

Introducing a New Critique Class and Abolition of the Preliminary Class

(from September 2020)

Background

The club retains a healthy membership although there may be early signs of 'stalling'. The club continues to cater well for a range of photographic interests although perhaps we could improve a little in moving towards a greater emphasis on critiquing rather than scoring in a way that would not distract from our traditional league scoring system. This is a subject for discussion in other camera club arenas.

We have a number of loyal members who tend to dip in and out of competitions, particularly in Preliminary Class. Indeed, some have withdrawn altogether from all classes but continue to attend meetings.

It is not uncommon for members to respect Judge's critiques but the scores become somewhat artificial in Preliminary Class when the total number of images is very small.

Not counting any new members that may join the club over the coming months there are potentially very small Preliminary Classes this year. It should be noted that this has fluctuated a lot over the years and there is no suggestion that we should go to a two-class system, the intent is to make the system more flexible. Following promotions and two members leaving there are 5 or 6 left in Preliminary which is healthy, however only 2 of those members entered all the competitions last year, and some entered just 1 or 2 print / PDI competitions. This means that for each competition there could be just a handful of prints/PDI entered. Furthermore, one faithful and productive Preliminary member is having a year off from entering both leagues for personal reasons. There has also been feedback that it can be daunting for some new members to immediately enter a competitive system, and some new members prefer not to enter a full complement of images.

Proposal in Brief

The proposal is that the Preliminary Class should be abolished and replaced with a new class called 'Critique Class' - there is a precedent for this in at least one other club. Work submitted to the Critique class will be critiqued by the judge on normal competition evenings but scores will not be recorded in a league table. Whether or not a score or a 'Judge's favourite' is awarded is for general discussion over the next year.

Two clear routes are proposed for members wishing to work towards transition to the competitive Standard and Advanced classes taking a minimum of 1 year and a maximum of 2 years (subject to criteria fulfilment).

It is also proposed that any member of the club may choose to spend a season in the Critique class instead of their Standard or Advanced league class whilst retaining their league class status, this allows for 'time off' or submitting fewer images without being penalised in the league system.

Detail

Replacement of the current Preliminary Class for 2020/21 season

Initially, all members of the Preliminary Class (unless they have already fulfilled the criteria below) will be placed in the Critique class in September 2020 as will any new members of the club whose work is not judged to be suitable for Standard Class (this mirrors current practice).

There will be two ways to move from the Critique class to the competitive Standard Class;

- a) After 1 year at the recommendation of the sub-committee (in line with the current review procedure)
- b) By automatic transition for members who have entered pictures in every league competition for at least 2 of the preceding 3 competition years. We propose that this would be retrospective with the first qualifying season being 2018-19

Critique Class open to all club members

Any club member in Standard or Advanced class may choose to enter the Critique Class instead of their Standard or Advanced class league for a whole competition year and in doing so will not lose their current Standard or Advanced class status.

At the beginning of each competition season any members of the Standard or Advanced Class wishing to enter the Critique Class for that competition season must notify the Print or Digital secretary as appropriate. In the absence of any such notification members will remain in their competitive league (Standard or Advanced) for that competition season.

New members joining the club who are able to provide examples of work may be assessed for possible direct entry to the Standard or Advanced Class in line with current practice. A new member whose work does not meet the criteria for direct entry to Standard or Advanced class will be allocated to the Critique Class. Any new member accorded Standard or Advanced class status may elect to join the Critique class and may continue to do so without prejudice to the league class status awarded.

There will be separate Critique Classes for Prints and PDIs, a member may, for example, be in Critique Class Prints and Standard Class PDIs in the same year.

Members may enter up to 2 pictures per evening in line with current practice. A picture cannot be submitted for critiquing more than twice.

Non-League competitions

All non-league competitions such as Monochrome, Portrait, Nature, Master and the Annual Exhibition would remain as they are now and open to all members of the club including those in Critique Class.