

Handbook for Contestants of the Midwest Master/slave Contest

Owned and Produced by Midwest Leather Kink Alliance

Basic Philosophy for the Midwest Master/slave Contest and Titles

The Owner and Producer of the Midwest Master/slave Contest is committed to providing the Leather/BDSM/ Ms communities with a Midwest Master and a Midwest slave who will represent the Master/slave lifestyle with integrity and competence. The holders of the Midwest Master and Midwest 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/slave or Owner/property.

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

The Midwest 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 Midwest 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.

The Midwest Master/slave Contest is accessible, ethical and all contestants are treated with kindness and respect.

Requirements for Contestants

1. A contestant pair must self-identify as Master and slave or Owner and property. It does not mean they need to use these specific terms to address each other, for example the Owner may be addressed as Sir or

Ms or Ma'am, not Master or Owner. These terms are gender-neutral and not indicative of any particular sexual orientation or gender presentation.

2. A contestant pair must have been in a self-identified Master/slave or Owner/property relationship with each other for at least 1 year prior to running for the Midwest Master/slave title and each individual must be a member of the Leather and/or M/s community for a minimum of 5 years.
3. The contestant pair must have been selected by the State in which they live as the current year's State Master/slave titleholders in order to compete at the Midwest M/s Contest.

Expectations and Requirements for the Midwest M/s Titleholders

1. In order to serve as the Midwest titleholders, a contestant pair must be willing to travel to a minimum of 4 events or M/s, leather or BDSM group meetings or events to present on Master/slave or Owner/property relationships and/or to represent the titles. One of the 4 events must be to South Plains Leatherfest as a contestant.
2. The contestants run for and win the Midwest 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 Owner/Producer will determine in what manner the title will be represented for the remainder of the year in question.
3. The Midwest 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 or Owner/property relationships.
4. The Midwest M/s titleholders must be willing to speak on Master/slave or Owner/property relationships to all segments of the leather/BDSM community. In addition, the Midwest M/s 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.
5. The Midwest 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 Midwest titleholders may not receive payment above and beyond actual travel expenses for speaking engagements or other activities performed in their role as Midwest Titleholders during the title year.
6. The Midwest M/s titleholders will be provided with a travel fund in an amount determined by the Owner/Producer.
 - A. The travel fund will be disbursed by the Owner/Producer to the Midwest M/s titleholders in 2 equal installments. The first within 30 days of the contest and the second at 6 months.
 - B. The Midwest M/s titleholders are required to submit to the Owner/Producer 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.
 - C. If the Midwest M/s titleholders are unable to carry out the requirements of the title, any unspent travel funds will be returned to Midwest Leather Kink Alliance, along with a financial accounting of funds that have been spent to date.

7. The Midwest M/s titleholders are required to provide the Owner/Producer 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.
8. Master/slave pairs who hold a State M/s title and who compete for the Midwest Master/slave title must agree not to compete for or hold another title within the leather and/or BDSM community, together or individually, during their title year, or if they are chosen as Midwest Master/slave, during their Regional and State title years.
9. No commercial use may be made of your Midwest title. The Midwest Titleholders during and following their title year may not financially profit by the direct use of the logo, name of the contest system or name of their title nor may they associate the logo, name of the contest system or name of their title with any monetary based work.
10. The Midwest M/s titleholders may not make any representations on behalf of, or purport to bind, the Owner/Producer of the Midwest Master/slave Contest and Title, and/or Midwest Leather Kink Alliance without the prior consent of the Owner/Producer.
11. The Owner/Producer reserves the right to recall the title from current or previous Midwest M/s titleholders if, in her 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 Midwest Master/slave title and/or Midwest Leather Kink Alliance.
12. The Midwest M/s titleholders are representatives of the entire M/s community. As such, the titleholders must protect the title and community from unfavorable publicity or focus. This means titleholders may not be able to participate in activities or take positions that they otherwise were free to do before winning the titles. Examples include appearing as an expert witness in a trial on the issue of what constitutes abuse in the SM community; agreeing to be interviewed by the vanilla media regarding the title and the Leather and/or M/s community; taking a lead position on issues of significant controversy in the Leather and/or M/s community. Any questions regarding whether or not an activity could unfavorably impact the title should be immediately directed to the Owner/Producer. The decision of the Owner/Producer will be final on these matters.
13. During their title year, the Midwest M/s titleholders may not engage in interviews with or appear in “vanilla” mainstream media in any way without the specific written consent of the Owner/Producer. After their title year, the former Midwest M/s titleholders may not identify themselves as former titleholders or display the MWLKA M/s logo or patch or the Midwest Leather Kink Alliance logo in interviews with or appearances in “vanilla” mainstream media (whether print, television, film, radio or internet based) without the specific written consent of the Owner/Producer.
14. The Midwest M/s titleholders are permitted to use the title “Midwest Master/slave [title year]” in perpetuity, with the exception of interaction with “vanilla” mainstream media and provided the Owner/Producer have not exercised their right to recall the title as described above. The current Midwest M/s titleholders are permitted to use the Midwest Master/slave logo on business cards and stationery for the term of their title year. Any other use of the title name or the Midwest M/s logo must be approved by the Owner/Producer in advance. The Owner/Producer retains the right to review any use of the Midwest Master/slave logo and to rescind permission to use the logo for any reason and at their sole discretion.

About the Contest and Weekend

Competing in a regional leather contest is an exhilarating – and exhausting – experience. It often is helpful for a contestant pair to bring someone with them as a support system/assistant for the weekend. Anyone assisting a contestant pair at MWLKA M/s may do the following:

- Accompany the contestant pair to the contestants' meeting.
- Stay with the contestant pair outside of the interview room during the interviews.
- Stay with the contestant pair outside of the presentation room.
- Assist the contestant pair before the contest in the dressing room. (Due to space constraints and safety issues, assistants are not allowed backstage with the contestant pairs during the contest.)

What You Can Expect of the Judges at the Midwest Master slave Contest

- Judges are expected to treat the contestants with kindness and respect.
- We do not tolerate discrimination of any kind at MWLKA.
- Judges will arrive on-time and participate fully in each judging component.
- Judges will observe the contestants before MWLKA out and about at other events as well as social media.
- Judges will research contestants and learn about them prior to arrival at MWLKA.
- Confidentiality is of primary importance. We require that Judges hold in confidence all information they receive about the contestants and do not discuss this information outside of Judge deliberations. Toward this commitment, all Judges are required to sign a written agreement to not share information regarding the contest or the contestants outside of the judging process.

Grievance Process

We realize that contestants are under a lot of pressure during the contest process and may be hesitant to approach the contest staff to report inappropriate behavior by a judge. We strongly encourage contestants to speak to the Contest Director immediately should they feel they have been treated inappropriately. We commit to keep your reporting in confidence and protect you in a manner that you consent to. Midwest Leather Kink Alliance is unable to take action if nothing is reported. We encourage contestants to trust the process and speak with the Contest Director.

The Structure of the Midwest Master/slave Contest

1. The Midwest Master/slave Contest is made up of five judging categories: Interview; Presentation; Speech; Pop Question and M/s Dynamic. Each of these categories is described in greater detail under the “Judging Categories” section of this Handbook.
2. In addition to their performance in the five judging categories, two other aspects of the Midwest M/s Contest will impact a contestant pair's score:

- Meeting Contest deadlines/complying with Contest rules: Contestants are required to meet all Contest deadlines, including but not limited to timely submittal of the Contest Application, complete information on Contest Application, submission of references, information on the item the contestants are required to submit for the Silent Auction, and attendance at all required Contest rehearsals and meetings. Failure to comply with any Contest rule or deadline will be reported to the judging panel by the Owner/Producer. The judges may use this information as a part of the interview of the contestant pairs and may factor this information into their scoring of the contestant pairs at their discretion.
 - At the meet and greet the contestant pairs will be draw their numbers. During the opening ceremony Friday night contestant pairs will have the opportunity to introduce themselves on stage. Each pair will have a maximum of 2 minutes total to make their introduction. The form and content of the introduction is up to the contestant pair; however, props or sets of any kind are not permitted. While there is no deduction for too short or too long an introduction, the Contestant Pair's representation goes to the Dynamic Score with regard to how the contestants presented themselves on stage.
3. There are seven judges for the Midwest Master/slave Contest. A form of scoring commonly known as "Olympic scoring" is used, i.e., the high score and low score for the contestants in each judging category is thrown out and the remaining five scores are averaged, giving a composite score for each category. The contestants' composite scores for the five categories then are 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.
 4. If a judge becomes incapacitated during the Midwest Master/slave Contest, or if for any reason the Owner/Producer in their sole discretion determines a judge is unable or unwilling to carry out their duties as a judge, that judge will be withdrawn from the Contest and their 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 Owner/Producer reserves the right to define the duties of a judge of the Midwest Master/slave Contest and to determine if a judge is able and/or willing to carry out those duties. The Owner/Producer further retains the right to remove from the judging panel any judge who in their judgment is unable carry out those duties.
 5. Contestants for the Midwest 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.
 6. 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 the tied pairs 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.

7. If there is only one contestant pair running for the Midwest M/s title, the pair must receive a final overall score equal to at least 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 be awarded the title.

Judging Categories

1. Interview with Judges (150 points) (limited to 30 minutes, max callback 5 minutes)

- 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 ensure 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.
- The Judges' Interviews are open to all persons registered for Midwest Leather Kink Alliance (excluding your handlers and support team).

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. The Master and the slave are not required to speak on the same topic or any specific topic.
- If a contestant's speech exceeds 2 minutes, the contestant will be allowed to continue with a live mic and the tallymasters will be notified that the contestant went over time. The judges will not penalize the contestants for going over and will judge them on the quality and content of the speech only. The deduction will be made by the Tallymaster to the final composite speech score as follows:

Overtime by 1 seconds to 15 seconds	No penalty
Overtime by 16 seconds to 60 seconds	5 points deducted per contestant going over
Overtime by 61 seconds or more	10 points deducted per contestant going over
- No props or sets may be used during a contestant's speech.
- The contestants are permitted to have helpers in the audience indicating time markers during the speeches. The judges will not penalize the contestants in any way for making use of timekeepers.

3. Presentation (100 points)

- The presentation category is designed to judge the contestants' ability to speak in a seminar type format on Master/slave relationships. The contestants are required to make a brief (no more than 10 minute) presentation on any topic relating to Master/slave relationships. Both the Master and the slave must speak during the presentation.
- If the presentation exceeds 10 minutes, the contestant will be allowed to continue and the tallymasters will be notified that the contestants went over time. The presentation will not be interrupted.

The judges will not penalize the contestants for going over and will judge them on the quality and content of the presentation only. The deduction will be made by the Tallymaster to the final composite presentation score as follows:

Overtime by 1 seconds to 15 seconds	No penalty
Overtime by 16 seconds to 60 seconds	5 points deducted per contestant going over
Overtime by 61 seconds or more	10 points deducted per contestant going over

- The contestant pair is permitted to use a device to aid them in keeping time during their presentation and will not be penalized in any way for doing so.
- Contestants are permitted to use props or visual aids in their presentations but are not required to do so. The Midwest M/s Contest will provide a flip chart and markers. Contestants must provide any and all other handouts, props or visual aids, at their expense.
- Before beginning the presentation session, the Contest Director 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 contestants will call for questions from the audience and manage the room recognizing audience members to ask their questions.
- Questions must relate to the presentation topic.
- Judges will not ask questions of the contestant pairs in this judging category unless there are no questions from the audience.
- The Contest Director will monitor the question-and-answer time, and their 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.
- Contestant pairs are permitted to use handouts but are not required to do so. If a contestant pair chooses to use handouts, it is the responsibility of the contestant pair to bring enough copies for at least the judges of the Contest. If a contestant pair chooses to use props or other visual aids, the contestant pair is responsible for obtaining and bringing those items, including any equipment necessary to present the visual aid such as an easel, flip chart, projector, screen, etc. The cost of all handouts, props and other visual aids will be the responsibility of the contestant pairs.
- The Contestant Presentations are open to all persons registered for Midwest Leather Kink Alliance. However, handlers, support persons, etc. for contestants may only attend their own contestant's presentation.

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 judges and/or Owner/Producer of the Midwest Master/slave Contest.
5. 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 or Owner and property to the public.
 - Judging in this category begins Thursday evening, when the contestant pairs introduce themselves and draw their numbers onstage at the Opening Ceremonies. While there is no deduction for too short or too long of an introduction, the Contestant Pair’s representation goes to the Dynamic Score with regard to how the contestants presented themselves on stage.
 - 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” or “incorrect.”

The M/s Travel Fund

- The primary means of fundraising for the Midwest M/s Travel Fund is through the Silent Auction, held at Midwest Leather Kink Alliance.
- Each contestant is required to provide a basket to be auctioned off. The basket is made up of several small items on the order of a standard small “gift basket.” The item/basket need not be large or expensive, but instead, should be something that represents the contestant pair, their region or the spirit of their state contest.

Producer’s Guarantee for the Titleholders

The Owner/Producer of Midwest Leather Kink Alliance and the Midwest Master/slave Contest guarantees the titleholders the following:

- Winners’ back patches
- Winners’ medallions
- A travel fund consisting of money raised from the Silent Auction, and any other funds donated by groups or individuals.
- Contestants Fee to International Master/slave Contest at South Palms Leatherfest.