



## SA COS CHAMPS – RULES & JUDGING CRITERIA 2025

### GENERAL RULES

The following rules apply to each contestant entering SA Cos Champs and are intended to create a fair and inclusive environment for all participants. If you require additional information for any of the rules or judging criteria below, please contact us on [info@wecosplay.org.za](mailto:info@wecosplay.org.za) or via our Instagram page and we will gladly assist.

- Entrants costume should be a minimum of 70% self-made. Undergarments, shoes or wigs can be purchased but would need to be modified accordingly based on the reference supplied. Any identifiable components such as SFX makeup should also be self-created by the contestant as it would contribute to the completed percentage of the
- Entrants must be 18 years of age or older at the time of entry.
- The competition is open to individuals only. Group entries are not permitted unless otherwise stated.
- No store bought, or commissioned pieces would be allowed if it falls within the 70% of construction. Example - If your character has a jacket and you've added elements or altered it to fit the reference; the jacket must not be purchased or commissioned and would have to be made by the contestant.
- The contestant's entry must be based on an existing character/costume; original designs won't be accepted at present for SA Cos Champs. Fan art will be accepted, if the original source is from an existing character and a clear, fully realized design can be supplied.
- A clear reference should be supplied when entering, ideally a reference that shows as much of the character/costume as possible. Only 1 image file should be supplied, this can be a collage of various angles and details in high quality for the judges to refer to during pre-judging.
- Employees, volunteers, or direct affiliates of the organizing body are not eligible to participate.
- Work in progress portfolios are not compulsory, however we would recommend that contestants bring a portfolio to share their creation process during pre-judging purposes to confirm the validity of the self-made costume entered. Contestants will not be marked higher if a portfolio is supplied and no marks are allocated for portfolios. Judges will be limited to the time they have to view portfolios, please keep them clear, simple and avoid using too much text if you choose to bring one into the judging room.
- Entries must be submitted by the posted deadline. **[Insert deadline date here]**

- Contestants should make use of makeup or tailoring for their costumes where suitable, but it is not a modelling competition and accuracy extends to the costume itself not the physical traits of the person wearing it. The spirit of competition allows people to choose who or what they want to portray, according to their comfort and skills.
- If your character has a specific hairstyle and colour, the use of wigs and wig styling is recommended as this would count towards accuracy to reference. If your character has a realistic hairstyle, for example – ‘Wonder Woman’ or ‘Captain America’ and your own hair is suitable, then a wig is not necessary, however appropriate styling should still be applied.
- Contact Lenses are completely optional. Some contestants may not be able to wear coloured Contact Lenses; therefore, no additional marks will be allocated to those who are wearing them and contestants who cannot wear them, will not lose marks.
- Blackface or race swapping is strictly prohibited. If your character originates from a fantasy race or world, for example – an ‘Orc from Warcraft’ or ‘Princess Bubblegum from Adventure Time’ then the use of body paint, special effects (SPX) makeup to resemble the character is allowed. If your character is based on a real-life race or culture, the use of body paint and special effects (SPX) makeup to change your appearance will not be accepted and will result in disqualification from SA Cos Champs. The use of makeup, including prosthetics, to change your natural skin tone or features to that of another realistic race has been a contentious topic and while it is not usually intended to cause offence, using makeup in this way carries connotations of historical practices that contributes to an environment where people may feel uncomfortable and it is not appropriate for the competition. By understanding that costume accuracy does not include skin colour, age, gender or body shape, we include and invite everyone to portray any character that they love in a respectful and considerate manner.
- Contestants are invited to ask for advice when entering from the WeCosplaySA team if they are at all concerned that their choice of character or costume design could be considered offensive in any way.
- Entrants must wear and present their costume themselves. In certain circumstances, the entrant can make use of a model; however, this would need to be arranged and discussed prior to the event with the WeCosplaySA team.

## **PROPS**

- Only self-made props will be scored and contribute to the total scoring of the costume. If a prop was purchased and customized, the contestant will only be marked on the construction involved in the customization. Example – If you purchase a plastic sword to use the plastic blade but made your own handle, you will be scored only on the craftsmanship of the handle.
- All props **MUST** be convention safe and conform to the rules of the host convention/venue.

## **EXAMPLES OF PROPS NOT ALLOWED**

Airsoft rifles, BB Guns, pellet guns, real metal swords, arrow heads, spears, daggers or bats etc.

- Contestants are to be fully responsible for their own props regarding storage, transport and handling them. WeCosplaySA or SA Cos Champs will not be offering a locker service, space to store them or be held liable for any loss or damage.

- Props may not be thrown on or off-stage during presentation and shooting of any projectiles will not be allowed. Example – If you have a fake bow and arrow, you are not allowed to shoot the arrow on or off stage; the action of shooting an arrow should be suggested by acting in character with poses instead.

### **3D PRINTING AND PURCHASED PATTERNS**

- The use of 3D Prints and other automated production tools have become increasingly accessible for cosplayers. These notes provide guidance for entrants and judges on how to approach the use of these.

- The use of 3D printing is allowed for smaller accessories, embellishments and minor pieces; however, the finish, casting or assembly must be completed by the entrant. Example – If you've 3D printed a gemstone and make a silicone mold to cast the clear gems; you may score higher than if you've 3D printed all the gemstones. Significant or larger costume pieces created this way will only be scored on the construction work done by the entrant after the pieces were printed, including assembly and finish.

- If the entrant presents a significant part of their costume that was 3D printed with no additional work done by themselves, this would be treated as a purchased item and will not be considered for scoring by the judges.

- If the model has been created by the entrant, they should include details of the modelling process in their progress book for the judges to review and verify. These items will score more highly than purchased models due to the additional work carried out by the entrant. Much like the use of commercial sewing or crafting patterns, you are allowed to use models created by someone else provided the original creator is disclosed and credited. The finishing and final construction of such pieces must be completed by the entrant, and they must be able to detail how this was done for the pieces to be eligible for judging.

- It's important to note that 3D printed pieces will be scored the same as costume pieces made from other crafting materials. Example – If one contestant uses EVA Foam and another uses 3D printed pieces, the contestant who has the better overall finish, fit and accuracy will score higher regardless of the material used.

### **JUDGING CRITERIA**

- Pre-judging of costumes will take place before the stage presentation and judges will allocate scoring according to the below criteria. Each contestant is given equal time with the judges and contestants must ensure that they are punctual and ready for the prejudging timeslot. Contestants who are late for pre-judging or stage presentation will incur a penalty to their final score, a discretionary penalty of up to ten **(10)** points or disqualification, depending on the circumstances. Please refer to the 'Host Convention' section on the entry form for more information regarding pre-judging time slots, room location and stage presentation times.

The winners would be decided using a point system, however a final deliberation with the judges and moderator would finalize and confirm placements considering the allocated scoring. Each contestant will be scored with a total out of 100 points.

**Accuracy to design [25 Points]**

- How closely has the contestant worked to the reference images supplied - Are all the costume components present and what effort has been made to resemble the character, including the use of makeup and hair/wig styling?

**In character representation [15 points]**

- Is the contestant mobile enough to represent the character they are portraying? Have they tried to channel the personality and likeness of the character?

**Tailoring and proportions [30 points]**

- Has the contestant tailored the costume to fit their own body shape and applied enough planning for well-balanced proportions to translate what is seen on the reference when brought into reality? Have they adjusted any costume or armour pieces to suit a human figure considering their height, mobility and overall appearance when the costume is fully assembled?

**Overall finishing [30 points]**

- Has the contestant spent time finishing off edges, seams and hidden fasteners that should not be seen? Are the props sealed and painted well? Can we see brush strokes and unsanded surfaces? Have they pressed their garments and tried to finish off raw edges on fabric?

**Please note:** We respect comfort and privacy of each contestant. The judges, any representative of WeCosplaySA or SA Cos Champs are prohibited from taking photographs or videos of contestants in the pre-judging room.

**STAGE PRESENTATION**

- No points would be allocated to stage presentation; however, we encourage contestants to make full use of the stage, showcasing the whole the costume and remaining in character for a fun presentation to the audience and media.

- Each contestant should be mobile in their costume without requiring any assistance on stage, unless arranged with the organizers prior if there are restrictions due to a disability. Assistance can be received by an organization representative when entering and exiting the stage if needed. When costumes are being constructed, please ensure that you take mobility into account as this would contribute to in-character representation.

- Music, if any, for the stage presentation will be provided by the hosting convention. Contestants will not be allowed to request or submit their own music for their stage presentation. The use of a microphone is not allowed, and contestants may not request the use of a microphone from the host on stage.

- No polluting on the stage area in the form of confetti, fake blood or any substance that would require clean up after the contestant's stage time. Smoke or vapor machines are not allowed to be used on stage and would need to conform to the rules and regulations of the convention SA Cos Champs is being hosted by. Fake blood, slime or any detail that resembles liquid should be 'dry' or solid; not wet or dripping off costumes, props or makeup. Example – Fake blood should be painted so it appears wet but would need to be completely dry if touched.

- Contestants must respect the instructions given by the organizers and consider the amount of time given to present their costume on stage. Contestants are to walk onto the stage when announced, present their costume and return backstage for winner announcements.

- No explicit content, nudity, political views or hate speech would be allowed on stage or as part of the costume. Regardless of gender, please ensure that your costume does not expose an inappropriate amount of skin and that you take the necessary care into wearing the correct undergarments. Military insignia connected to any real-life historical events are not allowed to be used on any part of the costume, including props and will not be allowed on stage.

## **WINNER TITLES**

- Three base titles are awarded at each SA Cos Champs event. These will be announced and advertised in advance. Additional spot prizes or special mentions may be included but are subject to availability prior to the competition. SA Cos Champs does not use a specific category system; it is an open construction-based competition. All self-made costumes that meet the competition rules and judging criteria are eligible to be selected as a winner. Prizes for the 3 titles can be found under the 'Host Convention' section provided on the entry form.

### **The 3 main titles would consist of:**

- 1st Place
- 2nd Place
- 3rd Place

- **Please note:** Prizes will vary with each event and are subject to change prior to the competition.