

## Your Progress in Photography Hinges on Continual Learning



Are you contemplating entering photography competitions but feeling uncertain? You're not alone. The prospect of showcasing your work alongside talented photographers can be intimidating. However, competitions offer far more than the thrill of winning; they serve as significant stepping stones in your artistic journey.

Entering competitions can elevate your skills, inspire you to push creative boundaries, and connect with a support network of fellow enthusiasts.

## Your Progress in Photography Hinges on Continual Learning

1. **Track Your Progress:** Think of competitions as checkpoints in your photographic adventure. By regularly entering photo competitions, you'll gain valuable insights into your skill development over time. Think of these competitions as a means to assess your progress and compare your work to that of your peers in a supportive environment.

2. **Learn from the Community:**

Remember, becoming an accomplished photographer is a marathon, not a sprint. Competitions are not about instant gratification or winning at all costs. They're about steady and incremental growth. With each competition you enter, you'll have the opportunity to refine your technical abilities, explore new creative avenues, and push your boundaries as an artist.

3. **Set Achievable Goals:**

Instead of aiming for the top prize right away, why not challenge yourself to have one or more of your images scored in the top 30% of the competition? As you gain experience and confidence, you can gradually raise the bar.

#### **4. Receive Valuable Feedback:**

Our zone competitions offer a unique opportunity for novice photographers to receive constructive feedback from experienced CAPA Certified Judges as well as supportive suggestions you receive from your fellow photographers and camera club members. This collaborative environment allows you to gain diverse perspectives on your work, helping you to refine your skills and enhance your artistic vision. The valuable feedback you receive will help you grow from a novice (beginner) photographer, to intermediate and advance and even master photographer.

#### **5. Push Your Creative Boundaries:**

Competitions are your canvas for creative experimentation. Each competition presents a unique opportunity to:

- Push beyond your comfort level
- Explore unfamiliar techniques
- Capture subject you've never attempted before
- Develop your distinctive photographic style

While competitions spark creativity, structured education can refine it. Consider enriching your competition experience with:

- Photography courses that deepen your technical knowledge
- Hands-on workshops led by experienced professional photographers
- Specialized seminars focusing on specific genres or techniques

This powerful combination of competitive challenges and formal instruction creates a robust framework for your artistic growth.

## **Elevate Your Photographic Expertise**

In the world of photography, the most rewarding competition is one you wage with yourself. Our competitions provide a structured, supportive environment that serves as a catalyst for your personal growth journey.

Whether you're aiming to refine your technical skills, explore new genres, or simply gain confidence in sharing your work.

## Celebrating Your Achievements

We believe in celebrating your progress and accomplishments. Here's how we recognize outstanding work in our competitions:

### Zone Competition Awards

Our zone competitions are designed to provide a supportive environment for photographers at all levels, especially those new to competitions. Awards include:

- **Medals:** Awarded to the three highest scoring individual images
- **Honourable Mentions:** Awarded to 8% to 10% of the highest scoring individual images

To enhance fairness and broaden participation in our zone competitions, we've implemented a tiered skill-level model that groups photographers into three skill levels: novice, intermediate, and advanced.

A photographer's skill-level is based on their CAPA award history, which helps prevent top performers from dominating across all categories. Each tier has its own set of awards, ensuring participants to compete against others of similar experience.

For all zone competitions, novice-level entrants will receive constructive feedback on each of their submitted images from at least one judge.

### National Competition Awards

For our national competitions, we recognize both consistent performance and individual excellence:

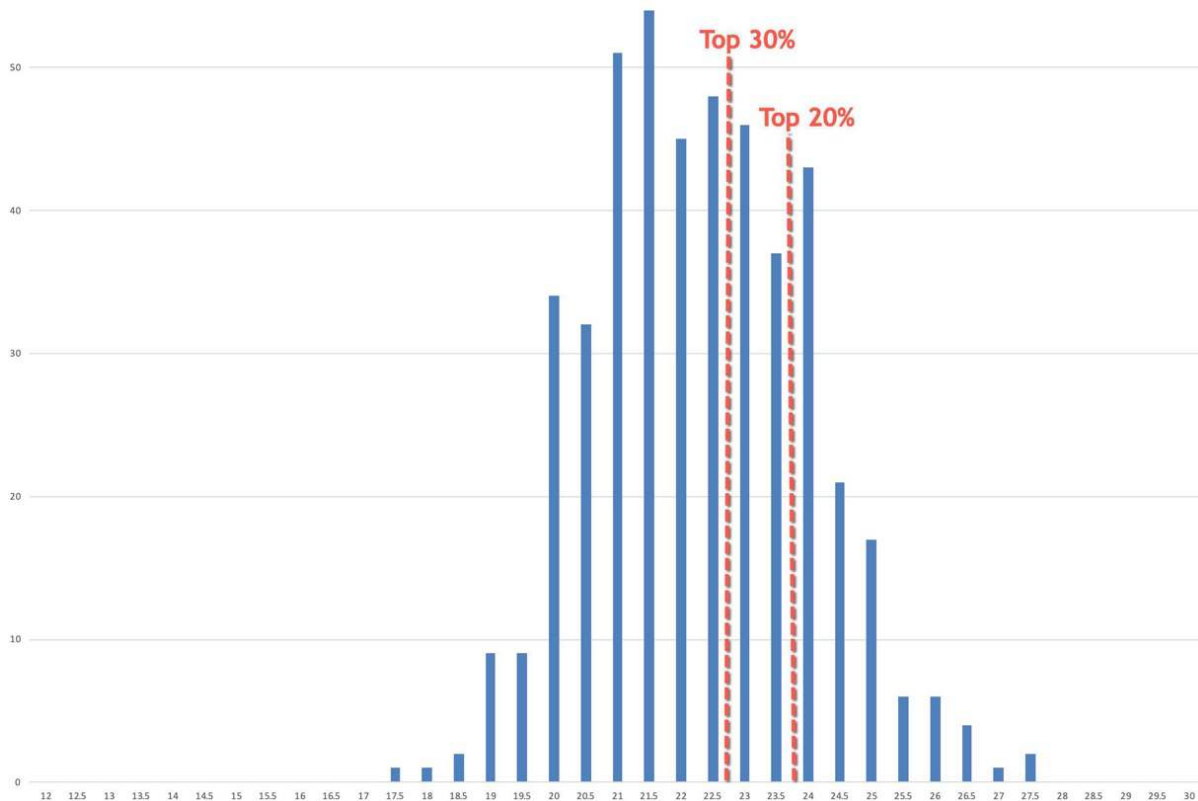
- **Medals:** Awarded based on the three highest cumulative scores
- **Merit Awards:** Awarded to the three highest scoring individual images
- **Honourable Mentions:** Awarded to 8% to 10% of the highest cumulative scores

These award structures ensure that exceptional work receives appropriate recognition while maintaining our competition standards.

## A New Way to Measure Your Success

Starting October 1, 2024, we're introducing an enhanced feature within all our competition reports. This enhancement will include a distribution chart showing the top 20% and 30% thresholds in each competition. Achieving an individual image scores in the top 20% is a significant accomplishment – it means your work is of superior quality and in contention for awards. Use this knowledge to set meaningful goals and celebrate your progress.

### Competition - Distribution - Distribution des pointages



*Example of an updated competition report's distribution chart with 20% and 30% thresholds.*

## Embrace Your Growth in Photography

As you embark on your photographic journey, remember that entering competitions offer far more than accolades. Each competition offers a unique opportunity to challenge yourself.

Select a competition that aligns with your skill level or interest, prepare your best work, and submit them with confidence. Each competition challenges you to refine your technical skills, explore new creative directions, and view your work through fresh eyes.

Remember, the true success in your photographic journey lies in your artistic growth and the connection you'll forge within the photographic community. Your journey is just beginning – embrace it with open eyes and an eager spirit.

If you have any questions about our competitions, please email me at [competitions@capacanada.ca](mailto:competitions@capacanada.ca).

Sheldon Boles – FCAPA  
CAPA Director of Competitions