

Open Judging

First, one must realize that just as all the possible permutations and rankings of flaws are impossible to define for IPMS Judging, it's similarly impossible to do for Open judging. All we can do is set out guidelines. From those guidelines the judges will be expected to fairly use their judgment, common sense, and experience when applying the guidelines to a model. While we aren't trying to narrow a field down to the top three entries, the judges will still be looking for the same types of flaws, as well as the good work done in trying to determine whether to award Gold, Silver, Bronze or nothing.

We'd suggest that like IPMS Judging, judges make a "first cut". That is, to view the models from a casual viewing distance (2-3 feet) to see if anything is apparently wrong. Can you, standing over the model, see visible seams? Glue blobs? Heavy orange peel? Clear parts fogged? Alignment issue? If so, the model hasn't made the "first cut" and in a typical 1-2-3 contest, it wouldn't likely be looked at further as there are likely to be at least 3 models of higher quality. Likewise, it hasn't made the cut for a bronze medal. This is not to say that after that first cut, closer inspection of a model that "made" the cut doesn't reveal a flaw or flaws that when taken alone or together could or should take the model out of contention for an award.

As a final note, the following guidelines were written from an aircraft modeler's point of view. The concepts however should carry over equitably to other genres. Regardless of genre or class, a model's parts must be removed from sprues, cleaned up, assembled cleanly with seams filled and detail restored, painted and decaled well, and weathered appropriately and consistently. We trust that judges in other genres can take the examples outlined below and translate them into terms that fit their particular genre.

BRONZE LEVEL

A Bronze Medal reflects the modeler's avoidance of any significant errors on the model. The model has no glaring flaws in finish or construction as seen from a casual viewing distance. At closer range a number of minor flaws may be noticeable but are not concentrated in one area or indicate a lack of basic skills (for example, one decal, but not all, may be silvered). This level of quality indicates the modeler is doing the right things but needs to be more consistent in execution. Basic craftsmanship is good, but realism or attention to details may be lacking. Examples of flaws that would not drop a model from contention for a bronze might be:

- Slight misalignment of the landing gear and or gear doors
- Wings slightly out of level
- Slight misalignment of the tail
 - Note though that multiple misalignments should preclude a bronze score for construction as it should be clear that proper care wasn't taken during construction.
- Slight "orange peel" in the paint finish
- Occasional decal silvering
- Inconsistent detail repair (scribing, rivets, contours) following seam treatments

In general, the model will demonstrate that the modeler has a solid grasp of the basics. Seams are taken care of, the model is pretty well aligned, paint work is good but not perfect, decals are good but not perfect, and weathering (if present) may be less than well rendered. This model may or may not have contended for a third place in a contest, but still demonstrates that the modeler understands and can execute the basics.

SILVER LEVEL

A Silver Medal reflects a modeler exhibiting very few minor errors in construction, and a better grasp of finishing techniques. This applies to out of the box kits as well as a high level of accomplishment with adding details not included with the kit. The model has a higher level of craftsmanship in all areas: very few flaws, finishes are realistic, basic techniques have been used to improve appearance (exposed edges are realistically thinned, gun barrels or exhaust stacks are drilled out, etc.).

- Misalignments should not be apparent to the naked eye (if a measuring aid is required to demonstrate or prove misalignment, that element is done well enough to qualify for Silver)
- Paint finish should be uniform with only very minor irregularities around typical trouble spots such as wing roots or raised detail
- Decals should be nearly perfect, with virtually no silvering and they should conform uniformly to both raised and recessed detail
- Detail repairs such as re-scribing following major construction should be consistent and similar to kit detail
- Weathering, if present, should be consistent and in scale
- Detailing should be consistent. If the cockpit is detailed, other areas such as wheel wells should be detailed
- Gun barrels should be drilled out
- Aftermarket detailing should be cleanly incorporated and in scale

A silver medal model is one that most likely would have been a contender for a placing in a crowded, high-quality category in a typical contest. It demonstrates that not only has the modeler mastered the basics, but he has command of more advanced techniques as well.

GOLD LEVEL

A Gold Medal represents an exceptional level of craftsmanship - practically no flaws or omissions of basic techniques should be present, and the finish should be near to perfect. Current best practices for assembly and finish are used throughout and are executed well. An out-of-the-box model can receive a Gold award, but it must exhibit the highest standards. Gold recognizes that the modeler has made a model with almost "zero-defects".

- Misalignments should be nearly impossible to measure
- Paint finish should be uniform and realistic
- Decals should appear painted on with clear film not apparent. No silvering should be present, and weathering should be applied to give markings the same worn appearance as the rest of the model
- Detail repairs following major construction should be imperceptible

- Weathering should appear completely natural, in scale and be consistent
- Aftermarket or scratch-built detailing must be cleanly incorporated and in scale
- A gold medal model is close to perfect. A small error should not eliminate a model from a gold medal, but two might. In many cases a Gold medal model will demand your attention and draw you to it; and it may be equal parts artistry and technical achievement.

Scoring

We have broken scoring into three areas, construction, finish, and intangibles. Please note the tables to follow are not hard, fast RULES. They are meant as guidelines to aid the judges in applying their judgment and common sense. Using alignment as an example, our intent is that a slightly skewed wheel will not knock an otherwise magnificent model out of a Gold award. We also wouldn't want an out of alignment tail plane to knock a model out of Bronze. But what about a tail plane, a wing and a gear leg? That probably indicates a modeler who either hasn't mastered or doesn't fully understand the "basics", and the model should be removed from consideration for a medal. Also, constructive feedback is a very important part of what we are trying to achieve. Please take a few moments while judging each model to indicate where a modeler might improve his efforts. We will be making the scoring sheets available to the modelers, so while the comments need to be honest, they also need to be constructive and fair.

Construction: 1-5 points

This is where both basic and advanced construction techniques are evaluated.

- 1 pt - If the model made it to the table and is assembled, it gets 1 pt.
- 2 pts - Seams, glue marks, alignments issues visible from a viewing distance of 2-3 ft (casual viewing distance)
- 3 pts - Faint seams, rare glue spot, slight alignment issue visible on close inspection. Lost detail either not restored, or not well restored. Ejector pins/punch out marks may be present on close inspection
- 4 pts - Seams, glue only visible with aid of penlight. Alignment issue must be measured to verify. Lost detail must be restored but may not be perfect. No ejector pins or the like visible. Level of detailing should be consistent through the model (i.e., wheel wells and cockpit).
- 5 pts - Near perfect build.

Finish: 1-5 points

This is where paint, decals, and weathering would be considered.

- 1 pt - Like construction, if the model has paint/decals/stickers on it, it gets 1 pt.
- 2 pts - Issues with paint, decals, weathering are visible from a casual viewing distance of 2-3 feet.
- 3 pts - Issues become visible on close inspection. Gloss finish may be slightly orange peeled. Rough texture may be present in trouble spots like wing roots. Camo transitions may be inconsistent or may show build up on masking edges. Occasional decal silvering may be present, or decals may not have settled into detail. Weathering, if attempted may not be consistent.
- 4 pts - Paint should be a consistent finish, with trouble spots only visible with a pen light. Camo transitions should be consistent, with no paint build up at masked edges. Gloss finishes should

be smooth. Decal silvering should only be apparent with a pen light. Decals should conform well to all surface detail. Weathering should be consistent and realistic.

- 5 pts - Near perfect finish.

Intangibles

This is perhaps both the most difficult and easiest point to explain. This is where we trust the judgment of the judges the most. The judges can award a point (or partial point) and reward extra effort for tackling what they know to be a difficult kit, or for adding a significant amount of extra detail, or for making significant corrections to an inaccurate kit. It is also where they can add a bit for presentation (i.e., a very nicely weathered AFV on a realistic base), or where they can reward an effort, they think exhibits “something special”. As noted, this is a point that MAY be added for an intangible that the judge feels is worthy of note. If a judge doesn’t see anything in a model that he, as a modeler and a judge feels warrants the extra point, it simply isn’t awarded.

Scoring Breakdown

Scoring Item	Points available
Construction	1 – 5
Finish	1 – 5
Intangible	1
Total Available	11

Award levels
Gold 10-11 points
Silver 8.5 – 9.99 points
Bronze 7.25 – 8.99 points
No award – 7.24 and down

An important consideration here is “partial points”. As can be seen, generally speaking, 5 pts in either construction or finish roughly equates to Gold, 4 pts to Silver, and 3 points to bronze. However, you may see a flaw that while worth noting, you don’t think should drop a model a full medal value. For that reason, we encourage the use of partial points. A very slightly visible seam, or just a hint of decal silvering shouldn’t equal a full 5-point score even on a really nice model, but it may also not mean knocking the score all the way down to 4 points. So maybe you score it at 4.75, or 4.8, or if it’s a really slight flaw, maybe even a 4.9 or 4.95.

Likewise, you may see a model that is truly spectacular, has been built from a really tough kit, and is on a nice base, so you give it the full intangible point. But a few models down, there’s a really nice OOB model that is sitting on a nice base. You think it deserves something for the effort on the base, but not the full point. So you give it a quarter point. An important factor with the intangible point is that it can’t do more than raise a model one level. It can take a “strong” silver and make it a gold, or a “strong” bronze and make it a silver, but it can’t take a bronze and make it a gold, and it can’t even take a “weak” silver and make it a gold.