

2026 Phoenix Lion Dance Championships

May 23-24, 2026
Phoenix, AZ

Hosted by Phoenix Wushu Nationals

Traditional Lion Dance

Rules & Regulations by



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Rules and Regulations

Classifications

This is a Traditional Southern Lion Dance Competition. The ultimate objective of the lion's quest must be one (1), or more, of the following:

- Choi Cheng/Cai Qing (採青/采青) - "Picking Greens"
- Choi Lingji/Cai Lingzhi (採靈芝/采灵芝) - "Picking Mushroom / Flower of Immortality (Ganoderma Lucidum)"
- Choi Jau Cheng/Cai Jiu Qing (採酒青/采酒青) - "Picking Wine"

NOTES:

1. A flower can be used to represent a cheng or lingji.
2. Not including and "picking" one of these three objects in the routine is considered a mistake and will result in a deduction in the team's final score.
 - a. Picking a cheng or lingji must include the actions of taking, eating and spitting.
 - b. Picking wine consists of taking and drinking.
 - c. The pick is not complete if all of these actions are not clearly demonstrated.

Definition of Terms

- Cheng/Qing (青) = Greens, mushroom, or wine jug

Categories

- Traditional Lion Dance (May 24, 2026)*
Open to all
- Women Lion Dance (May 24, 2026)*
Lion head and tail must be female
- Youth Lion Dance (May 24, 2026)*
Lion head and tail must be 12 years or younger on May 24, 2026

1. Participants

- 1.1 Participants can only represent one (1) School. Within each category that a participant is qualified to compete, lion dancers and drummers may only dance or drum for one (1) team per School. The lion dancers and drummers can be part of a different team for their school as long as they are performing in a different role.

As long as they meet the category requirements:

- The same drummer can drum for all three (3) categories representing one (1) school.
- Lion head and lion tail can dance as a pair for all three (3) categories representing one (1) school.

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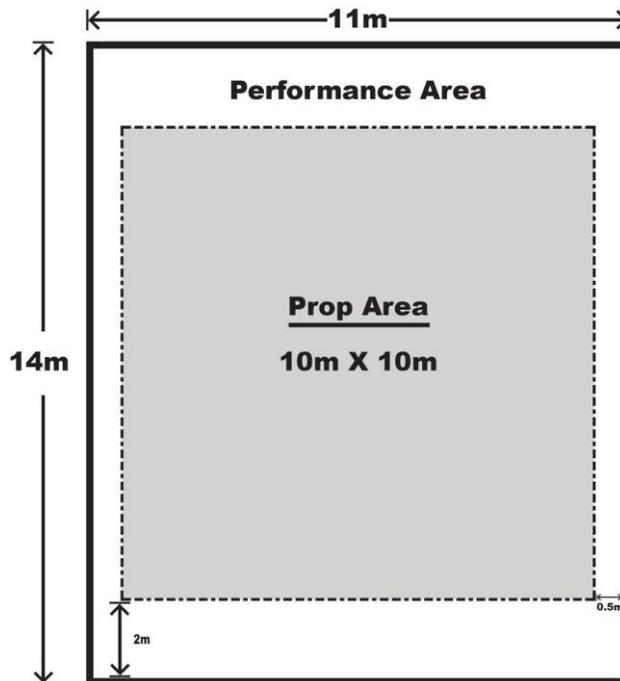
- 1.2 The maximum participants of a Lion Dance team is ten (10) people, of which there can be a team leader, coach, and up to eight (8) competitors. A minimum of six (6) competitors are required to participate, consisting of at least one (1) drum player, one (1) gong player, two (2) cymbal players, one (1) head player, and one (1) tail player. Remaining competitors are allowed to play any other instruments or lion leading characters (ie. Happy Buddha, Monkey King, etc.).
 - Switching of roles for lion head and tail is allowed during the routine, but it must be declared in the storyline, or a 1.0 deduction will be taken for separation of head and tail (See deductions for details)
- 1.3 The use of safeguards is not allowed and will result in point deduction.

2. General Regulations

- 2.1 All participating teams must submit their registration form by May 1, 2026. The storyline, difficulty movement form, and sketch map of their prop arrangement must be submitted by May 8, 2026.
- 2.2 Performers must obey all the rules, respect the competitors and the judges. Any influence and disturbance on the competitors and judges are prohibited.
- 2.3 Performers should salute to the judges and the audience when entering and leaving the competition area.

3. Venue Size

- 3.1 The performance area will be eleven (11) meters x fourteen (14) meters and the ceiling will be fifteen (15) feet in height with no obstructions such as light fixtures. The performance area boundary will be marked off, stepping out of bounds will result in deductions.
- 3.2 All props must fit within a ten (10) meter x ten (10) meter area in the center of the performance area.



3.3

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4. Prop Regulations

- 4.1 No High Pole (Jong/Zhuang - 椿) props are allowed.
- 4.2 “Cheng” can be set anywhere within the competition area.
- 4.3 The “Cheng” cannot be a real fruit or vegetable.
- 4.4 Props Regulation size: Props that will be climbed on or support the lion must not exceed two (2) meters. Props used for decorations or supporting the Cheng are allowed to be taller than two (2) meters in height.
- 4.5 All props must fit within the ten (10) meter x ten (10) meter square space, designated in the performance area.
- 4.6 Any form of liquid used in the performance is strictly prohibited and will result in a deduction.
- 4.7 For the safety of all present, the use of open flame or pyrotechnics (eg. firecrackers, fireworks, etc.) in the performance are strictly prohibited and will result in a deduction.
- 4.8 No watches or any sort of timekeeping device is allowed.
- 4.9 If you are using any remote control device. The switch or controller must be controlled by 1 of the 6-8 competitors.

5. Music and Equipment Regulations

- 5.1 Teams are required to perform with at least one (1) standard southern style lion dance drum, one (1) gong, and two (2) pairs of cymbals.
- 5.2 Basic instruments (lion drum, two (2) pairs of cymbals and a gong), a size three (3) Hok San and a size three (3) Fut San lion head will be provided if needed. The equipment will be placed at a designated area provided by the hosting committee. Please check with the hosting committee if any equipment is needed before May 1, 2026. The team will be responsible for any charges and expenses related to damaging the borrowed equipment.
- 5.3 The following dimensions are guidelines to ensure that the lion head is proportional to the performers. The chief judge will determine if the size is correct or requires a deduction.
 - For head dancers under one hundred fifty-seven and a half (157.5) centimeters, the lion head should be no smaller than sixty-one (61) centimeters in height, seventy-one (71) centimeters in depth, and forty-six (46) centimeters in width.
 - For head dancers between one hundred fifty-seven and a half (157.5) centimeters and one hundred eighty-three (183) centimeters, the head should be no smaller than sixty-six (66) centimeters in height, seventy-four (74) centimeters in depth, and fifty-six (56) centimeters in width.
 - For head dancers over one hundred eighty-three (183) centimeters, the head should be no smaller than sixty-six (66) centimeters in height, eighty-one (81) centimeters in depth, and sixty-four (64) centimeters width.

6. Competition Time Limit

- 6.1 Performance time for the different categories
 - Traditional Lion Dance Category - The performance must be between seven (7) and ten (10) minutes. Points will be deducted for going under or over the time limit.
 - Female Lion Dance Category - The performance must be between seven (7) and ten (10) minutes. Points will be deducted for going under or over the time limit.

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- Youth Lion Dance Category - The performance must be between five (5) and seven (7) minutes. Points will be deducted for going under or over the time limit.
- 6.2 Each team will be given up to ten (10) minutes to set up props and “Cheng”. Points will be deducted for going over the time limit. Each team will have five (5) minutes to remove their props after the performance is over.
 - 6.3 The time starts when the drum is hit. The drummer is allowed a single rim click to signal other team members to start. The time ends when the lion head and lion tail players are out of the lion and salute.

7. Forfeit & Disqualification

- 7.1 A representative from each team must check in by 8:00 pm on May 22, 2026, at the Registration Table to confirm intent to compete for the day. If you are unable to check in by this time, please let the organizing committee know.
- 7.2 All registered team members must be present at the staging area no later than ten (10) minutes after their team is called for on deck within a reasonable time before their performance order. (Order will be posted in the Preparation Area as soon as Lot Drawn is done.)
- 7.3 Teams must start to set up for the competition routine within five (5) minutes after each team is given the ok to set up.
- 7.4 Teams must enter a designated competition ring within two (2) minutes of the team name called for Competition Performance.
- 7.5 Teams will forfeit if all above requirements (7.1, 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4) are not met.
- 7.6 A team can request to forfeit by having their team leader speak to the chief judge.
- 7.7 In the event that any participating team cannot complete the entire performance due to mistakes, falls, or injuries no score will be given and the team will be disqualified.

8. Redo

- 8.1 Redo is allowed if the competition routine is interrupted for some objective reasons for no point deduction.
- 8.2 The redo application is allowed if the competition routine is interrupted for some subjective reasons such as the performer’s injury, equipment damage, music accompaniment, etc for point deduction.

9. Awards

- 9.1 Traditional Lion Dance Category
All teams placing 1st through 3rd will receive trophies and team members will be awarded individual medals.
- 9.2 Female Lion Dance Category
All teams placing 1st through 3rd will receive trophies and team members will be awarded individual medals.
- 9.3 Youth Lion Dance Category
All teams placing 1st through 3rd will receive trophies and team members will be awarded individual medals.

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Judging Guidelines

Definition Of Terms

- Valid Scores are the evaluation judges' scores selected to calculate the deserved score using the valid Score Selection rules.
- Deserved Score is calculated based on the average of the valid scores. There is no rounding for the deserved score. It will cut off after 2 decimal places.
- Basic Score is a score assigned by the chief judge when the valid scores are in violation of the rules set out in Regulations for the Differences between valid Scores.
- Final Score is the result of applying the chief judge's deductions to the deserved score.

1. Judging

- 1.1 The panel of judges consists of one (1) chief judge and five (5), seven (7) or nine (9) evaluation judges.
- 1.2 The chief judge has the right to call for a conference if there are any issues with the performance or discrepancies between judges.
- 1.3 All decisions made by the judges are final.

2. Scoring Order

- 2.1 Evaluation judges will provide scores following each performance.
- 2.2 All the evaluation judges will meet with the chief judge after the first performance to ensure scoring consistency prior to providing scores. Additional conferences can be called on subsequent performances if the chief judge determines they are necessary.

3. Valid Score Selection

- 3.1 If there are five (5) evaluation judges, the highest and the lowest scores will be regarded as invalid.
- 3.2 If there are seven (7) evaluation judges, the two (2) highest and two (2) lowest scores will be regarded as invalid.
- 3.3 If there are nine (9) evaluation judges, the two (2) highest and two (2) lowest scores will be regarded as invalid.

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4. Regulations For The Differences Between Valid Scores

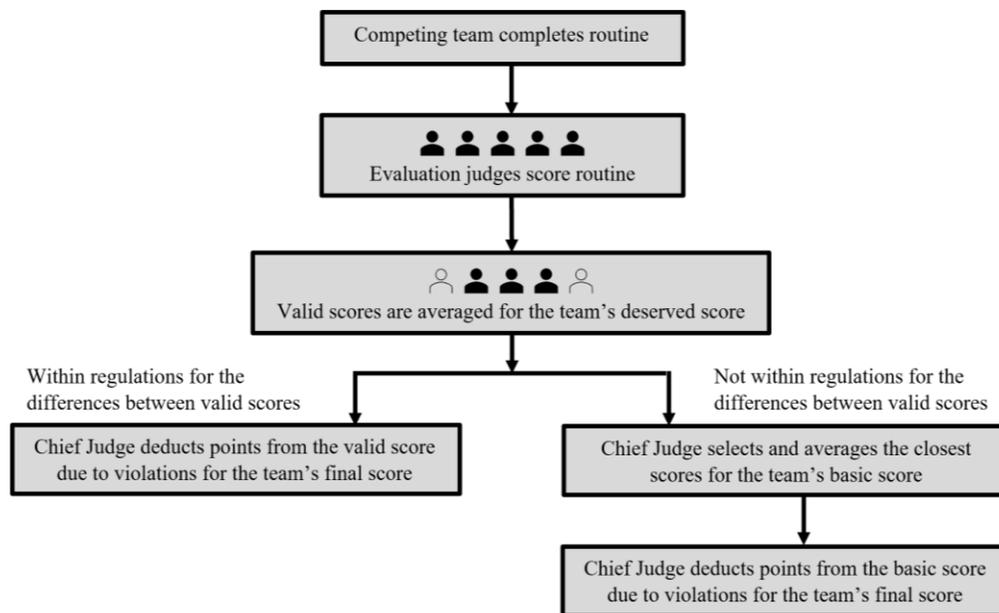
- 4.1 The difference between scores should not be more than 0.2 when the deserved score is 9.5 points and above.
- 4.2 The difference between scores should not be more than 0.3 when the deserved score is in the 9 - 9.5 point range.
- 4.3 The difference between scores should not be more than 0.5 when the deserved score is below 9 points.
- 4.4 The chief judge selects a score to be used as the basic score when the difference between the valid scores of the evaluation judges is in violation of the rules set out in Regulations for the Differences between valid scores. This basic score is then used with the two (2) or four (4) closest valid scores to calculate the team's deserved score.

5. Final Score

- 5.1 The team's final score is the result of applying the chief judge's deductions to the deserved score.

6. Scoring Process

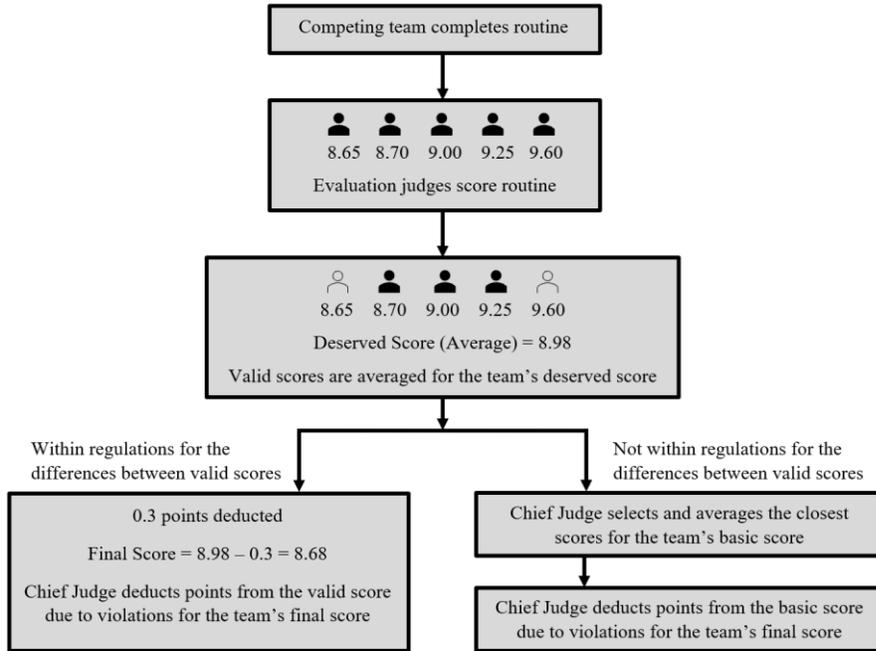
- 6.1 Scoring Process Flow Chart



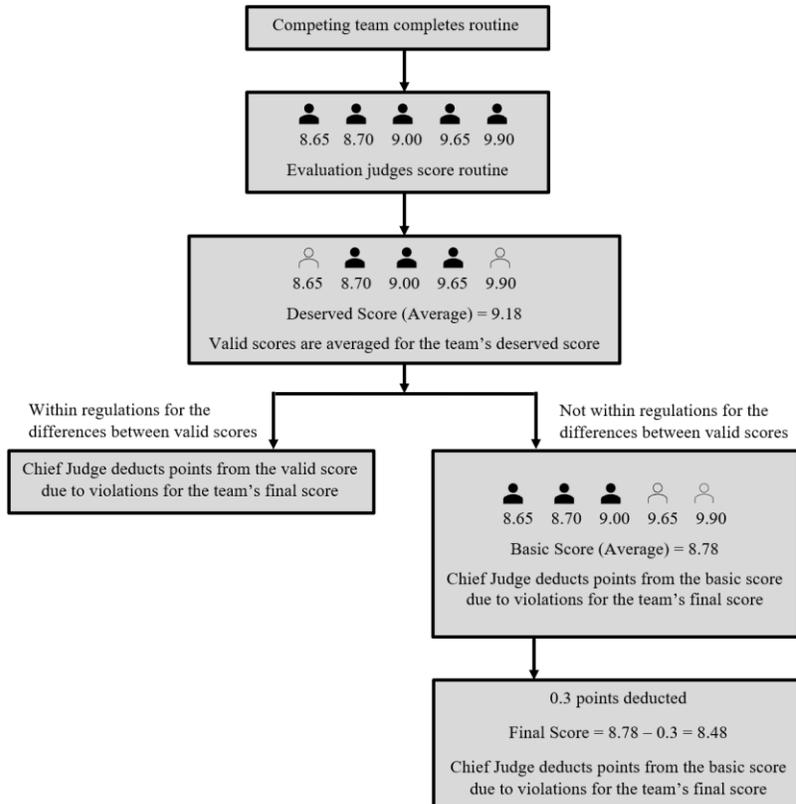
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6.2 Scoring Process Example 1



6.3 Scoring Process Example 2



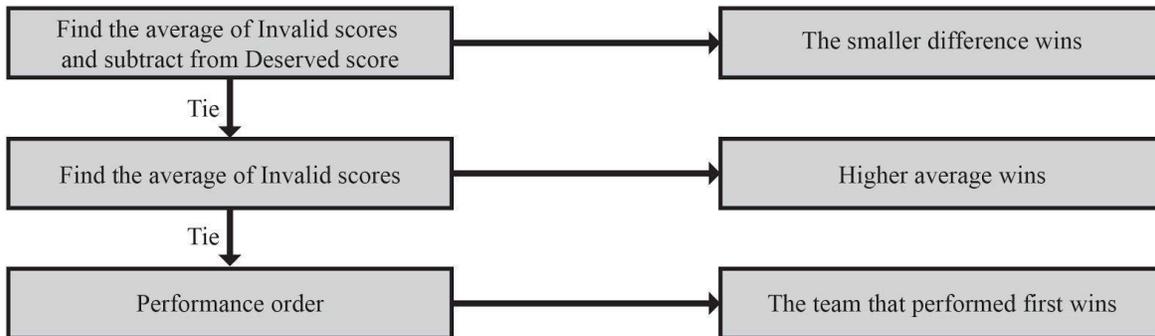
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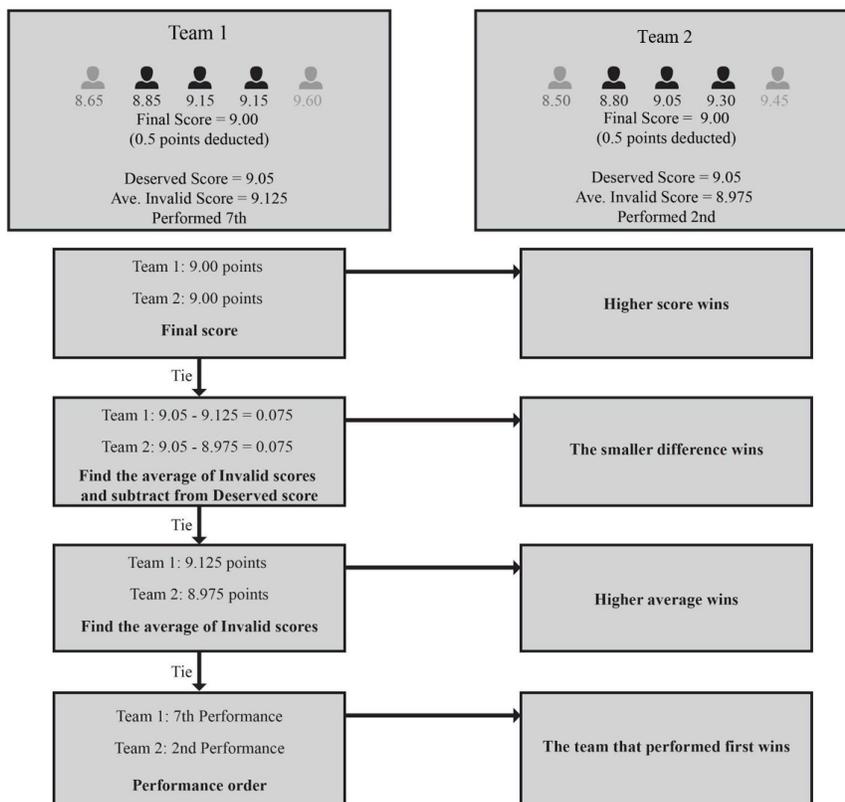
7. Ranking and Tie Breaker Guidelines

7.1 Teams with higher final scores will be ranked higher.

7.2 In the event of a tie, teams will be ranked according to the following guidelines:



7.3 Tie Example



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8. Standard Grading

8.1 Teams will be given a score between five (5) to ten (10) points based upon the following criteria:

Etiquette (0.5 - 1.0)	Vigorous and polite, correct etiquette of marching into and out of the competition field.
Attire and Equipment (0.5 - 1.0)	The style and color of the attire matches and compliments the equipment, the design of which is ingenious and meets the theme requirements.
Composition (0.5 - 1.0)	The composition is ingenious, well-knitted in structure and reasonable in arrangement, so that different forms and expressions of the lion are revealed with the help of equipment based on the theme.
Coordination (0.5 - 1.0)	Perfect coordination between the Head and Tail Dancers. The coordination of the movement of the legs and body when performing different dynamic stances and difficulty/skills
Stance (0.5 - 1.0)	Display of different stances. Example of stances can be Ma Bu, Gong Bu, Xu Bu, Qilin Bu, Ban Ma Bu, Ding Bu, Du Li Bu, etc
Shape (0.5 - 1.0)	Perfect movements of posing, reasonable technique, flexible, firm and varied footwork, well coordinated
Spirit (0.5 - 1.0)	Varied expressions, true-to-life demonstration, energetic performance, a full display of lion spirit and nature.
Music Coordination (0.5 - 1.0)	Perfect coordination between the Drum, Gong and Cymbals. 0.05 is deducted for any error or music that is "out of beat"
Music and Lion (0.5 - 1.0)	Perfect coordination between the Music and Lion. The speed, expressions, skills of the lion is closely coordinated with the music. The rhythm is distinct, and the style is unique and conventional, setting off the atmosphere of NanShi.
Skill (0.5 - 1.0)	The performance is perfect, the movements are skillful, and the theme can be reasonably revealed through certain acrobatic movements, which has a good value of appreciation. 1 point is awarded for 5 completed difficulty movements.

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Deduction of Points

1. Rules of Deductions

- 1.1 If any errors are present during the performance, evaluation judges may signal the chief judge using colored deduction cards to acknowledge an error. The following color cards will be used:
- Red - Grave Error (1.0 point deducted)
 - Black - Serious Error (0.5 point deducted)
 - Yellow - Minor Error (0.3 point deducted)
 - Green - Other Error (0.1 point deducted)
- 1.2 Deductions will be decided by the chief judge based on the signals of the evaluation judges, and will be applied after the deserved score has been calculated.

2. Common Errors and Point Deductions

Classifications and Criteria	Reasons	Point Values
Grave Error	Both the lion head and lion tail performers fall on prop or fall to the ground.	1 point deducted
	Lion head or lion tail performers fall and are separated from the lion.	1 point deducted
	Objective not completed, such as Cheng picking.	1 point deducted
	Cheng is not set or the performance is without theme.	1 point deducted
Serious Error	Either the lion head or tail falls down on the prop or the ground; but the performers and the lion are not separated.	0.5 point deducted
	In the traditional items, the content (theme, procedure) of Picking Cheng violates the rules, For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● The form of a lion coming out of the cave with no cave.● Jumping from a higher to a lower position for “Picking Cheng” under the cliff.● Passing through the bottom of the bridge for Cheng under the bridge● Picking Cheng of the Snake, Crab or Centipede from the front.	0.5 point deducted
	The fallen Cheng is not retrieved, and the theme unaccomplished.	0.5 point deducted

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Classifications and Criteria	Reasons	Point Values
Minor Error	Slip or tumble of the upper legs below the knee or slip on the equipment.	0.3 point deducted
	Either lion performer is out of balance and using extra-support to prevent fall during the performance.	0.3 point deducted
	The props are damaged or collapse when in use.	0.3 point deducted
	Cheng falls out of carelessness, and can be retrieved with skills.	0.3 point deducted
	Unreasonable picking of Cheng (collecting Cheng under the neck, or stretching more than a palm out of the lion's mouth, etc.)	0.3 point deducted
Other Error	Standing on lion's tail performer's leg discordantly and unnaturally, or foot slipping.	0.1 point deducted
	Unstable step or foot shifting when stepping on a prop (e.g. bench).	0.1 point deducted
	The lion head and lion tail performers have an uncontrolled clash (bump into each other by accident).	0.1 point deducted
	The lion costume or any of its adornments fall off.	0.1 point deducted
	Props or background setting falls.	0.1 point deducted
	Any musical instrument falls (including drumsticks or gong mallets).	0.1 point deducted
	Small decorations of the Cheng prop fall (like tree leaves or flower petals) in the process of picking the Cheng.	0.1 point deducted

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3. Regulation Deductions

Classifications and Criteria	Reasons	Point Values
Time	1-15 seconds less or more than the scheduled time	0.1 point deducted
	16-30 seconds less or more than the scheduled time	0.2 point deducted
		The rest can be inferred
Redo	Redo is allowed if the competition routine is interrupted for some objective reason.	No point deducted
	Redo is allowed if the competition routine is interrupted for some subjective reason such as but not limited to injury to a performer, equipment/prop failure or problem with musical instruments.	1 point deducted
Boundary	The lion head performer, lion tail performer, and/or the lion leading character step on the line or outside the boundary line during the performance	0.1 point deducted for each occurrence
Violations	Too many or too few performers	0.5 point deducted for each additional/missing performer
	The prop dimensions are in violation of the prop dimension guidelines	0.5 point deducted for each occurrence
	People other than the performers touching or handling the lion or equipment.	0.5 point deducted for each occurrence
	Delayed registration	1 point deducted
	Coaching during the performances including saluting in and out of the ring	1 point deducted
	Use of live animals, real fruits or vegetables, liquid or open flames	1 point deducted for each occurrence
	Protocol violation: Rudeness or unsportsmanlike conduct	0.5 point deducted
	Use of safeguards	0.5 point deducted for each occurrence

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Other

1. Right of Interpretation

- 1.1 The right of interpretation of the rules belongs to the United States Dragon and Lion Dance Federation.

2. Event Change or Cancellation

- 2.1 The host committee reserves the right to cancel or change the event without prior notification.