponsored by an AAA member or pay the annual \$65 AAA membership fee in order to compete. Entry fee of \$30 must accompany the fully completed Entry Form plus the additional \$65 for a non-sponsored entry. Incomplete Entry Forms will not be accepted.

#### Age & Time Limits:

Juniorette (up to 9) – Time limit for total performance is 5 minutes

Junior (up to 12) – Time limit for total performance is 8 minutes

Intermediate (up to 15) – Time limit for total performance is 12 minutes

Senior (16 and over) – Time limit for total performance is 15 minutes

Virtuoso (up to 32) – Time limit for total performance is 20 minutes

Adult (no age restrictions) – Time limit for total performance is 15 minutes

**Selection #1** is a Choice Piece: Must be classical, open, or original music for accordion – no Pop, Ethnic, or Jazz is allowed.

**Selection #2 from Required Music List:** Must perform ONE of these pieces:

Juniorette: Sea Breeze, Deiro (PD5650)

Gibraltar Rock (OP0160)

Junior: Topsy Turvy, Ettore (PD0914)

Video March, Mosti (MO70A)

Intermediate: Colonial March, Sillari (PD515)

Flight of the Angels, Carrozza (PD0352)

Senior: Pioneer Concerto, Ettore (PD0901)

Four Nocturnes, Bennett (ED84)

Virtuoso: Omaggio a Pietro, Frosini (AL299)

Remembering a Legend: Charles Magnante, Schimmel (ED186)

Partita, Tcherepnin (OP0184)

Adult: First Movement from Concerto in A, Deiro (PD0240)

Trieste Overture (unabridged), Deiro (PD0609)

Prelude & Scherzo, Ettore (PD5733)

All Required Music is available for purchase from Ernest Deffner Publications. To order or inquire, please email [frank@bussomusic.com](mailto:frank@bussomusic.com).

**Prizes:** Trophies will be awarded for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place in each category. A cash award will also be presented to the 1st place winner in each category. All rules and regulations for the Honors Categories apply as noted in the 2026 Contest Rules and Required Composition List.

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For additional information, please contact Joanna Darrow at [acmeaccordion@gmail.com](mailto:acmeaccordion@gmail.com).

<p><b>ADULT CATEGORIES (Open, Ethnic, Pop, Founder's and Jazz)</b> Entry Fee – \$30.00 per category <i>Music and Performance Requirements</i></p> <p>1. There are five Open Adult Categories for Soloists:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• OPEN – music is own choice;</li> <li>• ETHNIC – play any polka or ethnic selection;</li> <li>• POP – play any traditional or current "pop" selection;</li> <li>• FOUNDER'S - any composition written by AAA Founders - Magnante, Biviano, Deiro, Von Hallberg, Gart, Frosini, Galla-Rini, or Nunzio;</li> <li>• JAZZ – (see OPEN JAZZ SOLO above)</li> </ul> <p>2. Memorization for all solos is required. 3. Contestant must provide a clean copy of published music for the Judge(s); unpublished compositions or arrangements may be submitted in manuscript form. Music or lead sheet optional for Pop Solo.</p> <p><b>OPEN DUETS</b> OPEN DUET - Juniorette, Junior, Intermediate, Senior, Adult OPEN MIXED DUET <i>See Age and Time Limits (maximums)</i> Entry Fee - \$18.00 per member (\$36.00 per entry) Eligibility: Competitors must not be over the age limit of their category as of June 1, 2026.</p> <p><i>Music and Performance Requirements</i></p> <p>1. There is no restriction on the music performed. 2. Contestant must provide a clean copy of music for the judge; manuscripts will be accepted only for unpublished music. 3. Music memorization is optional. 4. Contestants entering Open Duet may NOT enter Standard Duet. <i>See Age and Time Limits (maximums)</i></p> <p><b>BANDS &amp; ENSEMBLES</b> OPEN ENSEMBLE – Junior (up to age 15), Senior (age 16 and over) OPEN BAND - Junior (up to age 15), Senior (age 16 and over) Entry Fee - \$60.00 Eligibility: The contestant's age for Band and Ensemble categories is determined as of January 1, 2026. Awards: All members of first-, second-, and third-place winners will receive awards.</p> <p><i>Music and Performance Requirements</i></p> <p>1. There is no restriction on the music performed. 2. Contestant must provide two (2) published scores for the judges. Manuscripts will be accepted only if the work is unpublished. 3. Contestants may enter as many Band and Ensemble categories as they wish, within their age limit. Setup Time Limits: 8 minutes for Ensembles; 12 minutes for Bands A two-minute check for amplification and tonal balance is allowed additionally. A one (1) point penalty, per judge, will be assessed against any group exceeding specified setup time. <i>See Age and Time Limits (maximums)</i></p>	<p><b>ENTERTAINMENT AAA (Professional or Amateur)</b> Entry Fee - \$60.00</p> <p><i>Evaluation Criteria</i></p> <p>1. Delivery: Elements such as poise, style, showmanship are considered. 2. Effectiveness: The ability to hold the attention of an audience. 3. Material: The material selected should display the accordion to its best advantage. 4. Musicality and technique: An evaluation of musicality and technical proficiency as a unit in the art form presented. 5. Entertainment quality. 6. Special effects. 7. Vocals and dancing (if used).</p> <p><i>Music and Performance Requirements</i></p> <p>1. Noncompetitive. 2. No age restriction. 3. There is no restriction on the music performed. 4. Emphasis must be on the entertainment value of the accordion. 5. Costumes, vocals, dancers, decorated stands, special lighting and props are permitted. (Due to limited space and setup times, props should be kept to a minimum.) 6. Recordings may be used for special effects, not musical portions. 7. Stationary props are not permitted. 8. Other instruments may be used, however, the accordion performance must dominate. 9. Lead sheet or score not required to be provided for Judge(s). Setup Time Limits: 8 minutes for Ensembles; 12 minutes for Bands Performance Time Limit: 15 minutes maximum</p> <p><b>EVALUATION SOLO</b> Entry Fee - \$30.00 <i>Music and Performance Requirements</i></p> <p>1. Noncompetitive. 2. No age restriction. 3. Memorization not required. 4. Contestant may choose any style of music. 5. Performance in this category is private, permitting discussion between adjudicator and contestant. Guests of the performer's choice may be allowed in the room at the time of the contestant's evaluation. Time Limit – 6 minutes</p> <p><b>EVALUATION ENSEMBLE AND EVALUATION BAND</b> Entry Fee - \$60.00 <i>Music and Performance Requirements</i></p> <p>1. Noncompetitive. 2. No age restriction. 3. Memorization not required. 4. Contestant may choose any style of music. Setup Time Limits: 8 minutes for Ensembles; 12 minutes for Bands A two-minute check for amplification and tonal balance is allowed additionally. Time Limit – 6 minutes</p>
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Awards for Honors & Ensemble/Band (except Evaluation) categories will be 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> Place.

All other Solo and Duet categories will be on a merit award system:  
Competitors achieving a score of 95-100 will receive a Superior award, those achieving 90-94 will receive an Excellent award, and those achieving 85-89 will receive a Very Good award.

***Honors categories for USA students only; all others open to all students***

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