



Blues Society of Western PA

21st Annual Blues Challenge

Saturday, April 18, 2026

Coraopolis VFW | 412 Mulberry St | Coraopolis, PA 15108

The Blues Society of Western Pennsylvania has the pleasure to announce that the **19th Annual Blues Challenge** will be held on **Saturday, April 18** at The Coraopolis VFW, 412 Mulberry Street, Coraopolis, PA 15108.

We are currently accepting applications for at least 10 acts: 5 bands and 5 solo/duo.

The **2026 Blues Challenge** will be a one-day event. There will be a category for bands and a category for solo/duo acts. There will be one winning band entry and one winning solo/duo entry as determined by a panel of judges. The winners of the competition will represent the BSWPA at the **2027 International Blues Challenge** in Memphis, TN the following January.

Why enter the Blues Challenge? The gain that you will realize with your entry will be that your band will get to show its best 20 minutes of work. The benefits that each band will realize are:

- Using your creative talents to develop original material
- Competing with fellow musicians in your field
- Exposure to a new, broader fan base through the competition
- The winning band and solo/duo will have a slot in the 2026 International Blues Competition in Memphis, TN
- The possibility of attracting national, regional and local attention
- Cash prizes awarded on day of finals competition to winning solo/duo and band

The application and payment should be submitted and **returned by February 28, 2026 to secure your place on the competition roster.** Applications will be taken on a first-come, first-served basis until 10 slots are filled. A wait list will be compiled after the first ten slots are filled. On-line form submission date or postmark will be used to determine order applications. The BSWPA reserves the right to reject an application if necessary.

Please submit your application and fee of \$50 to either of the following:

- 1. Electronically (preferred) via the BSWPA website at www.bswpa.org**
- 2. Via check to BSWPA, 79 Linmar Homes, Aliquippa, PA 15001**

After receiving your application, the BSWPA liaison will be your contact throughout the event process. It is our intention to improve and enhance our communication with the applicants. Each applicant will receive advance notification of the competition's rules and judging criteria that is mandated by the International Blues Foundation in Memphis, Tennessee (www.blues.org). If you have questions or concerns, please contact the **event liaison, Jonnye Weber at 724-888-6183 or webmaster@bswpa.org.**

We sincerely hope that you **accept this challenge** as a worthwhile opportunity and join us for a spectacular event.

Sincerely,

Jonnye Weber, BSWPA President, 724-888-6183, webmaster@bswpa.org



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21st Annual Blues Challenge

Saturday, April 18, 2026

Coraopolis VFW | 412 Mulberry St | Coraopolis, PA 15108

2026 Blues Challenge Application

Application Deadline: February 28, 2026

Please use our on-line application and payment option available from our website at www.bswpa.org. If you do not have internet access, the following form can be filled out and mailed with your payment.

Please Note: PLEASE REGISTER EARLY. Applications will be taken until those slots are filled. Slots will fill quickly! Excess applicants will be placed on a waiting list and notified when a slot opens in the order placed on the wait list. Your \$50 deposit will be held until the event and will be returned if you remain on the wait list.

☐ Band ☐ Solo/Duo		
Act name:		
Contact person:		
Phone:	Best time to reach:	
Address:	State:	Zip:
Email:		
Act Website:		
Act members:	<u>Name</u>	<u>Instrument</u>

MAIL APPLICATION AND \$50 ENTRY FEE TO:

BSWPA Blues Challenge, 79 Linmar Homes, Aliquippa, PA 15001; webmaster@bswpa.org

Payments can also be made via **Credit Card** on our Square Store, bswpa.square.site

NEED MORE INFORMATION??

Contact Jonnye Weber, BSWPA President 724-888-6183 webmaster@bswpa.org



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General Rules and Requirements

- Please focus preparations on the following criteria that has been established by the Blues Foundation in Memphis, TN: originality, vocal, blues content, stage presence and instrumental talent.
- A short biography of your act and a high-resolution photo must be submitted by **March 15, 2026** for the competition program. This can be submitted with your entry or emailed to webmaster@bswpa.org. **Points may be deducted from your final performance score if this information is not submitted in a timely manner.**
- Each entry should be there two hours before their starting time. Lineups can change, be there early and be prepared to change positions if needed.
- A backline will be provided. You will have only ten minutes to get on stage after the prior band is done. (Bass amp, guitar amp, drum kit and microphones). If you desire, you may bring your own microphone, but set-up time limits are still in effect.
- If you wish to bring any special equipment not included with the standard backline set up, such as a harp amp, please contact the band liaison prior to the event.
- Each entry will check in with stage manager upon arrival.
- The stage manager will direct you to start getting ready when the band prior to your slot is on stage.
- There is a **firm** twenty minute time limit for your set. Point **deductions** will be made if you exceed twenty minutes. An entry is permitted to finish their set earlier than the twenty minute time limit without point penalty.
- When done with your set, each band will be directed to leave the stage quickly.
- A panel of judges will decide the overall winner. These judges are local and regional experts in the music industry and are chosen based on their experience, integrity, and ability to be impartial.
- A copy of each completed judging sheet will be forwarded to you after the competition (minus the judge's names) for you to assess your performance.
- The band entry and solo/duo entry will be announced and cash prizes will be awarded that evening following the event. The Jim Weber Memorial Guitar Award will be also presented that evening.
- Prizes are as follows: Band, \$1000 plus trophy; solo/duo, \$500 plus trophy, Jim Weber Memorial Guitarist, \$100 plus trophy. Both the band and solo/duo acts will also be presented with a gift certificate for studio time at studio(s) to be announced.
- You will be given your position in the competition one week prior to the event. Positions are determined at random.
- There will be a one hour break for dinner. Reasonably priced food and drinks will be available for purchase throughout the day.
- You will be required to submit a play list one week prior to the competition. Please list originals and covers. Original songs are encouraged.
- Band members will be given passes when they arrive for entry. All guests (friends and family members) that accompany the band will receive the BSWPA member discount for entry to show.
- Attached is a copy of the scoring sheet that will be used. This sheet follows the criteria that the Blues Foundation uses annually in their International Blues Challenge.
- **Any questions, contact Jonnye Weber, BSWPA President at 724-888-6183 or webmaster@bswpa.org**

🎸 BSWPA 🎸 79 Linmar Homes, Aliquippa, PA 15001 🎸 www.bswpa.org 🎸 724-888-6183 🎸



**BLUES CHALLENGE
OFFICIAL SCORE SHEET**
Blues Society of Western Pennsylvania
SAMPLE



Name of Act		☐ Solo/Duo ☐ Band
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Instructions: The categories are ranked in order of importance, from top to bottom. Score each category by circling the appropriate number. If you wish to change a score, please mark an "X" through your original score, initial it, and circle your new score. You must enter a score in each category, or else the act will have no chance to advance.

- 1 – 3: Typical of a beginning blues act
4 – 5: Typical of a local weekend blues act
6 – 7: Typical of an advanced local act but not yet ready to headline at a major blues club
8 – 9: Typical of the quality of blues artists who headline at major clubs
10: Typical of those who play the main stage at major festivals such as Chicago or Wheeling

Category	Scores										Total	
Blues Content	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	x4	
Instrument Talent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	x3	
Vocal Talent	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	x3	
Originality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	x2	
Stage Presence	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	x2	
Total Score											140	

General Comments	<i>Provide comments if you have advice that would be helpful to the act. These comments will be provided to the artists, so please be professional.</i>

Judge's Name			
Judge's Signature		Date	
<i>I have judged the act fairly. I have no conflict of interest in judging this act.</i>			



**BLUES CHALLENGE
JIM WEBER MEMORIAL
BEST GUITARIST AWARD**
Blues Society of Western Pennsylvania
SAMPLE



Name of Act	
Guitarist	

Instructions: All categories are equally weighted to provide an overall impression of the guitarist(s) from each act. Please keep the definitions listed below in mind when making your decisions. Score each category by circling the appropriate number. If you wish to change a score, please mark an "X" through your original score, initial it, and circle your new score.

Category	Description	Poor << Score >> Excellent					Total
Technique	Clarity, articulation, fingering, dynamics, mastering of instrument	1	2	3	4	5	
Originality	Uniqueness of playing style and execution, distinctive, memorable	1	2	3	4	5	
Musicianship	Rhythm, timing, tone production and projection	1	2	3	4	5	
Showmanship	Playing with life and feeling, stage presence	1	2	3	4	5	
Total							

General Comments	<i>Provide comments if you have advice that would be helpful to the guitarist. These comments will be provided to the artists, so please be professional.</i>

Judge's Name			
Judge's Signature		Date	
<i>I have judged the act fairly. I have no conflict of interest in judging this act.</i>			