

MKW CONTESTANT HANDBOOK



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Revised on:

Welcome

Missouri Kink Weekend exists to develop leaders, educators, and representatives within the leather and kink communities of Missouri. The contest is designed to uplift a wide range of identities, experiences, and expressions while honoring the traditions, values, and responsibilities of titleholding.

This handbook serves as the Contest Rules & Procedures Manual for Missouri Kink Weekend. It outlines eligibility, contest structure, judging categories, expectations, and logistics so that all contestants can prepare fully and compete with confidence.

Contestants are strongly encouraged to read and familiarize themselves with the Missouri Kink Weekend Code of Conduct and Contestant Handbook prior to applying and again before the contest weekend. Understanding expectations around consent, behavior, ethics, and representation is essential to participation.

Participation in the Missouri Kink Weekend Contest indicates understanding of and agreement with the contents of this handbook and all governing policies referenced herein.

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Section 1: Overview of Titles

Missouri Kink Weekend awards multiple titles that reflect the breadth of leather, kink, and adjacent communities. Each title is designed to uplift leadership, visibility, service, and representation while maintaining shared expectations of conduct, integrity, and accountability.

While each title emphasizes different forms of expression, all titleholders are expected to engage thoughtfully with their communities, represent Missouri Kink Weekend with care, and uphold the organization's values. MKW encourages contestants to choose the contest that most meaningfully represents them and the community they wish to serve, understanding that often not one title will fully represent the entirety of their identity. This does not keep them from being part of their communities or representing their title in those spaces.

Missouri Leather Ambassador

An inclusive leather title open to individuals who identify as part of the leather community in its many forms, including men, women, trans and gender nonconforming individuals, bootblacks, Sirs, boys, and others whose identities and practices fall within leather culture.

This title emphasizes leadership, service, visibility, and connection within and across leather and kink communities.

Missouri Fetish Ambassador

A title for individuals whose primary community focus centers on a specific fetish or fetish-based identity not otherwise represented by the other titles. This may include rubber or latex, leather-adjacent fetish expression, littles, bigs, gear-based or material fetishes, and sensory or body-focused fetishes, and roleplay. This list is not exhaustive.

The Missouri Fetish Ambassador title is intentionally broad and welcomes individuals whose fetish identity plays a meaningful role in their community engagement and self-expression.

Missouri Pet Ambassador

A title for individuals who identify as a part of the pet culture within the kink community. This title centers personal identity, voice, and leadership. This can include pets, critters, handlers, and other identities that fall within pet play.

Contestants are expected to demonstrate a strong sense of self, to be thoughtful and vocal about what matters to them, and to articulate a vision for how they hope to support, grow, or strengthen pet communities.

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Missouri Bear Ambassador

A title open to people of all genders who identify within the bear community. This title is meant to help bring bears together in community and support or create spaces to achieve that vision

Bear identity is understood as expansive and welcoming, rooted in body positivity, openness, joy, and community connection. There is no single way to be a bear, and this title celebrates that diversity. Bears, cubs, otters, wolves, mama bears, polar bears, admirers, and all are welcome to compete.

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Section 2: Eligibility and Contestant Expectations

Contestants must:

- Be at least 21 years of age
- Reside in Missouri or within 50 miles of the Missouri border and have no comparable state contest.
- Submit a complete application by the published deadline
- Provide a safe-for-work photograph for promotional use
- Provide a community reference that can speak to your ability and character (include organization membership or titles held if applicable).
- Pass a background check

There is a maximum of three contestants per category during Missouri Kink Weekend. Applicant priority will be given to those for whom this their first run in the category of its type (other contests included). The following criteria and points will be used based on information acquired within contestants applications. Point criteria will be used to fill any unused spots by first time contestants with remaining applicants or in the event of an abundance of applications. The top point earners will be the contestants for that category. Exceptions may be given at the Executive level if other categories do not fill their maximum (Bear/Pet can take each other's open spots and Leather/Fetish can take each other's open spots). Ties will be decided by the Advisory Board review of references and applications.

- 0-2 points: Have you attended previous leather/kink/bear events or contests? How recently?
- 0-2 points: Are you currently part of any local or state organizations or social groups? Have you held an office?
- 0-2 point: Have you previously volunteered at other leather/kink events or for your local organizations? How recently?
- 0-2 points: Have you taught, performed, fundraised, or presented at another event? Was it a larger sanctioned event, smaller local arrangement, has it been recent?

By applying, contestants acknowledge their understanding of and agreement with:

- This Contestant Handbook
- The Missouri Kink Weekend Code of Conduct
- The Accessibility Policy
- Other governing policies of Missouri Kink Weekend

Contestants may withdraw at any time. Advance notice is strongly encouraged to allow schedules, judging materials, and run-of-show documents to be updated.

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Section 3: Contest Weekend Overview

Friday Evening

- Contestant meeting and venue orientation
 - Number Draw
- Meet & Greet with judges and community
- Pop Questions (All Titles)
- Speeches for Missouri Bear Ambassador and Missouri Pet Ambassador

Saturday Morning

- Private Interviews for Missouri Leather Ambassador and Missouri Fetish Ambassador
- Fantasy Rehearsals for Missouri Bear Ambassador and Missouri Pet Ambassador

Saturday Afternoon

- Educational Presentations for Missouri Leather Ambassador and Missouri Fetish Ambassador
- Private Interviews for Missouri Bear Ambassador and Missouri Pet Ambassador

Saturday Evening (Main Contest)

- Speeches for Missouri Leather Ambassador and Missouri Fetish Ambassador
- Fantasies for Missouri Bear Ambassador and Missouri Pet Ambassador
- Presentation of winners

Sunday Morning

- Victory Brunch
- Winner and production team meeting, including:
 - Review of titleholder expectations
 - Logistics and support
 - How to Be a Titleholder class

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Section 4: Judging Structure and Scoring

The contest is judged across multiple categories for a total of 550 possible points.

Category	Points
Pop Question(s)	75
Private Interview	150
Speech	150
Education or Fantasy	100
Lifestyle / Presence	75
Total	550

Title-specific components:

- Missouri Leather Ambassador → Education
- Missouri Fetish Ambassador → Education
- Missouri Pet Ambassador → Fantasy
- Missouri Bear Ambassador → Fantasy

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Section 5: Judging Categories, Requirements, and Preparation Guidance

This section outlines what each judging category involves, what judges are evaluating, and how contestants can best prepare. While each category is scored separately, contestants should remember that judges are looking at the *whole person* across the weekend.

Pop Questions (All Titles - 75 Points)

What to Expect

Pop Questions take place on Friday evening and are asked live on stage. The number of questions will be determined once the final contestant roster is confirmed:

- If time allows, contestants will receive two questions: one more serious and one lighter or playful.
- If time is limited, contestants will receive one blended question designed to allow for both depth and personality.

Pop Questions are intentionally unrehearsed. They are meant to show how contestants think, react, and communicate in the moment.

What Judges are Evaluating

Judges are looking at more than the content of your answer. They are also paying attention to:

- How you engage the audience
- Your presence and confidence under pressure
- Your ability to communicate sincerity, humor, or thoughtfulness quickly

A strong Pop Question response can make people laugh, pull at their heartstrings, or get them invested in you with just a single answer.

Preparation Guidance

This is your chance to be yourself without a script. Be fun, goofy, sincere, serious, or reflective as the moment calls for it. You are not expected to have the “perfect” answer, and it is absolutely okay to pause before responding.

Audiences and judges respond to authenticity far more than polish. Trust yourself and let your personality come through.

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Private Interview (All Titles - 150 Points)

What to Expect

Private interviews last approximately 15 minutes, with the possibility of callbacks after all interviews are completed. Interviews are conducted in a private setting with the judging panel.

- Saturday morning: Missouri Leather Ambassador and Missouri Fetish Ambassador
- Saturday afternoon: Missouri Pet Ambassador and Missouri Bear Ambassador

What Judges are Evaluating

The interview allows judges to engage with you more deeply and may include discussion of:

- Your leadership style and values
- Your involvement in community and service
- Your understanding of the responsibilities of titleholding
- Your goals, vision, and readiness to represent Missouri Kink Weekend

Judges are not looking for rehearsed answers. They are looking for clarity, honesty, and self-awareness. Questions may come from material found in your application, social media, community presence, or discussions held during the contest weekend.

Preparation Guidance

Think about your “why.” Why this title, why now, and why you?

Preparation helps reduce nerves and build confidence, but authenticity matters more than perfection. It is okay to acknowledge areas where you are still learning or growing. Judges value thoughtfulness and self-reflection. Try to schedule a mock interview with community members before you get to the contest.

Speech (All Titles - 150 Points)

What to Expect

The speech allows judges to see how clearly you communicate your platform and values to a broader audience.

- Maximum length: 2 minutes
- Speeches take place:
 - Friday evening for Missouri Pet Ambassador and Missouri Bear Ambassador
 - Saturday evening for Missouri Kink Weekend and Missouri Fetish Ambassador

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Timing and Deductions

Timing begins once communication begins. An eight (8) second grace period is permitted. After the grace period, five (5) point deductions are applied immediately to the overall score and then again every additional thirty (30) seconds over time. Judges do not apply timing deductions.

What Judges are Evaluating

Speeches are an opportunity to speak directly to the judges and audience about:

- Who you are
- What the title means to you
- How you hope to serve and represent your community

Judges are looking for clarity, presence, and connection.

Preparation Guidance

Speeches may be memorized or not memorized. Note cards are allowed and encouraged. Reading from your phone is permitted and will not result in point deductions.

This is not a beauty pageant, and over-rehearsing can work against you. Know your key beats and allow space for genuine moments. A speech that sounds like *you* will always land better than one that sounds perfect.

Education (Leather and Fetish Ambassador Only - 100 Points)

What to Expect

The Missouri Leather Ambassador and Missouri Fetish Ambassador are expected to teach a class that demonstrates knowledge and expertise. Topics should be chosen that tie to the contest they are participating.

- 10-minute presentation
- 5-minute audience Q&A
- Occurs Saturday afternoon
- Same judging rubric used for both titles

Visual aids are welcome, including slides, posters, gear, props, or other materials. Demonstrations are allowed but must be disclosed in advance so appropriate consent or content warnings can be provided. Audience members will be informed that these educations are part of the contest and are meant to evaluate contestant performance and are not part of the sanctioned and vetted education schedule.

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Timing and Deductions

Timing begins once communication begins. An eight (8) second grace period applies. Five (5) point deductions are applied immediately to the overall score after the grace period and then again every additional thirty (30) seconds thereafter. Judges do not apply timing deductions.

The contest maintains an official timekeeper for recordkeeping purposes. That time is not disclosed to contestants. Contestants may have their own timekeeper or signal person during their education. The production team will make a reasonable effort to ensure they are visible.

What Judges are Evaluating

- Clear and accessible communication
- Depth of understanding
- Ability to engage and educate an audience

Preparation Guidance

Choose a topic you care about and feel confident discussing. Focus on clarity rather than trying to cover everything. Practice pacing with your own timing support so you know how your presentation flows.

Fantasy (Bear and Pet Ambassador Only - 100 Points)

What to Expect

The Missouri Bear Ambassador and Missouri Pet Ambassador will develop and perform a fantasy number during the contest that shows off their personality, kinks, story, or how they feel sexiest.

- Maximum length: 4 minutes
- Occurs Saturday evening
- Up to two additional people may appear on stage
- All participants and content must be disclosed in advance
- Audio tracks must be submitted digitally; backups are encouraged
- No materials requiring extensive cleanup
- No mics will be given, any dialogue must be previously recorded and part of your track

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Timing and Deductions

Timing begins once the fantasy begins. An eight (8) second grace period applies. Five (5) point deductions are applied immediately to the overall score after the grace period and then again every additional thirty (30) seconds thereafter. Judges do not apply timing deductions.

What Judges are Evaluating

Fantasies are judged on intention, storytelling, creativity, and presence. Judges are not scoring realism or spectacle. They are looking for audience engagement in the number and entertainment factor

Preparation Guidance

Fantasies are exactly that: fantasies. They should be fun, playful, expressive, and intentional. Look for a creative or unique way to tell a story. Choose music that provides direction and helps you hit moments or transitions.

Fantasies can be spicy or soft, serious or joyful. What matters most is that they feel true to you and communicate how you experience joy in this space.

Lifestyle/Presence (All Titles - 75 Points)

What to Expect

Judges begin observing contestants as soon as the contest officially starts and continue throughout the weekend.

This includes Meet & Greet interactions, backstage conduct, and how contestants navigate shared spaces.

What Judges Are Evaluating

Judges may consider:

- Awareness of space and consent
- Professionalism
- Engagement with judges, staff, contestants, and attendees
- Consistency between on-stage and off-stage presence

Judges may also be familiar with public digital presence and may ask questions based on what they observe.

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Preparation Guidance

This category is not about being “on” at all times. It reflects how you naturally show up in community spaces. Be present, respectful, and authentic. This is how you would represent yourself at other leather and kink events.

A Note on Support and Preparation

Your assigned Contest Coordinator is a key part of your support system and wants to see you succeed. Contest Coordinators have experience both as contestants and observers, and are available to answer questions, talk through ideas, and help you prepare.

If you are unsure about expectations, timing, or structure, reach out early. You are not expected to navigate this experience alone.

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Section 6: Event Access for Contestants and Handlers

Access to Missouri Kink Weekend is included in the registration fee for each contestant. This provides access to any official events throughout the weekend. Contestants will be given a lanyard with a name card that should be worn throughout the event.

Each contestant is allowed a maximum of three handlers for the event. The name of all handlers will need to be provided to contest staff. Handlers will be given their own lanyard and must pay for a full event pass.

Contestants may not have handlers backstage at any time. Exceptions will be made for those doing a fantasy and have more than one person on stage only in the lead up to their performance.

Section 7: Scoring, Judging, and Rubrics

All categories are scored numerically according to published point values.

Judges use standardized rubrics created by Missouri Kink Weekend. Each rubric is divided into defined components, each scored on a sliding scale. Component scores add up to the total score for that category.

Rubrics are intended to:

- Promote consistency and fairness
- Clarify expectations for contestants
- Support meaningful written feedback

Judges submit scores independently. Timing deductions and administrative penalties are applied separately by Tallymasters.

Missouri Kink Weekend intends to publish judging rubrics in advance, either within this handbook or as a separate document.

Contestants will receive written judges' feedback after the contest. While no specific timeline is guaranteed, feedback is typically provided within two weeks and is intended to support reflection and growth.

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Section 8: Auction Baskets and Fundraising

All contestants must provide an auction basket with a minimum value of \$100.

Baskets are used in a silent auction format to support titleholder travel and contest operations. Handmade items, themed baskets, service coupons, and community-donated items are welcome. Creativity and personal touches are encouraged.

Section 9: Conduct, Ethics, and Representation

All contestants are expected to uphold the Missouri Kink Weekend Code of Conduct throughout the contest and when representing Missouri Kink Weekend.

Violations may result in corrective action at the discretion of the Executive Producers.

Section 10: Accessibility and Content Considerations

Contestants are required to submit accessibility requests and education/fantasy content disclosures in advance so accommodations and appropriate content warnings may be provided.

Requests and disclosures are handled in accordance with the Accessibility Policy.

Section 11: After the Contest

Winners will meet with the production team after the victory brunch to review expectations, responsibilities, travel support, and next steps, including participation in the **How to Be a Titleholder** class.

Non-winning contestants remain valued members of the community, and feedback is provided to support continued leadership development.

Section 12: Acknowledgement

By participating in the Missouri Kink Weekend Contest, contestants acknowledge that they have read and understand this handbook and agree to comply with its contents and all referenced policies.