

2025 Trauma Competition Charlotte, North Carolina November 12-15, 2025

Judge, Competitor and Volunteer Handbook



Improving Trauma Care Worldwide

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OVERVIEW:

Since the demonstration of the patient care competition in Toronto in 2002, the patient care competition has been a part of the annual ITLS conference and has been designed to showcase the ITLS approach to out-of-hospital trauma patient care.

SAFETY:

As you will see throughout this document, safety is the primary focus for all participants. Everyone is required to practice safety and immediately correct unsafe acts.

“No Duff”

As a failsafe, for all competition participants during the competition, the term “**No Duff**” will be used to indicate a medical emergency or other emergent issue (e.g. safety, etc.).

“**No Duff**” is a term to be used by all competition participants to indicate that they or someone else are actually having a medical emergency. Should someone have a medical emergency during the competition, they only need to speak to the closest judge or participant and state, “No Duff” and the medical problem they are having. At that point, the closest judge is to be advised. The judge then stops the event, and appropriate medical intervention is started. If medical care is warranted based upon assessment by on-scene medical personnel, local EMS will be contacted. The process for other emergent issues is the same as for medical.

For the purposes of organization, the judges are tasked as the immediate first responders and will take the lead role. That stated, given the audience, additional and more appropriate assistance may be sought. For the purposes of organization, the scenario timekeeper will be tasked with contacting local Emergency Services should they be required.

OVERVIEW OF THE PROCESS:

Timelines:

This is a one-day round-robin event where the teams all compete in three scenarios with the winner decided based upon the highest accumulative score on all three scenarios with **no scenario disqualifications.**

The typical format for the event will be as follows:

- Competition Interactive Presentation

- Team Sequestering
- Patient Care Competition
- Scenario Feedback Presentation*
- Release

****Note: The Team Debriefing session and the award ceremony for the competition will be listed in the conference agenda.***

Scenario Rotation:

Teams will rotate through three patient scenarios and keeping the equipment they have been issued or been using throughout the scenarios. Re-stocking will be done after each scenario as required.

SCENARIO PARTICIPANTS

Judges:

Judging a competition is a very difficult job and any judge is to be commended for taking on the task. For the ITLS Trauma Competition and for clarity, the term judge is used in a generic fashion and is inclusive of any and all persons providing feedback, timekeeping and any other function.

Judge's Responsibilities:

- ***Ensure that the safety of all participants, patients, judges and spectators (etc.) is maintained at all times.***
- Ensure that the scenario is run in a timely and organized fashion.
- Ensure that all live patients understand their “programming” and adhere to it with consistency.
- Ensure that the scenario feedback and marking is consistent for all teams.
- Ensure that marking is always against the scenario plan.
- Ensure that the scenario marking is fair, equitable and meets the patient care standards as set out by ITLS.
- All persons evaluating the scenario must be recognized as current ITLS Instructors, Affiliate Faculty or recognized as having ITLS Chapter authority (i.e., Medical Director).
- Ensure that any team accommodation (i.e., language interpretation) is done in such a manner as not to give unfair advantage.
- Judges are required to always maintain confidentiality of the scenario contents. No discussion of the scenario outside of the competition structure is to take place.

Safety:

- Judges are required to ensure that all actions during a scenario are completed safely.
- Judges are required to put an immediate stop to any unsafe actions (i.e., lifting a live patient on a backboard without proper straps/restraints, improper sharp procedures). Once safety has been re-attained, the judge(s) can decide if it is safe to continue the scenario.
- The primary scenario judge may halt the scenario if unsafe acts or issues are flagrant, repeated or have caused injury. The Competition Co-Chairs will be notified if this occurs.
- Please keep in mind that our “patients” are usually on the floor or are out in the elements and tend to get cold. Frequently check them to ensure that they are as comfortable as possible and that we are not causing them any harm. Consider rotating/alternating a patient if the environment is an issue.
- Judges are to react to “No Duff” calls as required.

Competitors:

Competitor Responsibilities:

- ***Ensure that all actions undertaken are completed in a safe manner at all times.***
- All competitors must be physically capable of participating in active patient care. (This is primarily for the safety of the patients, the judges, the other competitors and themselves).
- The Team Captain/Leader is required to be a current ITLS-certified provider or instructor. Team Captain/Leaders will be required to provide proof of a current ITLS card (Basic or Advanced) to their level of patient care.
- As this is an international competition, some teams may require an interpreter to assist in understanding the scenario. This accommodation is quite acceptable as long as patient care prompting does not occur.
- Professional patient care is expected. “Horseplay” or actions that may be considered detrimental to the ITLS brand or inappropriate in the spirit to which the competition is intended **will not** be tolerated.

Safety:

- Each competitor is responsible for ensuring that every action undertaken is done with safety in mind. Judges will stop or prevent unsafe acts from occurring up to and including stopping the scenario.
- Live “patients” are frequently used in the competition. Care is to be given not to cause the patient any discomfort and no active procedures are to be attempted (i.e., glucometry, IV initiation). A judge will advise what is required to simulate the

action you are attempting where appropriate (i.e., moving to a mannequin to intubate).

- Should you injure yourself or notice someone actually ill or injured, stop the scenario and inform the nearest judge of the situation. (“No Duff” rule).

Sequestering:

The intent of sequestering is two-fold. First, it is to ensure that all teams have no fore-knowledge of the scenario and to maintain scenario security. Secondly, it is to organize the teams to ensure they understand the rules of the scenario, have an opportunity to check their equipment and to interact with each other. Any sequestering will be done for the shortest amount of time possible. To those ends, ITLS asks the following of the teams:

1. Teams are sequestered just prior to and during the time of the practical competition. Team members (three plus the alternate, if applicable) are not to leave the room, make phone calls, talk or communicate with anyone from outside the room. If no washroom facilities are available in the sequester area, escorts will be provided.
2. **Cell phones, mobile devices, tablets, pagers and any other electronic devices are prohibited during sequestering.** Exceptions may be made due to **circumstances** by the Competition Chair, Co-Chair or their delegate (i.e. educational content, etc.).
3. Beverages and light snacks will be provided in the sequestering area. Competitors are encouraged to eat as appropriate prior to sequestering.
4. If you have any medication you need to take, please bring it with you or take it prior to arrival at the sequestering area.
5. Teams will be escorted to the practical competition site and will not be allowed to talk with anyone at this time.
6. Opportunities for photography/videography (i.e., Team Pictures) will be afforded prior to sequestering. **NO photos, videos, etc., other than by ITLS officially recognized photographers will be allowed.**
7. As a “pre-sequester” initiative, a competition Co-Chair or delegate will provide a presentation on the rules of the ITLS Trauma Competition. All competitors are required to attend. Details about the exact timing of this session will be confirmed.

Team Composition:

1. Each team is composed of three persons and up to one alternate, with the Team Captain/Leader that is required to be a current ITLS Basic or Advanced provider or instructor.
2. It has been past practice that Chapters or organizations send entire teams, and this is preferential. *However, composite teams made up of persons attending from different Chapters are also encouraged.*

3. The maximum number of teams for the competition will be decided by ITLS International through the Conference Planning Committee and the Competition Co-Chairs.
4. Issues involving team composition will be decided by the Competition Co-Chairs.

Patients:

Overview:

The intent of any patient care competition is to provide the patient care providers with scenarios that are as accurate as possible. To that end, patient presentation, programming and feedback are key to a successful scenario. Where possible, live patients are used to provide a more normal patient feedback loop. These patient “volunteers” are an extremely valuable resource and as such, the focus for all persons involved in the competition is their SAFETY at all times!

Patient Responsibilities:

1. Patients will be provided with “programming”, feedback information and an overview of their condition so they can interact appropriately with responders. A judge will be in close proximity to ensure their safety and provide feedback as required (i.e., vital signs).
2. Patients will either be provided with clothing or asked to bring clothing that can be “cut away”. All patients are asked to wear bathing suits underneath their clothing that will not be removed by the responders.
3. Any advanced procedures required will be done on a mannequin off to the side.
4. Patients are not to “ad lib” the programming that is provided. If something comes up that has not been covered, the judge responsible for the patient will provide information as appropriate and required. Consistency is the hallmark of a good patient.

Safety:

The safety of all patient volunteers is paramount! All judges and participants are tasked with ensuring patient volunteer safety during the scenario.

Other Scenario Volunteers:

Overview

Volunteers fill a multitude of other positions in a scenario such as allied services and bystanders to ensure a successful scenario. As they are also participants, they have some responsibilities as well.

Other Volunteer Responsibilities:

1. Other volunteers may be provided with “programming” or “feedback information” so they can interact appropriately with responders. Volunteers are asked to be consistent with their programming and follow instructions provided.
2. Other volunteers are not to “ad lib” the programming that is provided. If something comes up that has not been covered, provide the answer “I do not know” and advise a judge as soon as possible.
3. Other volunteers may be asked by the scenario participants (teams) to help with patient care. This is permissible as long as it is safe for the volunteer to do so and is a “reasonable” request (i.e., simple “hold this like this”, etc.)

Safety:

The safety of all participants is paramount! All participants are tasked with ensuring your safety during the scenario. If you see something unsafe, immediately point it out to the nearest judge.

SCENARIO SCORING (MARKS) & FEEDBACK

Scoring (Marks):

Judges will make every attempt to be consistent and fair in their marking of patient care performance during the competition. To aid in the understanding of the scoring and marking, the following guide will be used:

1. Each scenario will have a time limit as set by the Competition Committee. Teams are to manage their own time and will not be told the scenario length. The scenario length is determined by the competition committee but will be no longer than 20 minutes.
2. Judge’s score sheets will have no numerical marking values on them; instead, check boxes for completed, partially completed or not completed assessments, interventions or treatments will be used. There will also be boxes to indicate if penalty points were awarded. Marking will be done later with a small group inclusive of the Competition Chair(s) and a medical advisor.
3. Competitors will be given marks only for assessments, interventions or treatments actually delivered. No marks will be given for just verbalizing an assessment. For example, to get full marks and appropriate feedback for blood pressure, the cuff will have to be on appropriately, the stethoscope correctly landmarked, the cuff inflated and deflated as appropriate for a live patient. Once that is completed, feedback will be given. **“Remember: Not actually done = No actual marks.”**
4. Unsafe acts by competitors may produce penalty points up to and including a “zero” on the entire scenario dependent upon the act. Unsafe acts will be stopped immediately and based upon severity, the scenario may be halted and the team disqualified from the scenario. Repetitions of warned unsafe acts will not be tolerated. Examples of unsafe acts include but are not limited to sharp safety, throwing equipment or the unsafe movement of a live patient.

5. Feedback will be given in different ways based on patient presentation. For conscious and alert patients, they will interact with participants directly with other feedback (vital signs, chest sounds, etc.) given by the patient's judge. Feedback for patients with altered levels of consciousness may be given by either the patient or judge dependent upon patient presentation. (
6. During the scenario, the feedback from a judge may simply be "as found". This term, "as found", indicates usually one of two things. For example, the pulse of the patient as assessed is the pulse for the patient in the scenario. Conversely, "as found" may be indicative of an inappropriately done assessment that would not produce actual results (i.e., inappropriate pulse check location).
7. As the scenarios are conducted in English, language interpreters are allowed to provide language services to teams as required. They are **not** allowed to provide guidance on patient care or elicit information other than what is asked by the team. Teams must provide their own interpreter if needed.

SCENARIO LAYOUT:

Overview

For the purposes of judging, each scenario will have the following standard set-up:

- Two judges per patient (one providing feedback, one scoring) where practical and available.
- One timekeeper.
- One "safety" person.
- Two to three "volunteers" to help with scenario set-up and equipment re-stocking.

The judges will meet prior to the scenario for a read-through and to ask any questions or make adjustments as required.

Adequate supplies of presumed consumable products based on the scenario should be on hand to restock equipment bags as required.

EQUIPMENT:

To attempt to maintain equity among the participants, standardized patient care equipment bags will be provided to all teams for the competition. However, if a team wishes to bring their own equipment bags, it should include the equipment listed in the ITLS Trauma Competition Appendix as a minimum standard. Teams adding items not on the provided equipment list must declare it by providing written notice to the competition staff prior to being sequestered. Any equipment not on the equipment list brought by a team will be inspected by a competition judge or member of the competition committee to

ensure that it complies with the competition equipment and ITLS standards. Use of equipment not in the appendix or otherwise agreed to prior to the competition may disqualify a team.

Competitors should consider bringing in their own personal equipment as listed below, as some will not be provided.

- Personal eye protection (not provided)
- Stethoscope
- Patient care gloves (not provided)
- Trauma Shears/Scissors (not provided)
- Penlights (not provided)
- Hemostats (not provided)

Other equipment may be allowed based upon the judgment of the Competition Chair and equity among the participants. For example, in 2010, the Ontario Team asked to bring a CAT tourniquet into the scenario, which was not a provided item. The request was granted based on four criteria. The criteria were:

- 1) that it was a recognized non- research study piece of equipment.
- 2) that they (Ontario) provided all teams with access to a CAT tourniquet for the scenarios.
- 3) that any team requiring information on its use was addressed to that team's satisfaction.
- 4) that everyone was in agreement.

As all criteria were met, it was allowed in. A complete list of all equipment provided is in Appendix A.

The required bag contents are listed by category. They can be arranged as per specific response bag configurations.

TEAM & PARTICIPANT RECOGNITIONS

As with any team-based challenge event, teams and individuals are recognized for their performance during competition. In the ITLS Trauma Competition, teams and individuals are recognized as follows:

Team Award – ITLS Annual Trauma Care Competition Trophy:

The patient care team that wins the competition has their name engraved and displayed on the ITLS Trauma Care Competition Trophy. Originally donated to ITLS by Shannon Bramwell, the owner of Emergency Rescue Academy, the trophy carries the names of the winning teams from past years.

Individual Award – George Eliadis Memorial Award

Initiated in 2017, the George Eliadis Memorial Award is presented to the Patient Care Competition participant who, during the competition, demonstrates the highest level of professionalism, leadership and trauma care. This "judge's choice" award further recognizes that the individual has demonstrated in their performance that they are truly an ambassador for the patient care principals set out by ITLS.

COMPETITION LEADERSHIP ROLES

Competition Committee Chair & Co-Chair

- The competition is overseen by the Chair and Co-Chair of the Competition Committee. All functions (Lead Judges, Team Leads, etc.) report to them.
- The Chair and Co-Chair of the Committee will report to the Board as outlined in the bylaws.
- The Chair and/or Co-Chair will be the lead on any concerns and/or issues.
- The Chair, Co-Chair or their delegate are responsible for marking all scenarios.

Lead Judges

- Create scenarios as required.
- Oversee the running of their individual scenarios.
- Correlate and organize the judges' marking of the scenario.
- Report any issues to the Chair and/or Co-Chair as required.

Medical Director

- Fulfill the functions similar to that of a course Medical Director.
- Given that this is an international competition, provide expert input as required on procedures performed by teams that may vary from local standards or protocols.
- Provide guidance to the committee as needed on "best practices".

Volunteer Team Lead

- Coordinate with local lead to ensure that we have enough volunteer resources.
- Coordinate with scenario leads to understand volunteer needs (patients, bystanders, first responders, etc.)
- Ensure that all volunteers are aware of what is being asked of them (time, role responsibilities, clothing, etc.)
- Ensure that all volunteers have a safety briefing (e.g., "no duff", etc.)
- Assign volunteers to roles as needed.

Moulage Team Lead:

- Creates their moulage team as they see fit.
- Liaison with scenario leads as to patient injury needs.

- Oversees any moulage needs (Note: We need to ensure we have reimbursement for costs).
- Ensures that scenarios are supported on an ongoing basis.
- Liaison with volunteer team lead, ITLS Office and local leads as to any required consumable clothing for scenarios.

Equipment Team Lead:

- Oversee the ITLS standardized equipment bags including stocking, storage and transport.
- Ensures any changes are standardized across all equipment bags.
- Liaison with local leads for large equipment that is not transportable (stretchers, defibrillators, etc.)
- Liaison with local lead for any local stock and consumables.