



# International Rescue & Emergency Care Association

PO Box 431000, Minneapolis, MN 55443

---

## Basic Life Support (BLS) Challenge Rules

Updated March 26, 2023

### Section I – Definitions

- The term **challenge** is considered synonymous (the same as) with the terms *competition*, *event*, or *contest*, and refer to the overall event comprised of a number of scenarios and potentially written evaluations.
- The term **scenario** is considered synonymous (the same as) with the term *problem*, and refers to one individual component of the overall challenge event.
- The term **Basic Life Support**, or **BLS** refers to those individuals trained at the Emergency Medical Responder (EMR) or Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) levels. All participants in this competition, including the BLS Chair, Chief Judges, and Judges are required to be certified to this level.
- The term **Advanced Life Support**, or **ALS** refers to those individuals trained to the Advanced Emergency Medical Technician (AEMT) or Paramedic level. All participants competing in the ALS competition, including the ALS Chair, Chief Judges, and Judges are required to be certified to this level. Rules for the ALS Competition are found in a separate document entitled “*Advanced Life Support Challenge Rules*” and are not detailed here in any fashion.

### Section II – Challenge Rules

#### **Rule 1 – Registration**

All team members’ registration applications must be completed and submitted via CVENT event management system. Complete registration includes full payment for the conference, and failure to complete registration may disqualify teams from participation in the challenge event. Teams may not enter the challenge under similar names. Substitute names may be assigned to those with similar names to eliminate potential scoring issues.

***The participating teams and the members shall agree to protect IRECA and its Officers, Challenge Officials, and Judges and the city and/or state of the owner or owners of and property including land and/or structures thereon where the BLS Challenge is conducted (held) from any liability, claim or expense in the event of any accidents during or in connection with the BLS Challenge in which any or all members of this team and our organization might be involved.***

A copy of each team’s proof of liability must be provided with the challenge application.

#### **Rule 2 – Team Composition & Qualifications**

Each team must consist of a maximum of three (3) members. Teams will have one member designated as their team captain, and all team members must be trained, at a minimum, to the Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) level. Individuals trained to the Emergency Medical Responder (EMR, or first responder) level may compete, but acknowledge that the challenge event is written to the EMT level and that they will be scored against the same standards as any other participant. No team will be able to ‘borrow’ a team member from another team without the consent of the BLS Chair, or designee. Each individual of a competing team must be a member of the association and be individually registered for the conference and BLS challenge event.

One (1) alternate team member may be listed on the application, but only three (3) members will be allowed to compete in an individual scenario. Alternates will be required to remain with their team for the duration of the challenge event. Any wandering of team members may disqualify them from participation. Use of the alternate member will be at the discretion of the BLS Chair, or designee. If granted, substitutions must be made prior to the start of the scenario. No substitutions will be allowed in a scenario once time has begun.

All team captains, or their appointees, will meet with the challenge officials prior to the challenge, at times & locations announced at the annual conference. Team captains, or their representative, are required to attend this meeting.



# International Rescue & Emergency Care Association

PO Box 431000, Minneapolis, MN 55443

---

## Rule 3 - Equipment

Each team must provide its own equipment, unless noted, and is expected to utilize said equipment in a manner consistent with its designed use, and in accordance with the requisite textbooks. Certain scenarios may call for equipment that may not be carried by all responders, and if it is expected of teams to utilize such equipment – it will be provided for all competitors to use during that individual scenario. Some equipment may be difficult to transport or produce, and can be provided upon request. Such request must be made at least 30 days prior to Monday of the annual conference. A list of recommended equipment can be found in Section III of this document.

Gloves must be worn for each scenario, and need to be verbally “changed” between each simulated patient contact.

Simulated items may be utilized, given that they follow and abide by the following criteria/conditions:

- An item, not reasonably expected of the competitor to carry with them at all times, may be substituted by a similar looking item and be used properly, in accordance with the requisite textbooks.
- The item must be physically present, as verbalization of use is not sufficient to earn specific points for that particular skill.
- The Chief Judge, BLS Challenge Chair, or designee will have final say as to whether points are awarded for the use of a simulated item.

Any invasive skills, such as airway adjunct or management device insertion, may be verbalized without penalty to the competing team so long as the skill is verbalized in accordance with the requisite textbook(s).

## Rule 4 – Required Textbook(s)

All score sheets and scenarios will be based on the following texts:

- Brady’s Emergency Care, 13<sup>th</sup> Edition

Any requested addition of a publication will be discussed and approved at the annual winter board meeting, and published to the IRECA website, via this document, within a week following the completion of the annual winter board meeting.

## Rule 5 – Challenge Format

Each team will be judged on three (3) separate scenarios. Scenarios will be designed to cover a variety of different situations that providers might encounter in their day-to-day activities as a pre-hospital care provider. All teams will also take an examination, with exams being scored by the BLS Chair, or designee. Questions will be based wholly on the requisite textbooks, defined in this document.

The BLS Challenge will consist of two (2) divisions:

- Youth Division, which will consist of any entrant who is under 19 years of age on or after the day of the BLS Challenge.
- Adult Division, which will consist of entrants older than 19 years of age on or after the day of the BLS Challenge.

## Rule 6 – Judges

Each team is required to furnish **two (2) judges** for the BLS Challenge, and any team who does not furnish a judge will be penalized at least 10% of their overall score, at the discretion of the Challenge Chair, or designee. All judges are required to attend a 2.5-hour clinic held the morning of the BLS Challenge. Additionally, all judges are required to attend the Judges/Captains meeting the evening prior to challenge. Meeting times will be announced at the beginning of the Annual IRECA Conference. Judges will be assigned to a scenario at the discretion of the BLS Challenge Chair, or designee.

All judges must possess Basic Life Support certification & credentials prior to being allowed to judge. Basic Life Support credentials include, but are not limited to EMR or EMT level certification. The BLS Challenge Committee reserves the right to request presentation of a prospective judge’s credentials, prior to that individual serving as a BLS Challenge judge or official.



# International Rescue & Emergency Care Association

PO Box 431000, Minneapolis, MN 55443

---

## **Rule 7 – Start of challenge**

The challenge will start at the time designated and ALL teams shall be in their allocated positions, with their equipment, at the designated time. No equipment or emergency care kits are to be opened prior to the start of the challenge. All equipment must be put away after the completion of each scenario and before the start of the next scenario. Teams will stay in their assigned positions, move, or have other assignments as deemed necessary by the challenge officials. The judges, following signal from the Chief Judge, will hand the scenario to the team Captain signaling the start of each scenario. Time starts when the Judge gives the scenario to the team Captain.

Textbooks, pocket guides or cards, forms, or other materials that provide triage or treatment priorities and/or treatment sequences, including triage tags, will not be allowed in the competition space. Use of such items during the challenge may result in a penalty up to, or including, disqualification from the remainder of the challenge event.

## **Rule 8 – Immediate Action**

Given that the first minutes of patient contact are arguably the most important, certain points for skills will only be able to be earned within the first minutes of a scenario. At the end of this time period, as designated by the Chief Judge in conjunction with the BLS Challenge Chair, a verbal command such as “End of Immediate Action” will be announced, and judges will turn that page – such that no points from that section can be earned following the announcement.

## **Rule 9 – Time limit & Scenario completion**

A maximum time limit will be set for each scenario. Near the end of the allotted time, a few-minutes-prior warning will be announced. Certain scenarios may require a patient hand-off report, which might also serve as forewarning to teams that the scenario time limit is near. At the end of the allotted time, a verbal command such as “Time’s Up” will be announced – teams are to cease their scenario-related activities, pack up their equipment, and prepare to be escorted to the next station. Points will be assessed based on completed actions, and any line-item skills not completed may result in further penalty, based on the individual scenario and at the discretion of the BLS Challenge Committee.

After the end of the allotted time, judges will confer with each other to review and tally points on the scoring sheets. Both judges’ scoring sheets will then be delivered to the Chief Judge.

## **Rule 10 – Disputes, Appeals, & Tie-Break Procedures**

Questions regarding simulated equipment or patient care will be referred to the Chief Judge for decision during the challenge event. If their decision is appealed, the BLS Challenge Committee will hear the appeal – and the committee will render a final decision on the matter within 24 hours of filing the appeal.

In the event of a tie, the Challenge Chair, in conjunction with the BLS Challenge Committee, will meet and consider a number of factors (all being equal) including, but not limited to, whether or not a team had successfully completed the scenario prior to the end of the allotted time or not.

## **Rule 11 – Victims**

The host committee will provide victims. They will meet with the challenge officials and judges at a designated time prior to the starting time for the challenge. Every attempt to arrange extra victims will be made. Victims may or may not have casualty simulation. At a minimum, injuries will be indicated by colored dots.

## **Rule 12 – Scoring reports**

Scoring reports (usually containing the scoring sheets) will be forwarded to the team captain within thirty (30) days following the challenge.



# International Rescue & Emergency Care Association

PO Box 431000, Minneapolis, MN 55443

---

## **Rule 13 – Spectators**

While the BLS Challenge welcomes spectators to the challenge event, spectators must remain clear of the working areas, unless giving explicit permission by the BLS Challenge Chair, or designee. Spectators are forbidden from communicating with competing teams for the duration of the challenge event, including between stations. Failure to abide by this rule may result in a penalty to the competing team and/or dismissal of the spectator from the challenge event, at the discretion of the BLS Chair, or designee.

## **Rule 14 – Team Conduct**

Competing teams will not be allowed to communicate with other competing teams for the duration of the challenge event. At no point during the challenge event will any competing individual be allowed to use cellular or electronic devices such as cellular phones, tablets, or watches, unless approved by the Challenge Chair, or designee. Conferring with other teams outside of the challenge area will be subject to investigation.

## **Section III – Suggested BLS Equipment List**

Each team member must have the following personal equipment:

- a) Boots or work shoes
- b) Clothing that offers protection to the body, arms & legs (**long sleeves are required**)
- c) Helmet & eye protection
- d) Shears, Penlight
- e) Flashlight

Emergency Care Kit supplies (recommended):

- a) Oxygen/Airway Management Supplies
  - a. **O<sub>2</sub> tank/cylinder is NOT required**
  - b. Adult Bag-valve Mask (other sizes are optional)
  - c. Oropharyngeal and/or Nasopharyngeal airway adjuncts (various sizes)
  - d. Adult Non-Rebreather mask (other sizes are optional)
  - e. Adult Nasal Cannula (other sizes are optional)
  - f. Portable Suction device
- b) Non-latex gloves, and related universal precautions
- c) Obstetrical kit
- d) Various sizes of splints for Upper/Lower Extremities
- e) Traction Splint with associated accessories
- f) Cervical Collars (various sizes) & head immobilizers for use with backboard
- g) Long backboard (can be provided for teams if prior notice given – see rule 3)
- h) Triangular bandages, large trauma dressings, sterile gauze pads, roller bandages
- i) Blood pressure cuff (sphygmomanometer), stethoscope, pulse oximeter device
- j) Pillows & Blankets (ideally two of each)
- k) Rolls of tape of varying lengths
- l) Sterile burn sheet
- m) Large Plastic Garbage Bag
- n) Clipboard, Paper, Writing utensil

The following items may be simulated (as in, there must be a facsimile of reasonable size & shape of the original item). Verbalizing an intervention on this list is not sufficient to earn points for the individual line-item skill.

- a) Occlusive dressing
- b) Cool & hot packs
- c) Water or saline for irrigation

The following items will be provided by the competition, if they are intended for use during a scenario:

- d) Pneumatic Anti-Shock Garment (PASG)
- e) Glucometer
- f) AED with appropriate pads



# International Rescue & Emergency Care Association

PO Box 431000, Minneapolis, MN 55443

---

**Signed & Approved for 2022 Basic Life Support Challenge**

*Alex Villarreal, Jr*

*3/26/23*

---

*Alex Villarreal, Jr, President  
International Rescue & Emergency Care Association*

---

*Date*

*Gary Leafblad*

*3/26/23*

---

*Gary Leafblad, Conference Chair  
International Rescue & Emergency Care Association*

---

*Date*

*Erwin Villar*

*3/26/23*

---

*Erwin Villar, Basic Life Support Challenge Chair  
International Rescue & Emergency Care Association*

---

*Date*