

KaraOakland Rules

Revised March, 2024

Introduction

KaraOakland is rooted in inclusivity, joy, camaraderie, silliness, transparency, and community. We're dedicated to uplifting the art and craft of karaoke and each other. The league-style competition builds friendship through teams while keeping the stakes minimally high with wins and losses.

Judging karaoke is extremely personal. We've let the crowd decide in keeping with our values of inclusivity and community. Crowd building and putting on a good show is just as important as singing every note correctly. This means KaraOakland is, at the core, a popularity contest.

However, we balance the popularity through transparency. This means the majority of the crowd needs to rank the winning team highly for them to win, with extra points given by accountable systems (like one team giving points to another). However, a larger team that brings more friends will always have a significant advantage.

We must balance inclusiveness, fun, and fair competition. Our rules are designed to be as fair and transparent as possible, leaving room for joy, community, and openness!

Thanks for carefully reading these guidelines, and I hope they are helpful in your KaraOakland journey.

Your Commissioner,
Melody White

Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Table of Contents	2
Competition Structure	3
Team Building	3
League Play	3
Song Selection	4
Performance Order	5
Voting	5
One-Off Contests	6
Attendance	6
After League Play	6
Scoring & Finals	6
Finals	7
Ties	8
Additional Awards	8
Props & Costumes	8
Human Props	8
League Logistics	9
Communications	9
What's App Communication Guidelines	9
Airing Of Grievances	9
Dashboards	9
Money	9
NonProfit Partner	10
Acceptable Behavior	10

Competition Structure

[Insert intro to this section]

Team Building

KaraOakland comprises five teams of 7 competitors. We want to keep the teams as even as possible while allowing for the maximum number of participants (inclusion is a core value and all). Also, because the team members are allowed to vote, it's best if they are all about the same size, to even out voting.

Teams are formed when competitors register and indicate whether they are registering as a pre-constructed team of 7 or as free agents. Free agents can attend pre-season events and meet fellow free agents to join together and form a team, or existing team captains to fill out the ranks to the required 7 (if a team of friends doesn't have enough). Teams will be locked in a week before the season starts, and everyone will get a dashboard with team contact information.

TIP: A diverse team has a diverse friend group to draw in and support them, creating a competitive advantage.

We want as many people to participate as possible, but there are only so many teams (5) and spots (35 in total) because we're taking up time at the Legionnaire, and we need to give the mic back to the general public by 9 p.m.

We'll open a waitlist once we reach capacity (35 competitors). Inevitably, folks will drop out, so don't despair if you aren't placed in the first round!

League Play

Once a week, our teams are invited to present three rounds of themed karaoke. The themes are announced at the last pre-season event (usually one week before league play starts). The league commissioner determines the themes, which are open to wide and varied interpretations.

We value fun over legalism. Ultimately, the audience will decide if your selection and presentation fit the theme, and vote accordingly.

The first and second rounds are any combination of performers (solo, duet, trio, etc). The final round is a group number, and requires as many of your group as you can muster on any night. League staff, bar patrons, and others can assist with the group number if only one team member shows up.

Song Selection

Submissions open immediately after themes are announced! Team captains must submit their songs at least 24 hours before league play begins each week. They are allowed to submit songs for any announced theme. Some teams game plan weeks in advance, so claim it early if you want to do a specific song for a particular week.

No duplicates are allowed throughout the season (excluding pre-season and open karaoke performances). The commissioner will review and approve all songs and reserves the right to reject songs based on theme adherence, repetitiveness, or other unforeseen reasons yet to be realized. If you aren't sure whether your song is acceptable, just ask the Commissioner!

If a duplicate is selected or a selection is otherwise disapproved, the commissioner will let the team captain know as soon as possible so they can choose a new song. Teams can change their songs at any point up until the deadline.

Song Selection Tips:

Ask ChatGPT for thematic song suggestions, it will provide an excellent list to jump off from.

Use props and costumes to relate your song to the theme.

Let's say the theme is "Space Age Fantasy." Well, you can dress up as Han Solo from Star Wars and do "I Feel It Now" because the lyrics are, "I'm a rebel just for kicks," which fits with Han's POV. Star Wars is sci-fi (with some fantasy/magic).

Provide the audience context for how your song relates to the theme. *It's best if it's obvious, but if it's a pop culture reference that some folks might not get (like if they've never seen a Star War), you'll want to clarify how it's all connected.*

Have fun with it! It doesn't have to be literal.

For example, the theme might be "Villians." You could choose "Poor Unfortunate Souls" from Disney's Little Mermaid or use it as a chance to do songs from artists who have been canceled for bad behavior. Who doesn't love the "Remix to Ignition?" But R. Kelly is gross.

Similarly, maybe the theme is "We're All Made of Stars," and you could do very literal songs like "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star" or use it as a chance to do celebrity impersonations. Christopher Walken does REM, or Jennifer Coolidge

does “Diamonds Are A Girl’s Best Friend.”

Check the KaraFun app to ensure your song is available. If not, find the version you would like to sing on YouTube. We prefer to stick to the KaraFun app. This is a question for the KJ, who can veto your YouTube. (But, it is your job to ensure it exists in the first place.)

Submit your songs using the Airtable link and indicate in the notes section if a key shift needs to be made. If you want to swap a song, submit the form again and indicate which song you are swapping.

Performance Order

The commissioner will publish the performance order before the start of the season, and each team will have a chance to go first, last, and middle at least once throughout the season. The commissioner can not guarantee that placement will be equally distributed amongst teams (it is sometimes mathematically impossible).

The Legionnaire, our host bar, has limited tables. Tables will be reserved for teams in the same order as the weekly performance. That said, our host bar is a public space, and the commissioner cannot guarantee the reservation of any tables.

Voting

In between each round the crowd (and teams) are invited to rate the performances. QR codes can be scanned around the bar or navigate to KaraOakland.com/vote. They select the appropriate round and rank their choices.

Our voting system is called Ranked Vote, and league staff will close out voting before announcing wins and then open up results pages. The results pages won't be visible during voting to prevent people from down-voting teams based on their performance.

You must be present to vote. Do not send the voting link to friends and ask them to vote. We can see how many people are in the bar, and if there are many more votes than folks present, we'll get suspicious. If it's far off, we reserve the right to resort to more drastic measures like applause-based voting or not give a point for that round or something else, based on the situation.

On that note, KaraOakland isn't responsible if someone decides to hack or mess with the voting process, including by voting from a location outside our host bar or multiple times. Hacking is literally illegal. We hope that doesn't happen, but we're all doing our best and hope everyone remembers that this is about joy and silliness, not finding a way to game the system.

One-Off Contests

Over the course of the year, we have off-season contests. These follow the same voting rules as league play. However, there are two categories:

- Solo: one person
- Group: two or more people

Each category is voted on separately and performed in rounds. With voting at the end of each round.

Up to six performances round. Sign up for one round only. If there is extra space, we'll open it up to current competitors.

Duplicate songs aren't allowed, so submitting your songs in advance is a good policy.

Attendance

We're all busy, and life gets in the way of karaoke sometimes, but this is a team sport, so attendance is critical to your team's success. If a player misses more than three weeks without talking to the captain or commissioner, they may be replaced with someone from the waitlist, and they also risk not being allowed to perform in the final. Just don't leave your team hanging. If you find that, due to life, you can't make it at the right times, it's fine to opt out with no hard feelings (and your spot will be filled by the next person on the waitlist to keep your team at 7).

That being said, DO NOT SING SICK! Calling in sick doesn't count against attendance. We use mic condoms, but illness can spread in tight spaces, and we all want to stay healthy.

After League Play

At the beginning of Round 3, the Legionnaire opens up its list for the general population to sing. They start singing after we announce the outcomes for that day. League members who have not had a primary singing role (solo, a big part in the duet, or the lead role in the group number) are welcome to sign up at any time, but those who had a primary role already had their "first song in," and need to wait for others to get their first song before singing up again. So, they are required to wait until after the final announcement of league play, before they sign up to sing post-league that night.

Scoring & Finals

Some join this to have fun, make friends, and put on a fantastic silly show; some join to **win**. This section is for the latter group.

There are three rounds each week. After each round, the audience ranks their choices in the app. The top 2 teams will get points assigned based on their rank:

- #1 for the round = 10 points
- #2 for the round = 6 points

In case of a tie, the points are split (so if you tie for first, that's $10 + 6 = 16$ points, so you each get 8.)

Besides these audience-based points, **each team must directly assign two points to a single opposing team based on overall performance (all three rounds)**. So if you lose all three rounds but every opposing team votes for your "overall performance," you would still get 8 points for the week. (This could reward a team for doing a linked performance, like three songs from the same musical, where the individual performances get out-performed by someone magical, but the overall cannot be denied).

At the end of each voting round, voting will close for the audience on the app. The commissioner will apply the team votes (equivalent to three regular votes) and announce the round winners. After all three rounds are over, the Commissioner will collect Team Points awarded by each team and announce them in the team chat – so, you will know which opponents voted for you to ensure transparency.

Points are cumulative throughout the season.

The two teams with the most points at the end of the season go on to the finals.

Finals

The two teams with the most points will advance to the finals, consisting of three rounds.

- Two rounds of silliness determined by League Leadership (dueling duets, spicy-oke, random props, karaoke roulette). It will be weird, it will be different, it will be entertaining.
- Your very best group number

The crowds vote as usual (deciding between the two teams). The votes are tallied up over the three rounds, and the team with the most votes **wins the championship!** The prizes for the championship are a trophy for first place and medals for each competitor. There may be additional prizes from our sponsors. There is no monetary prize.

All teams are invited to participate in mini-theme rounds during finals night. Mini-themes are too narrow to facilitate a three-round league night (ex, Saturday Morning Cartoons, Singers Who Died in Plane Crashes, Parody Songs). The winners of these will get a round of shots and bragging rights.

Ties

In the unlikely event of a tie, the two teams will be invited to perform a tie-breaking sudden-death number, and the audience will vote using a Google form. If this also results in a tie, we call it like it is: A TIE, and both teams are declared winners! This is extremely unlikely, so chances are the Commissioner will need to get seven additional medals which could take a week or two.

Additional Awards

There are also three areas of excellence the league chooses to celebrate during the finals:

- **Captivating Costumes:** This team didn't half-ass anything. They saw the stops and pulled up all up by the roots.
- **Infections Team Spirit:** This team made the most of all its players, having as many people perform as possible each week. It did not rely too hard on its heavy hitters but ensured the whole bench was represented. They worked within all their strengths and uplifted the entire league with their spirit.
- **Gag-Worthy Gags:** This team brought the most puns, warped point-of-view performances, and surprises. They had jokes on jokes. They made us laugh, and that's a huge win.

These categories are loosely tied to metrics and tracked by the commissioner (acts with costumes, acts with gimmicks and gags, number of players represented) and ultimately decided by league staff and team captains. There are no monetary prizes for the final winners or winners of additional awards, but we reserve the right to present something fun to commemorate the event.

Props & Costumes

Elaborate costumes and innovative props are excellent ways for teams to set their performances apart. Make sure you can clean up your act easily. So, do not do messy things without a tarp (foam, fake blood, silly string, etc.). No real fire. When in doubt, ask the commissioner.

Clear the stage after your performance and try to limit set up and tear down to 1-2 minutes.

Human Props

We are all about inclusivity. So, if you have a friend who's an incredible juggler, dancer, or hula hooper, you want them to come and join you for a performance. Yes! Get it! They cannot sing, but they can support physically.

League Logistics

Communications

We have an active WhatsApp community. The league will send out important updates via email. Individual teams can determine the comms channels that work best for them. Team Captains will have a private WhatsApp group for sensitive messages and discussions; the team captains are expected to disseminate those messages tactfully to their teams.

What's App Communication Guidelines

We have specific channels for specific conversations. Please keep communications in the proper channels.

Keep conversations kind and respectful. Anyone throwing excessive shade or unnecessary heat will be asked to leave.

Airing Of Grievances

If you've got a complaint or grievances, please direct it to our ombudsman, DeeDee carranzadeeds@gmail.com.

Dashboards

Once teams are formed, each team will get a unique link to their team dashboard and song selections. This will help you track your wins and teammates. Bookmark these links for future reference.

Money

Ughhhh, everything costs money! It's so stupid. We are trying to keep our league dues low to keep this accessible, but here's why we charge league dues in the first place:

- Web hosting & security: \$300 a year
- Graphic design program: \$120 a year
- Voting App: \$20 a month
- Awards/Medals: \$300 a season
- Gmail workspace: \$72 a year
- Tipping the KJ: \$20 a night (\$120 a season)
- Stickers, Name Tags, Misc: \$20

We are not paid by The Legionnaire, nor do we get a bar cut. This is mutually beneficial because we have a space, and they have more people. Anything left over is given to the photographer or donated to charity. We operate on a profit-neutral model. One of our values is community, so we strive to give back whenever possible.

The commissioner and staff don't take any money and do this as a hobby; don't come at them. This is a labor of love. They will accept drinks, pies, or dog sitting if you want to show appreciation.

Speaking of money, costumes, props, parking, and drinks at the bar all add up. So here are some tips for affording our rock'n roll lifestyles:

- Ask for costumes and props in the Prop Swap group on our WhatsApp community.
- Consider your local BuyNothing group.
- Also, if you buy stuff off Amazon, keep the tags on it, and return it the next day, we won't stop you. Suck it, Bezos.

NonProfit Partner

The Legionnaire graciously donates a portion of the profits from league nights to a non-profit. In our inaugural season, we chose Elevate Oakland to support arts education in schools (such as music, in theme with our theme).

If you have a non-profit that you would want us to support, please contact Melody as soon as possible (melody@karaoakland.com).

Acceptable Behavior

We want everyone to feel comfortable and included at KaraOakland, so please refrain from creeping or sexual harassment. Please be respectful, kind, and supportive.

Complaints of inappropriate behavior or comments will be taken seriously, and we may have to ask folks to leave the league. This hasn't happened yet, and obviously we don't want this nonsense in our league.

The same goes for interacting in KaraOakland Whatsapp community channels.

The same goes for trying to "buy votes" from the crowd. Cheap bribes, like a cookie, a sticker, or a condom, are funny, but spending big money (that other teams might not have) crosses the line.

The same goes for colluding with another team to "bring down" a competitor. It's fine to vote for your team first, but everyone's second choice should be who they think performed best (after their own teammate of course). If we sense alliances becoming a factor in the team vote, we will set up a video camera in the photobooth and film confessionals during each league night. Competitors must explain why they're pushing for specific teams to win. Then, we'll edit it into a reality show pilot and send it to the networks. If you create drama, we'll try to profit from it.

The same goes for voting against a performance you thought was the best, for strategic reasons.