

## *IPMS /Scalefest 2026 Contest Rules*

1. Scalefest is open to all modelers. Membership in any modeling organizations is not a requirement to be eligible for participation. All attendees to Scalefest are required to pay admission. A separate fee is charged for each model entered. Awards will be given for First, Second, and Third-place entries.
2. Contest model entries **MUST** be built by the model entrant and not assembled by another entity or third party (ex: friend, vendor, manufacture, contractor, etc.)
3. Models that have won any award at an IPMS USA National Convention or Region VI Convention or previous Scalefest event are ineligible for competition. [See rule 11f (Collections) for exception.] They may, however, be placed at the designated exhibit area at no entry fee. Models that have won an award in another IPMS Chapter's contest **are** eligible.
4. Proxy entries are welcomed at the same fees as normal registration (admission and model entry fees). Entrant must include the actual builder's name on the entry form.
5. A model may not be entered in more than one category/class.
6. The Contest Event Director/Head Judge may exclude from public display any entries, which could be deemed offensive to locally and generally acknowledged standards of taste and acceptability. A restricted viewing area may be provided for models falling into the "R" rating. For the purposes of this contest, models with explicit sexual content or graphic violence will be placed in the restricted viewing area.
7. Divisions:
  - a. Adult Modelers are entrants 18 years of age and older.
  - b. Young Modelers are entrants 13 to 17 years of age. At their discretion, Young Modelers will be allowed to compete in the adult categories.
  - c. Pre-teens are entrants 12 years of age & younger. At their discretion, pre-teens will be allowed to compete in the Young Modeler categories.
8. Models shall not be restricted from competition due to their material composition. Models made of wood, metal, or materials other than plastic are welcome.
9. "Politicking" for any model, pro or con, will not be tolerated. Any abuse of this rule could result in the disqualification of the model in question and/or the disqualification of all the offender's models. This decision will be the final determination of the Head Judge.
10. Scalefest uses collapsing/expanding categories. It is generally necessary to have three entries in a category to activate it. Any category having less than three entries may be collapsed into the next available category. A category with numerous entries may be subdivided into other categories at the discretion of the Head Judge.
11. Markings will be a strong factor in determining which category a model is placed. For example, a model of a military version of a DC-3 (C-47) would be placed in its appropriate category based on scale, while a DC-3 in airliner markings will be put in category 101 - Civilian: All Scales/All Eras.
12. Category Definitions:
  - a. **Out of Box (OOB)-Single Media Kits**, See description in item 17 .
  - b. **Conversion, Vacuforms, and Scratch-Built** designates a combined category.
    - 1). A conversion must represent a significant change to the silhouette/type of the subject using either commercial or Scratch building materials. The builder must detail the changes made to the basic model on the entry sheet or accompanying documentation.
    - 2). *Scratch-Built* is defined as any model where all major structural components of the model are scratch-built by the modeler. Auxiliary details from other sources are allowed.
  - c. **Figures** are defined as models of three-dimensional representations of living subjects — not mechanical subjects.
  - d. **Flats** will be defined as paintings for the purposes of this contest. They will be placed in the miscellaneous category for competition and will not compete against standard figures. Flats will be broken out when enough entries justify a separation.
  - e. **Missiles, Rockets, and Science Fiction** shall include any model of spacecraft, missile, rocket, or ground vehicles that depict actual or fictional hardware subjects.
    - 1). Missiles will be assigned to categories determined by their use. All vehicle-carried missiles/rockets (ground-to-ground or ground-to-air missiles/rockets used as mobile artillery) will be assigned to the appropriate class in the Armor category. All missiles/rockets used in space research, shown in flight, or on landing gear, will be placed in the Missiles, Rockets, and Science Fiction category.
    - 2). Media categories will include any modeling subjects that are based on mass published media. Published media is understood to be television, films, comics, books, computer games, etc.
  - f. **Collection** is defined as any group of five or more closely related items that are the works of one person.
    - 1). "Closely related" is defined as a common purpose or designation in relation to a specific era or purpose. For example, a collection based on variants of a single airframe is a tighter relationship than one of different aircraft operated by a unit.
    - 2). The closeness of the relationship within the collection is a significant factor in judging.
    - 3). Past winners at the IPMS National Convention, Region VI Convention, or Scalefest in other category/classes may be used so long as they comprise no more than 40% of the collection.

- g. **Humor in Modeling** is intended for modelers to display their skills and their sense of humor. Models competing in this category will be judged in a similar manner to dioramas. Models entered in this category must tell a story in a humorous fashion. While it may be difficult to account for an individual modeler's sense of humor, the entry's strength of humor demonstrated may be a factor in judging.
- h. **Dioramas** are story-centric, specifically built to tell a story or convey a message. Storyline will be considered first with quality of construction and finish considered second. A technically well-done diorama with a weak story line will be at a disadvantage to one with a strong storyline.
- i. **Vignettes** may also tell a story or may simply depict a moment in time/location but will be judged primarily on the quality of construction and finish.
- j. **Factory Stock** models shall include no non-factory modifications.
- k. **Street Rods** are defined as any vehicle with modified engine, wheels, interiors, etc. A "Slammer" is defined as a model that is basic and which does not include interior or chassis components. Windows must be opaque, and doors, hoods, and trunk lids must be closed. Visible blowers, carbs, or injectors will be allowed; no other engine parts may be visible.
- l. **Customs** are defined as any vehicle that exhibits major body modifications, such as customized fenders, Frenched headlights etc.
- m. **Open Wheel Racing** is defined as any vehicle intended for racing where the bodywork or fenders are not intended to enclose the wheels.
- n. **Closed Wheel Racing** is defined as any vehicle intended for racing where the bodywork or fenders are intended to enclose the wheels.
- o. **Commercial** includes all civilian commercial and public service vehicles.
- p. **In-Flight Aircraft** are defined as aircraft models in an in-flight, "gear up" condition, mounted on stands. The model must depict a retractable landing gear prototype with landing gear retracted. Spinning props and jet exhaust may be simulated but are not required. Crew figures are optional. This is **not** an "in-flight diorama" category; models will be judged solely as individual aircraft. **Planes that are placed in regular aircraft categories with gear up and on a stand will be moved to this category to make judging consistent for the regular aircraft categories.**
- q. **Scenic bases** will be allowed in all categories and will not be considered in the judging except in the diorama category. A base may be a piece of undecorated wood, plastic, or glass or may depict the natural surface on which the prototype would be found. The base must not be the predominant feature of the entry and must be of a size proportionate to the model. Models on bases may include primary crew figures in a **non-action pose**; **the addition of any other figures or equipment outside of or unattached to the model or depiction of action such as shell splashes will make the model a Vignette or Diorama, which then be entered in the appropriate category.**
- r. **Gunpla** subjects include only characters and vehicles from the Gundam media multiverse. Gunpla is short for "Gundam Plastic Model Kit". Gundam itself is an anime (Japanese animation) show that premiered on April 27, 1979. It was unique for its time—initially, human characters could pilot these robots. Gundam were represented as more realistic robots that were, essentially, replacements for tanks and jets. Many builders place business cards, stickers (known as slaps), and QR codes with their builds. The intent is NOT to sway judging but to advertise their social media and their "brand," allowing them to build a following and connect with other builders. These cards or stickers are acceptable to go with entries during IPMS-related competition. There are a few basic rules and guidelines that should be applied across all Gunpla categories. Category 603A includes more basic assembled kits that remain unpainted. Standard flaws judges will look for include nubs, gashes, or stress marks in the plastic. In unpainted models, there may be "dark spots" where the sprue tree meets the assembly piece. Due to the molding process, these areas will have had more heat applied than the rest of the parts, causing the spot. The only "painting" allowed is filling in the panel lines with a panel liner (such as the Mr. Hobby/GSI Creos Fine Point Gundam Marker for Panel Lines and the Tamiya Panel Line Accent Color). Another standard flaw is silvering decals; placement of the decals is still a crucial detail to judge. 603B includes more sophisticated assembly and painted models. Customization is allowed in this category including aftermarket or scratch-built parts. Some Gunpla kits may come with a light kit; there are also Bandai-produced light kits that may be purchased separately. **Light kits are allowed in this category, but not in 603A.** The posing of the kit should be taken into consideration. Posing is important because these kits can move initially. Even if the kit ends up being glued into a single pose, it **needs to be dynamic.**
- s. **Mecha** subjects (Category 604) Powered sci-fi robots, armor, or machines, with limbed features or humanoid construct. Such models may contain or display an operator figure if it is not the dominant part of the model; mechanical features should predominate. Otherwise, an entry will go in the appropriate Fantasy or Sci-Fi Figures category.
13. Judging will be by a team of judges. Each category judging team will consist of an odd number of judges, each representing a different chapter when possible. Judges will not be allowed to judge categories in which they are entered. Judging criteria will be as follows:
- Basic craftsmanship.** Removal of flash and/or mold marks, glue application, elimination of seams, construction, alignment, etc.
  - Finish.** Paint and decal application, correctness of weathering, shadowing, and other methods of detailing.
  - Scope of Effort.** (SoE) Definition: Rigorous pursuit to expand the opportunity of creative art and craftsmanship for a model presentation. A work requiring time and achievement. SoE is synonymous with degree of difficulty in judged athletics.
  - The modeler's attempt at accuracy shown in their entry is noble, but it is difficult for a judge to determine unless they have access to the same knowledge and references that the modeler may have used. The judges' understanding of "Accuracy" may be used as a final determiner between entries which are otherwise similar in craftsmanship, finish, and effectiveness.

14. "Sweeps." A person may enter any number of models in any category and possibly win all three awards for that category.
15. Special Awards:
- Judges' Grand Award (a.k.a. Best of Show) – determined by the Judging Team.
  - Annual Theme Award and any other special awards – determined by the Judging Team.
  - Special awards– determined by the sponsor of the award in association with the appropriate Judging Team(s)
  - The judging team of each category determines "Best of" winners. Models eligible for these awards must have won their respective classes.
16. All decisions of the Judging Team and the Head Judge are final. The Head Judge is the final authority in all matters concerning the contest, the final classification of all entries and the presentation of any awards.
17. **Out-of-Box (OOB)-Single Media.**

In most cases, these categories are designed to return IPMS to its roots, or "the "P" in IPMS-plastic." In Aircraft, Armor, Ships, and Automotive Classes, only models which come with plastic parts exclusively are eligible. Exceptions apply only to the Military Vehicle Class and Ships where rigging is included with the kit and specified in the instructions. Also, OOB emphasizes the founding principle of any IPMS model - FIT and FINISH. The focus is on the basics of modeling. Construction, alignment, seams, paint, etc. Pick out your favorite kit and showcase your basic modeling skills with an Out of the Box Masterpiece! If the model comes with metal reinforcement parts that are not visible, the model is allowed. Vinyl/Rubber tires are acceptable along with metal axle rods in the Automotive Class.

The following steps are allowed to enhance your entry plus eligibility:

- KIT INSTRUCTIONS MUST BE ACCOMPANIED WITH MODEL TO BE ELIGIBLE IN THIS CATEGORY
- Filling seams and gaps
- Add weight to make the model sit correctly
- Sanding off rivets and other fine details
- Rescribing panel lines lost during construction
- Drilling out gun barrels, exhaust pipes, grilles, portholes, and the like
- Thinning down parts such as doors and trailing edges
- Adding antennas as shown on the box art or specified in the instructions
- Adding simple seat belts (paper or tape).
- Paint/finish may include brush, spray can, airbrush, metal foil, or natural plastic finish.
- Decals other than those included in the kit may be used and modelers may paint markings and details.  
However, 3D decals are not allowed anywhere on the model
- Weathering is permitted, but no added scratch-built battle damage
- Not allowed: Photo-Etched, Resin, Cast Metal, 3D parts/decals

**Judging Criteria** - The following items will be used for the purpose of judging all Scalefest contest entries.

### Construction

- Flash, sink, mold, ejector-pin marks, Trademarks, and any provisions for motorization, etc. are eliminated.
- Any openings are blanked off or have the field of vision obstructed (a figure that blocks the view through an armored vehicle's open hatch for example.) to prevent a "see-through" effect or if not, show the appropriate detail inside.
- Seams are filled if not present on the actual prototype. If depicting a subject with visible seams, such detail should be uniform and to scale throughout the model.
- Correct cross section of round/cylindrical/oval parts is maintained.
- All components are appropriately aligned.
  - Wings/tailplanes: same dihedral or anhedral on both sides. Rudders aligned with each other.
  - Engine nacelles/cowlings: lined up correctly in front, side, and plan views.
  - Landing gear: components properly aligned with airframe and with each other in front and side views.
  - Ordnance items (bombs, rockets, pylons, etc.) aligned correctly with aircraft and with each other.
- The underside of the model, if visible, should have the same attention to these criteria as the rest of the model.
- Any clear parts present (i.e., windshields, vision blocks, canopies, etc.) should be free of glue marks or scratches/cracks unless they are part of the weathering of the subject.
- Detail removed while filling seams, removing sinkholes etc., is restored to a level consistent with the rest of the model.
- Aftermarket parts and kit bashed or scratch-built additions/changes should blend in with the rest of the model.

### Painting

- The model's surface once painted should show no signs of the construction process such as glue, file or sanding marks, fingerprints, etc.

- Unless irregularities in the actual subject's finish are being duplicated, the finish should be even and smooth. Exceptions should be documented.
- There should be no brush marks or hairs, lint, or dust in or on the finish.
- There should not be any "orange peel" or "eggshell" effect and no "powdering" in recessed areas. Any exceptions to the actual subject should be documented.
- There should be no differences in sheen of finish or whitening caused by the misapplication of clear coats or glossiness caused by washes.
- Paint edges that should be sharp are sharp (i.e., framing on aircraft canopies) with no effects of bad masking. Edges that are supposed to be soft or feathered should be in scale and without overspray.
- Dry-brushing should not be apparent as such.
- Paint colors can vary due to variations from paint batch to batch, different operating environments can change colors in unusual ways, paints fade from the effects of weather and sunlight, and viewing distance can change the look of any color. Poor initial application and subsequent maintenance compound these problems. Therefore, color shade should not be used to determine a model's accuracy. Models with unusual colors or color schemes should have appropriate documentation.
- Any bare plastic, resin, etc., that is visible should not be recognizable as such. i.e., If the plastic is the correct color for the model, even if a modeler does not paint the model, he should apply a gloss and/or dull coat to make the plastic "look" painted.
- "Weathering" is inherently neither good nor bad. When comparing a model with a weathered finish to a model with a pristine finish, the judges will concern themselves with the degree of success achieved by each builder in depicting the intended finish. An exception is in the diorama categories where appropriate weathering may be necessary to render appropriate realism.

### **Decals**

- Decals should be aligned properly. If the real prototype had a markings anomaly, the modeler should document it.
- There should be no silvering or bubbling of decal film.
- Decals should "snuggle down" around detail/corners smoothly.
- Decals should blend in with the rest of the finish to look painted on.
- Decals should have the same sheen as the rest of the model unless they are simulating a different type of surface such as a glass window on a brick building.

### **Scope of Effort**

- Scope of Effort. (SoE) Definition: Rigorous pursuit to expand the opportunity of creative art and craftsmanship for a model presentation. A work requiring time and achievement.
- SoE is a multiplier on the existing Model Aircraft Basics as outlined in the IPMS Competition Handbook.
- SoE is a synonymous with degree of difficulty in judged athletics
- SoE presents itself early in the judging process.