2026 SAN DIEGO BOOTBLACK CONTESTANT CATEGORIES

Events may not be in the order below.

Using the Olympic Scoring System, contestants will be judged by a panel of community members and titleholders. 100 points are possible from each judge for each category, then scores are combined and averaged. Contestant must earn 75% or more to qualify for the titles. The total(s) will be certified by the Tally Master(s), and the contestant with the highest points will represent San Diego for the title year. In the event of a tie, producers will look to who scored the highest in the category with the most weight.

Bare your Sole (Zoom Interview)**: (15%)**: Attire: - tidy, respectful, feel good in it

Judging panel will have a maximum of 15 minutes to interview each contestant on their knowledge of bootblacking, history, accomplishments, mentors, or any other relevant subject. Judges may ask questions about your tech boot only during the tech boot portion on March 14th whereas interview questions should focus on the person.

Shine On! (Open Shine) **(35%):** Attire: what you like to bootblack in

On Friday March 13th from 9pm-11:30pm contestants offer bootblacking services to the preceding SD Bootblack titleholder, Judges, and other event-goers. This category is weighted the highest because it most closely reflects how the winner will perform and conduct themself during the title year. Qualities the judges observe or experience are: skills, knowledge, chair management, personality, and appropriate level of professionalism &/or (if negotiated by boot-wearer & bootblack) eroticism.

Show Us Your Stuff (Personal Ad & Peacocking) **(10%):** Attire: Hot Wear

Contestants will draft 40–50-word personal ad to be read aloud by emcee as they show off their hot wear/jock wear. Personal Ad can be submitted for approval and feedback at any time after your application has been accepted and are otherwise **due on February 28th** by noon/12pm

Style & Soapbox (Public Communication): **(10%):** Attire: your finest leather/alt leather

Contestants have 120 seconds to communicate their thoughts on any topic of their choosing. Bootblack themes are not required, but yes please! Contestants are encouraged to show off their public communication skills and to let everyone in attendance know who they are and what they care about. Noticeable under or overages may be a factor in scoring. Use of memory aids will not count against anyone unless doing so impacts the quality of your delivery or shows a plain lack of preparation.

Dirty Soles Welcome (Tech Boot): **(20%)**: Attire – what you like to bootblack in

Contestants are provided with a pair of messy boots. Contestants must revitalize & highshine one of the boots to showcase their technical skills. Judges compare against the work of other bootblacks and/or using the un-touched boot from the pair as a reference.

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VIDEO Fantasy (10%)

Contestants will create a 3-4 minute video fantasy. Consider what turns you on, excites you, a bucket list scene you'd like to find yourself in, or maybe just and activity that brings you joy. Fantasies are judged on creativity, self-expression, audience response, storytelling, and cinematic energy. BOOTBLACK THEME ENCOURAGED

Note: failure to follow the accessibility guidelines below will result in 0% here.

VIDEO RULES:

- **ACCESSIBILITY: YOU MUST USE CLOSED CAPTIONING WITH AUDIO DESCRIPTION.**
- Maximum of 4 performers, including yourself
- You may use whatever resources/people you have to assist with filming, production, performance, and editing.
- Videos must be provided to production team electronically by email or on a flash drive.
- Do not post your video online or elsewhere before the contest concludes.
- Production will only show your film fantasies to judges and to the contest audience on March 14th. We will not distribute, share or post your videos without your permission, but understand we may not be able to control if the audience uses their own devices to record them.
    - If you have privacy needs, please communicate that to production team and we can discuss how to reasonably accommodate any needs you have around that.
- **Videos must be submitted to the production team for approval and feedback by Saturday February 28th at 12pm. Submit it as soon as possible in case feedback inspires further edits.**