

# Newbie Newsflash – PIMBA Competitions 2009

Gateway participates in competitions sponsored by two organizations – PIMBA (Pennsylvania Interscholastic Marching Band Association) which generally consists of bands in Southwestern Pa.; and BOA (Bands of America) which is nationwide. This newsletter will deal with PIMBA competitions.

## **What to expect on Saturday afternoon:**

- Students will be asked to report early on Saturday afternoon (time determined by Mr. Read). They will have rehearsal all afternoon. They will then have a break for dinner, and pack up for the show. They can pack a dinner, or parents can deliver one to them. Depending on departure time, they may not be able to leave campus.
- They should make sure they have everything they need for the show when they arrive for rehearsal (or parents can bring it with dinner).
- Remember, for competitions they are not to wear anything bulky under their uniforms. Under Armour or other form fitting shorts are preferred. No “boxer bunch-up”, please. Girls must wear their hair up.

## **The Competition:**

- The band will arrive at the host school in plenty of time to prepare. They will spend their time in warm-ups, and will not enter the stadium until they compete.
- After they compete, they will leave the stadium. They will eventually reenter the stadium to watch the rest of the competition. At PIMBA shows, Gateway always remains in uniform throughout the show and awards ceremony. They are not allowed to visit the concession stand. Because they usually compete late in the show, this is not really an issue.
- PIMBA bands compete in classes, most of which are determined by the size of the band. Classes (smallest to largest) are A, AA, AAA and AAAA. National class bands have finished in the top 5 at a BOA Regional for 2 consecutive years, or have been placed in the class at the request of their director.
- Bands are judged in several music and visual categories by judges both on the field and in the stands.
- Warning: A band’s score depends on many factors, some of which are difficult for the layperson to understand! An entertaining show which seems like a crowd favorite may not necessarily be the winner. Be prepared to hear some grouching in the stands (hopefully not from Gateway parents).
- At the end of competition, Drum Majors will report to the sidelines to await the results (this is called “retreat”). Scores will be announced and trophies handed out for each class. The Gateway Band will not cheer when their score is announced, but will come to attention.
- After the awards ceremony, the band will return to the buses for the trip home.

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## What parents can expect at the competition:

- You can arrive at any time during the competition. The gate price (probably \$7.00) will be the same regardless of the time you arrive. The best seats go early. It is also nice to support the smaller bands which compete earlier in the event. Check the PIMBA website ([www.pimba.org](http://www.pimba.org)) for start times, schedules, scores, and other info.
- All fan seating will be on the press box side of the stadium. Bands will be seated on the visitor side or in other special areas.
- Look for other Gateway fans. It's nice to sit together to show our support.
- Bring a seat cushion. Dress for the weather. In cooler weather, you may want to bring a blanket with you. If it rains, do not bring umbrellas as they block the view. Bring ponchos instead.
- You must wait to be seated during breaks between bands. Please remain seated while bands are performing. Go to the restroom, concession stand, etc. during breaks.
- Please refrain from talking during performances.
- Please make only POSITIVE comments about all bands' performances. You may hear negative remarks from other bands' fans. Gateway fans are better than that!
- The Band Boosters of each host band will be operating a concession stand. They will have programs for sale. They may also have band related items to sell. There may be a 50/50 drawing as well.
- Many bands sell air grams (you may send a personal message to be read as the band enters the stadium). They may also sell candy grams (candy with a note attached from you that is delivered to the band after they compete). Look for a table when you enter.

## What to expect after the competition:

- It will take a while for the band to leave the competition. The trailers may still need to be packed, and the directors need to wait to receive their "critique", which is helpful info from the judges about the show.
- It is a Gateway tradition for parents to line the student parking lot and honk their horns when the band returns.
- The trailers will need to be unpacked, and instruments and uniforms put away before band members may leave. Please be patient. It will be late!
- Please be prompt when picking up your child. Ask them to call you *before* they reach the high school.
- Parents who attend the competition: You *will* be back in plenty of time!