

Lochac A&S Champion Format

Proposed changes 2017

Issues with the current format

Currently the Lochac A&S champion is determined solely through entry in Kingdom A&S competitions. The champion is deemed to be the person who accumulates the most points during the SCA year (1 May - 30 April). This person is announced at May Crown, and maybe Pegasus, sometimes they get the promised “champion’s pouch” (usually not though, as there is no avenue to get the item made) and then nothing happens for that person.

Interestingly the “champion for a year” thing is out of sync with our game where we tend to focus on reigns. A year is a long time in the society and this contributes to why our Champion gets lost in the crowd.

The overall sense I have received from numerous conversations in the past 6 months is that this format is not meeting the needs of the Kingdom. This is demonstrated by low entries in A&S competitions, and low recognition of the champion, or even the existence of the title, across the Kingdom.

Comments received on the Lochac A&S survey support this observation:

“A&S is so varied it would be impossible to deem one person as ‘the best’. With the current Kingdom competition focus, it can be discouraging when the categories don’t align with your interests or skills. Part of that is the choice of categories.”

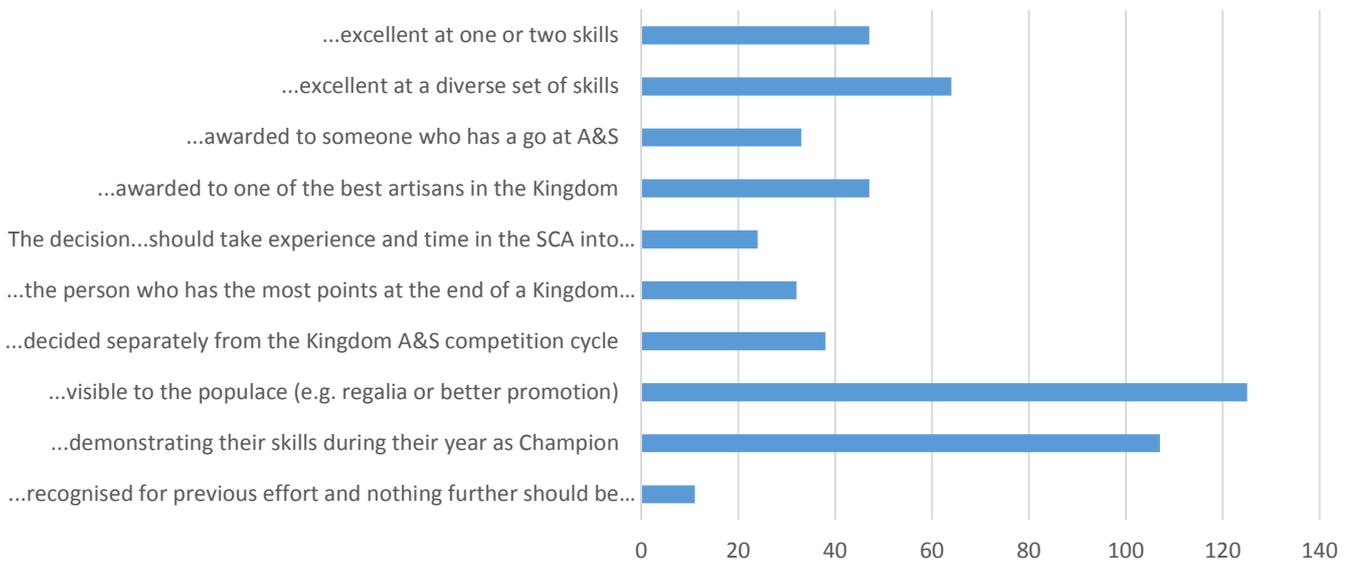
“I am not sure that the competitions over the past few years have been good ones for deciding the Champion. Many of them have been too specific and/or too weird and many people haven’t been entering for that reason.”

What the survey said

The Lochac A&S survey asked two questions about the Lochac A&S Champion. The first was a series of opinions on what sort of person should be recognised as the A&S champion, the second asked for any comments. Neither question was mandatory.

The Kingdom was split on the sorts of elements that should be considered when determining the A&S Champion:

The Lochac Champion should be...



Since there was no clear indication from the populace on how we should award the Champion we don't have a mandate to make sweeping changes, but we can't leave the system as it is currently.

Types of people we want to recognise

The open comments from the survey were illuminating, and clearly indicated that barely anyone knows who the champions are, why they are the champion and what types of items/research they produced in order to become the champion. The following comments provide a flavour of the sorts of responses received, and thus the people we think should be recognised as A&S Champion.

- With most champions they encourage their specific talent to the populace. Promoting A&S as a whole should be included in this.
- While the Kingdom A&S competition cycle is an obvious way to find a Champion, I think this potentially excludes worthy candidates. I think diversity is important although it should not be the only consideration. Taking experience and time in the SCA should be part of it, but I think the Champion's ability to inspire and FOSTER the Arts and Sciences is a critical point.
- They should be someone who represents the best stuff in A&S. For me, that is someone who tries new things, does them well, teaches them, and changes the game for the better for others. Teaching should be an essential component of being champion.
- They need to be producing entries comparable to those produced by A&S Champions from other Kingdoms. Knowing the skills and time that is necessary to complete some projects (particularly around mundane employment) it may be that yearly Championships is too often? Also their entry and documentation (or a summary thereof) should be published in Pegasus or Cockatrice.

Would we announce a Heavy Kingdom Champion who had just had a go? Or who fought with the most weapons in the last year? Or who used the most obscure shield design? No! We demand best. The same is necessary for A&S if we want it to have the same respect due to it. We should not look at their work and say "I can do that" but "Wow, I want to be able to do that".

- The Lochac champion should be excellent at something. It looks a bit lame when they are a bit ok at a range of stuff rather than good at something. It feels like a very child gets an award if they are a champion who produces lots of amateur stuff rather than a few good pieces.
- The Lochac A&S Champion should be the champion of A&S in Lochac. It should not be their art or science they excel in; give them a Laurel for that.

The Champion should do the most to further the cause of Arts and Science in Lochac, it could even be a group award, a village project, a lifestyle encampment, a mass of items from an era. Have the whole group compete for the title because they will come out the richer for the experience, win or lose.

- The champion should be a champion for all the arts and sciences. Someone to strive toward, but also someone to lead the society forwards.
- The A&S champion should be someone who is an excellent example of craftsmanship in the SCA. It does not need to be in an exclusive area but their approach should be something that is methodical and well put together in whatever they do.
- Someone who has shown great improvement or enthusiasm in promotion or making or teaching or encouraging A&S in the kingdom and is expected to continue it throughout their tenure
- I see the A&S champion as analogous to the crown tournament winner. You put your hat in the ring, go up against the others who have done so and biff it out between you. The only logical way of making that analogy work is to have either the competition cycle, or a specific A&S comp to decide the winner. Anyone of any skill level has the opportunity to put their hat in the ring, and it depends on the relative skill of the other competitors on the day (or over the year) as to who wins.
- I think that someone who inspires others would be wonderful to have in this role.
- I think it's an excellent way of highlighting the skills and efforts of an individual who is well on the way to laureldom - sort of like the way King's/Queen's Champion is used for heavy fighters during a reign.
- I definitely think that if kingdom competitions are a part of winning... it should be only one aspect - and there should be other aspects. I don't think that competition is the best way to find the most interesting artisans... for one thing, you are promoting somebody who can enter a wide variety of competitions, rather than a person dedicated to their particular individual art. Also you are promoting somebody who can whip out a set of not-bad things in a short time over somebody that produces one truly amazing piece that takes a lot of effort to complete.
- I like it being the person with the most points as it shows that there is a reward for having a go. Even if they are only OK as an artisan, that person will still have learned a lot as part of their doco construction and making the actual items and they will have inspired people in their area. I remember when Katherine Kerr and Margie of Glen More were doing loads with comps, they really encouraged others to enter – and only in part so the comp would actually run and they'd get points ;-P
- I have ticked both of the first two because I feel it should be either 'excellent at one or two things skills' OR 'excellent at a diverse set of skills'. One or the other is fine. Champion might be a fighter whose skills are armoury and archery which are both A&S, but they are someone who is researching their fighting and armour; or alternatively, as well as their fighting skills they are great at brewing, cooking, or some other set of skills...
- I believe a champion is a person with the most points at the end of the term. That person may not be the best but a person who is willing to learn and try new things. Who enters as many comps as possible. It may encourage more people to enter comps if they know they have a chance of winning.

Suggestions to improve the system

There were also a number of excellent suggestions on ways we could improve the system to ensure we are meeting the needs of the Kingdom and recognising the sorts of people that we want to recognise.

- The Kingdom Competition cycle could be broadened to include more than just making things - for example, perhaps it would be worthwhile adding points for teaching classes at events. A&S is not just research, not just creation, and not just teaching - it realistically should be all of the above.
- I don't think the A&S Champion should be excellent at all things, but maybe have something that they are confident in that they could teach to others. I think, most importantly, that the Champion should be selected on the basis of the efforts that they have made to promote A&S within the Kingdom, via teaching, Guild participation, collaboration with others on projects etc. Unfortunately that's harder to quantify than deciding on the basis of success in entering competitions!
- If not decided by competitions then what else could be objective? Though the current system might be more objective if it was readily available to more entrants.
- I like the idea of them having A Fancy Thing to make the role something seen as an honour, and maybe make it covetable.
- I would say that there should be elements of a service role but also of personal excellence. If someone spends all their time helping people, that's lovely, but they don't develop their own skills and aren't modeling craftsmanship. I'm thinking here of the academic promotions model that looks for scholarship/research, teaching, and community - all three 'pillars' are part of it. Depending on what other awards are available for SCA champions, it may be more appropriate to focus on one aspect of these - for example, some people struggle with interpersonal and organizational skills, but should still have an opportunity to be recognized for their fine craftwork or research.
- Personally I would like to see a few annual A&S Awards. A Rising Star award for those on the way up. An encouragement award for an outstanding first time entrant. Champion and Lochac Supreme Champion to recognise those who enter regularly and show a consistently high level of work. I do not think the highest points scorer over the year is good, as someone who is not too crash hot but enters lots of items wins under the current model.

Proposed changes

Taking all of the above into account, I am proposing that we reform the Lochac A&S champion concept as follows:

1. We have a champion per reign. That Champion is announced in Court at Coronation.
2. The champion is determined through a points system, but this system takes into account the various ways that the populace contributes to A&S in Lochac, and not just through 4 competitions per year (see next section for the proposed points system)
3. The champion receives a piece of perpetual regalia so they can be recognised throughout the reign. It is their job to make sure the regalia returns to the next Coronation Court.
4. The Champion will have a profile on the Kingdom A&S website which will go live within a week of Coronation and form part of the announcement. This profile will include photos of themselves and their work. This profile will be promoted through: Pegasus, facebook and the announce list as the Champion is announced.

Points table

Points towards the championship will be allocated for the following activities.

In considering how to set up this scoring system we started from “A&S display item” as a base case, then weighted points depending on effort/reputation and ability for something to be peer-reviewed. 4 points is the highest achievable point in this system as is provided to very high scoring competition entries, and to people who become Masters in a Guild as both items require excellence and strong peer review to achieve.

Type of Activity	Points allocated	Notes
Contribute an item to an A&S display, Kingdom or local event level	1	Includes Laurel Prize at Rowany Festival, and A&S display at Canterbury Fair
Perform a period piece of entertainment at an event	1	Think music, singing, poem, theatre.
Teach a class at any event	2	
Have an article published in Cockatrice	2	
Have something scored in a competition that follows the Kingdom competition score sheet, or similar. Score achieved in competition: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40-50 • 30-40 • 20-30 • 0-20 	 4 3 2 1	This can include local competitions. The test is, are you scoring the item out of 50, with a clear description of how points are allocated, and at least 2 people have scored the item. If the scoring is a different scale to 50 then the final score will need to be adjusted to fit the point bands.
Attain a ranking in a guild: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Master • Journeyman • Apprentice 	 4 3 2	Where a guild has a different set of ranks, then the equivalent names and scores should be negotiated with the Guilds Deputy, and the decision should be recorded in the guilds documents and the Champion webpage.

Administration

The collection of points will be managed by the Arts & Sciences Officers of the Kingdom, as well as Guild Administrators. An online form will be created for officers to input points with their quarterly reports.

Points will be tallied 2 weeks before Coronation, to allow the A&S champion to be notified and a profile created on the Kingdom website to go live immediately after Coronation.

Consultation Questions

1. Is this a workable model? What benefits and pitfalls can you see?
2. What else could be included in the points system? How would we fairly allocate points across the Kingdom for that thing?
3. How do we include research and science in this schema?
4. Should we include period arts martial, including Archery, in this schema?
5. What sort of item should we consider for perpetual regalia?
6. Anything else you think we've missed or should consider?