

IPMS Houston Model Mania

Open Judging System

The basic premise of the Open System of Judging as developed by Shep Paine and other top modelers from around the world in the 1980s is to recognize the good modelers and encourage the promising ones at a "juried exhibition" (not a contest). No deserving work should go home without having been assessed and possibly rewarded. Anything done to further this goal is a good idea, and anything that impedes it is a bad one.

Perhaps the most interesting feature of this system is that it is not a competitive one. Because the number of awards is expandable, no piece wins an award at the expense of another. Each exhibitor's work is evaluated on its own, and he or she receives the level of award the judges feel the work merits, without regard to the awards given to other pieces in the hall.

A disadvantage of this system is that one really has to see it in operation to appreciate some of its subtler aspects. Nonetheless, we hope this detailed explanation of its workings will help those interested in learning how it works.

These are not rules; they are a set of artistic criteria, by which judges can compare models uniformly and fairly. As such, they can effectively be applied to virtually any exhibition, regardless of the rules under which it may be run. The key element in fair judging is that the judges work to the same set of criteria in assessing the entries. That said, the criteria presented here offer few absolutes. Qualifiers like "sometimes," "often," and "can be" are frequent. This is both appropriate and inevitable. Judging is ultimately a matter of personal opinion, and while that opinion can be guided, it cannot be dictated. In the final **Judging Gold, Silver, Bronze (GSB)**

Bronze Level

A Bronze Medal reflects the modeler's avoidance of any significant errors on the model. The model has no glaring flaws in finish or construction as seen from a casual viewing distance. At closer range, a number of minor flaws may be noticeable but are not concentrated in one area or indicate a lack of basic skills (for example, one decal, but not all, may be silvered). This level of quality indicates the modeler is doing the right things, but needs to be more consistent in execution. Basic craftsmanship is good, but realism or attention to details may be lacking. Examples of flaws that would not drop a model from contention for a bronze might be:

- Slight misalignment of the landing gear and/or gear doors
- Wings slightly out of level
- Slight misalignment of the tail
- Slight "orange peel" in the paint finish
- Occasional decal silvering
- Inconsistent decal repair (scribing, rivets, contours) following seam treatments

In general, the model will demonstrate that the modeler has a grasp of the basics. Seams are taken care of, the model is pretty well aligned, paint work is good but not perfect, decals are good but not perfect,

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and weathering (if present) may be less than well rendered. This model may, or may not, have contended for a third place in a contest, but still demonstrates that the modeler understands and can execute the basics.

Silver Level

A Silver Medal reflects a modeler exhibiting very few minor errors in construction, and a better grasp of finishing techniques. This applies to out of the box kits as well as a high level of accomplishment with adding details not included with the kit. The model has a higher level of craftsmanship in all areas: very few flaws, finishes are realistic, basic techniques have been used to improve appearance (exposed edges are realistically thinned, gun barrels or exhaust stacks are drilled out, etc).

- Misalignments should not be apparent to the naked eye (if a measuring aid is required to demonstrate or prove misalignment, that element is done well enough to qualify for Silver)
- Paint finish should be uniform with only very minor irregularities around typical trouble spots such as wing roots or raised detail
- Decals should be nearly perfect, with virtually no silvering and they should conform uniformly to both raised and recessed detail
- Detail repairs such as re-scribing following major construction should be consistent and similar to kit detail
- Weathering, if present, should be consistent and in scale
- Detailing should be consistent. If the cockpit is detailed, other areas such as wheel wells should be detailed
- Gun barrels should be drilled out
- Aftermarket detailing should be cleanly incorporated and in scale

A silver medal model is one that most likely would have been a contender for a placing in a crowded, high-quality category in a typical contest. It demonstrates that not only has the modeler mastered the basics, but he has command of more advanced techniques as well.

Gold Level

A Gold Medal represents an exceptional level of craftsmanship – practically no flaws or omissions of basic techniques should be present, and the finish should be near to perfect. Current best practices for assembly and finish are used throughout and are executed well. An out-of-the-box model can receive a Gold award, but it must exhibit the highest standards. Gold recognizes that the modeler has made a model with almost “zero-defects”.

- Misalignments should be nearly impossible to measure
- Paint finish should be uniform and realistic

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- Decals should appear painted on with clear film not apparent. No silvering should be present, any weathering should be applied to give markings the same worn appearance as the rest of the model
- Detail repairs following major construction should be imperceptible
- Weathering should appear completely natural, in scale and be consistent
- Aftermarket or scratch built detailing must be cleanly incorporated and in scale

A gold medal model is close to perfect. A small error should not eliminate a model from a gold medal, but two might. In many cases, a Gold medal model will demand your attention and draw you to it; and it may be equal parts artistry and technical achievement.

Scoring

We have broken scoring into four areas: construction, finish, accuracy (documentation), and intangibles. Please note the tables to follow are not hard fast RULES. They are meant as guidelines to aid the judges in applying their judgment and common sense. Using alignment as an example, our intent is that a slightly skewed wheel will not knock an otherwise magnificent model out of a Gold award. We also wouldn't want an out of alignment tail plane to knock a model out of Bronze. But what about a tail plane, a wing, and a gear leg? That probably indicates a modeler who either hasn't mastered or doesn't fully understand the "basics", and the model should be removed from consideration for a medal.

Also, constructive feedback is a very important part of what we are trying to achieve. Please take a few moments while judging each model to indicate where a modeler might improve his efforts. We will be making the scoring sheets available to the modelers, so while the comments need to be honest, they also need to be constructive and fair.

Construction: 1-5 points

This is where both basic and advanced construction techniques are evaluated.

1 pt	If the model made it to the table and is assembled, it gets 1 pt.
2 pts	Seams, glue marks, alignment issues visible from a viewing distance of 2-3 ft (casual viewing distance)
3 pts	Faint seams, rare glue spot, slight alignment issue visible on close inspection. Lost detail either not restored, or not well restored. Ejector pins/punch out marks may be present on close inspection
4 pts	Seams, glue only visible with aid of penlight. Alignment issue may be measured to verify. Lost detail must be restored, but may not be perfect. No ejector pins or the like visible. Level of detailing should be consistent through the model (i.e., wheel wells and cockpit).
5 pts	Near perfect build.

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Finish: 1-5 points

This is where paint, decals, and weathering would be considered.

1 pt	Like construction, if the model has paint/decals/stickers on it, it gets 1 pt.
2 pts	Issues with paint, decals, weathering are visible from a casual viewing distance of 2-3 feet.
3 pts	Issues become visible on close inspection. Gloss finish may be slightly orange peeled. Rough texture may be present in trouble spots like wing roots. Camo transitions may be inconsistent, or may show build up on masking edges. Occasional decal silvering may be present or decals may not have settled into detail. Weathering, if attempted may not be consistent.
4 pts	Paint should be a consistent finish, with trouble spots only visible with a pen light. Camo transitions should be consistent, with no paint build up at masked edges. Gloss finishes should be smooth. Decal silvering should only be apparent with a pen light. Decals should conform well to all surface detail. Weathering should be consistent and realistic.
5 pts	Near perfect finish.

Accuracy: 1 point add, no effect

Add 1 point if the modeler included documentation to confirm historical accuracy or details modeled.

No deduct or add if the model isn't obviously inaccurate and no documentation is present. Most models would likely fall into the "no point" realm at a typical IPMS contest as they have no documentation, and no glaring accuracy issues. The same may hold true at our show.

Scope/difficulty/presentation: 1 point available for "intangibles"

This is perhaps both the most difficult and easiest point to explain. This is where we trust the judgment of the judges the most. The judges can award a point and reward extra effort for tackling what they know to be a difficult kit, or for adding a significant amount of extra detail, or for making significant corrections to an inaccurate kit. It is also where they can add a point for presentation (i.e., a very nicely weathered AFV on a realistic base), or where they can reward an effort they think exhibits "something special". As noted, this is a point that **MAY** be added for an intangible that the judges feels is worthy of note. If a judge doesn't see anything in a model that he, as a modeler and judge feels warrants an extra point, it simply isn't awarded.

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Scoring Breakdown

<i>Scoring Item</i>	<i>Points Available</i>	<i>Award Level</i>	
Construction	1-5 pts	Gold	10-12 pts
Finish	1-5 pts	Silver	9 pts
Accuracy	-1, 0, +1	Bronze	8 pts
Intangible	0, +1	Merit	7 pts
<i>Total Available</i>	12 pts	<i>No Award</i>	>7 pts