

***Judges' Handbook for
The International Master/slave Contest
Owned and Produced by South Plains Leatherfest***

Written by Master Jim and slave marsha, IM/s 2001

Basic Philosophy for the International Master/slave Contest and Titles

The Owners/Producers of the International Master/slave Contest (SPL Enterprises, LLC, Master Jim, slave marsha and Sir Cougar) are committed to providing the leather/BDSM community with an International Master and an International slave who will represent the Master/slave community and lifestyle with integrity and competence. The holders of the International Master and International slave titles will be spokespersons for the Master/slave community, and as such, one of the most important attributes of the titleholders should be the ability to clearly and effectively communicate what it means to them to live and identify as Master or slave.

It is expected that the holders of the titles will take every opportunity to educate the leather/BDSM community on the Master/slave lifestyle, and will actively seek out venues that will allow them to speak on Master/slave issues, whether that be through speeches, seminar presentations, participation on panel discussions, writing articles, etc.

The International Master and slave titles are not about a particular "look," dress, body type, gender or sexual orientation. There is no required set of protocols that International Master and slave are expected to follow.

Contestants are not required to have a formal "platform"; however, questions from the judges during the Interview portion of the contest regarding any specific plans or goals the contestants might have should they win the titles are quite appropriate.

Requirements and Expectations for Contestants and Titleholders

1. A contestant pair must self-identify as Master and slave.
2. A contestant pair must have been in a self-identified Master/slave relationship with each other for at least 1 year prior to running for the International Master/slave title.

3. If a contestant pair lives in the United States, the pair must have been selected by the region in which they live as the current year's regional Master/slave titleholders. If the contestant pair lives outside of the United States, the pair may compete at the International Master/slave Contest without holding a regional M/s title, at the discretion of the owners of the IM/s Contest.
4. In order to serve as the titleholders, a contestant pair must be willing to travel to a minimum of 4 events or leather/SM group meetings or events to present on Master/slave relationships and/or to represent the titles. One of the 4 events must be the next year's South Plains Leatherfest.
5. The titleholders are strongly encouraged to attend more than the minimum number of groups/events and to seek out every opportunity to speak on Master/slave relationships.
6. The titleholders must be willing to speak on Master/slave relationships to all segments of the leather/BDSM community. In addition, the titleholders are encouraged to select venues and attend events that offer them the opportunity to speak on Master/slave relationships, rather than to simply appear as titleholders.
7. The titleholders may accept additional monetary support from groups, event sponsors or individuals to cover travel expenses, and may raise additional money to cover travel expenses through fundraising activities. The titleholders may not receive payment above and beyond actual travel expenses for speaking engagements or other activities performed in their role as International Master and slave during the title year.
8. The titleholders will be required to submit to the Owners/Producers a quarterly financial report with supporting receipts on the use of the travel fund and any other funds raised or received during the title year to help defray travel expenses. The titleholders also will be required to provide the Owners/Producers with at least a monthly report identifying the speaking engagements they have booked. At a minimum, the report should include the event or group name, location and date of engagement.
9. The contestants run for and win the International Master and slave titles as a pair. Should one (or both) members of the winning pair become unable to carry out the requirements of the title, the Owners/Producers will determine in what manner the title will be represented for the remainder of the year in question.
10. If the titleholders are unable to carry out the requirements of the title, any unspent travel funds will be returned to SPL Enterprises, LLC, along with a financial accounting of funds that have been spent to date.

11. During the title year, the titleholders may not charge a fee for their personal use for participating in BDSM activity, whether sexual or non-sexual in nature. This does not prevent titleholders from engaging in fundraising activities for charities or for the International Master/slave title that may include BDSM.
12. The Owners/Producers, reserve the right to recall the title from the current titleholders if, in their sole judgment, the titleholders have failed to substantially comply with or fulfill the obligations of the title, or have in any way damaged the name or reputation of the International Master/slave title and/or South Plains Leatherfest-International Master/slave Weekend.

Scoring

1. There are seven judges for the International Master/slave Contest. The Olympic scoring system will be used, i.e., the high score and low score for the contestants in each judging category will be thrown out and the remaining five scores will be averaged, giving a composite score for each category. The contestants' composite scores for the five categories then will be added to give a final overall score. A perfect overall score would be 500. The contestant pair with the highest overall score using Olympic scoring will be the winner.
2. If a judge becomes incapacitated during the International Master/slave Contest, or if for any reason the Owners/Producers in their sole discretion determine a judge is unable or unwilling to carry out his/her duties as a judge, that judge will be withdrawn from the Contest and his/her scores will be discarded. The remaining 6 judges will continue to score the Contest under the Olympic scoring system, with the high and low scores of the remaining 6 judges dropped from the calculations. The Owners/Producers reserve the sole right to define the duties of a judge of the International Master/slave Contest and to determine if a judge is able and/or willing to carry out those duties. The Owners/Producers further retain the right to remove from the judging panel any judge who in their sole judgment is unable carry out those duties.
3. Contestants for the International Master/slave Contest will be given a joint score in all categories, as well as a joint overall score, rather than assigning separate scores for the Master and slave. Thus, the points indicated in parentheses following each judging category described in the next section represent the total maximum points a Master/slave pair may be awarded in that category, based on the performance of both the Master and the slave. For example, for the On-Stage Pop Question category, the Master and slave contestant pair will receive a single, joint score of up to 75 points based on their responses to the questions they are asked.

4. In the event of a tie score between two or more contestant pairs, the winning pair will be the one with the highest overall score, without using Olympic scoring. Thus, in the event of a tie, the scores of the tied pairs in each of the 5 contest categories will be recalculated, without dropping the high and low scores. The resulting composite scores for each pair then will be averaged, again without dropping the high and low scores. The pair with the highest overall non-Olympic score will be the winner.
5. If there is only one contestant pair running for the titles, the pair must receive a final overall score equal to 70% of the total possible. A perfect overall score would be 500; thus, the contestant pair must receive a final overall score of 350 in order to win the titles.

Judging Categories

1. Interview with Judges (150 points)
 - Questions should be directed to both the Master and the slave. A single judge does not have to ask both the Master and slave a question, but the judging panel as a whole should endeavor to insure that both contestants are being asked and are answering questions.
 - Given the nature of this title, questions are likely to focus on Master/slave relationships and issues in these relationships. However, questions addressing broader leather/BDSM topics or history are also appropriate.
 - Remember: a good answer is not necessarily an answer you agree with.
 - Suggested criteria for judging include:
 - Are the contestants able to think on their feet and give a responsive answer to the question asked?
 - Are the answers clear and understandable?
 - Are the answers factually correct? (If applicable.)
 - Does the body language of the contestants reinforce the answer or does it detract from the message?
 - Do the contestants seem reasonably relaxed and engaged in responding to the questions?
 - Do the contestants' answers evidence passion and enthusiasm about the possibility of representing the Master/slave community as titleholders?
 - Do the contestants' answers demonstrate that they self-identify as a Master or a slave?

- The Judges' Interviews are open to all persons registered for South Plains Leatherfest.

2. Speech (100 points)

- Both the Master and the slave are required to give a short speech (with each speech being 2 minutes or less) on the topic(s) of their choice during the Saturday night contest.
- If a contestant's speech exceeds 2 minutes, the producers of the contest will kill the contestant's microphone, and the contestant will not be allowed to finish his or her speech. There is no set "penalty" for a contestant going overtime in a speech, but in awarding a joint score for the Master/slave contestant pair in this category, a judge may elect to deduct however many points he or she feels are appropriate in light of the fact that a contestant failed to conclude the speech within the time limit allowed by these rules.
- Suggested criteria for judging include:
 - Do the contestants speak clearly?
 - Do the contestants use appropriate gestures and body language that help communicate the message of their speeches?
 - Are the speeches well organized and understandable?
 - Do the contestants demonstrate through their speeches passion and enthusiasm about the possibility of representing the Master/slave community as titleholders?

3. Presentation (100 points)

- The presentation category is designed to judge the contestants' ability to speak in a seminar or panel discussion type format on Master/slave relationships. The contestants are required to make a brief (5-10 minute) presentation on any topic relating to Master/slave relationships. Both the Master and the slave must speak during the presentation.
- Contestants are permitted to use handouts or visual aids in their presentations, but are not required to do so.
- Before beginning the presentation session, the Head Judge will remind the audience that questions should relate to the topic of a contestant pair's presentation. At the end of a contestant pair's presentation, the Head Judge will call for questions from the audience and will serve as the "moderator," recognizing audience members to ask their questions.

- Judges will not ask questions of the contestant pairs in this judging category unless there are no questions from the audience. If the judges have the opportunity to ask questions of the contestant pairs in this category, the judges should limit their questions to those relating to the presentation topic. The judging panel may not use this opportunity as additional general interview time.
- The Head Judge will monitor the question and answer time, and his or her decision on the propriety of a question from the audience or judges is final. The time for questions and answers will not exceed 5 minutes for any contestant pair.
- The purpose of allowing audience questions during the Presentation Category is to allow the judges to evaluate the contestants' ability to think on their feet and respond to the kind of questions likely to be asked of the titleholders when they speak on Master/slave relationships to community leather/BDSM groups. It is not intended as an opportunity for the audience to "sandbag" any contestant pair or to attempt to help out one contestant pair at the expense of another.
- Suggested criteria for judging include:
 - Is the presentation organized and understandable?
 - Do the contestants speak clearly and use appropriate gestures and body language to communicate their message?
 - Does the content of the presentation demonstrate that the contestants have given some thought to the message they are trying to communicate?
 - Are the contestants comfortable with answering audience questions and do they give organized and understandable responses?
- The Presentation session is open to all persons registered for South Plains Leatherfest.

4. On-stage ("Pop") Question (75 points)

- Both the Master and the slave will be asked an on-stage or "pop" question, which they must answer during the Saturday night contest. These kinds of questions often tend to evoke humorous responses from contestants.
- The questions will be written and provided by the producers of the International Master/slave Contest, with input from the judging panel.
- Suggested criteria for judging include:
 - Do the contestants speak clearly?

- Do the contestants look comfortable being asked to respond to a question without time to prepare?
- Do the answers given demonstrate a quality or characteristic that would be an asset to the titleholders, such as humor, logical thinking, knowledge in a particular subject area, etc.?

5. Master/slave Dynamic (75 points)

- Contestants will be observed by the judges throughout the weekend, both in and out of formal contest events, and will be judged on how they interact and present themselves as Master and slave to the public. Judging in this category begins Friday evening, when the contestant pairs are introduced at the Opening Festivities. The judging sheet for this category will be turned in at the end of the contest on Saturday night, to be tallied with the scores for the other categories.
- No particular protocol or form of dress is considered to be “correct.”
- Suggested criteria for judging include:
 - Do the contestants appear to be comfortable interacting with each other and the public as Master and slave?
 - Does the dynamic appear to be natural for the contestants, or does it appear to be something created for the contest?

The IM/s Travel Fund

- The IM/s regional contestants are required to bring a single item to IM/s to be auctioned off during the Silent Auction. The item need not be large or expensive, but instead, should be something that represents their region or the spirit of their regional contest. The decision on what constitutes a “single item” is within the sole discretion of the owners of the IM/s Contest. The proceeds raised from the Silent Auction will go to the IM/s travel fund.
- The IM/s regional contestants and/or the regions are encouraged to show their support and the support of the groups and individuals in their region for the goals of the IM/s title by making a monetary contribution to the IM/s travel fund. This is not a requirement on the part of either the regions or their contestant pairs. The IM/s contest judges **will not** be informed whether a region or contestant pair has elected to contribute to the IM/s travel fund. In addition, the judges **may not** ask any of the contestant pairs whether or not a contribution was made by the contestants or their region.

Producers’ Guarantee for the Titleholders

The owners and the producers of South Plains Leatherfest and the International Master/slave Contest guarantee the titleholders the following:

- Winners' back patches
- A travel fund consisting of all amounts raised from the Silent Auction and any other funds donated by groups or individuals to the IM/s Travel Fund or designated by SPL Enterprises, LLC.
- Airfare (up to \$400 per ticket) and hotel accommodations for next year's South Plains Leatherfest-International Master/slave Weekend.