

# Tips For Competition Quartets At A Rally

Everything from the Basic Basics and Intermediate tips still apply.

- **Have A Few Names Ready.** You are going to have to pick a name in about 3 minutes, and that name will “become” the four of you for the weekend. Bring a few interesting name ideas with you to the rally. “OC Times” is taken already.
- **Tone Match.** Everyone adjust their placement to one consistent sound. You can do that with a quick run of the song, but I prefer to start with the lead/bass duet, and then have the tenor and baritone match to that. (And that’s mostly the bass adapting.)
- **Agree On A Story.** The story doesn’t have to be perfect, and you don’t all have to like the story you will be using. But a quartet that looks like it’s all doing one thing together, is better.
- **Sing The Story In A Uniform Manner.** If your lead has an expressive face, and even one other singer doesn’t match that - it looks weird. Try to all move and match in body as well as in song. That may mean some people doing less, instead of demanding that everyone do more.
- **Duet, Duet, Duet.** It may seem weird to use very limited quartet time to duet, but there is no faster way to fix simple problems. A lead/bass duet fixes most problems. When two parts duet, you have a choice: the other two can “sing” with the same heart and emphasis but zero volume -or- the other two can listen and critique, focusing especially on chords that need fixing.
- **Find Something New In The Song.** Set yourselves apart from all the others who will sing the song. You can change a chord, add one or two simple bits of choreography, use a prop if you have one, modify a lyric. This audience knows the song as well as you do - delight them with something. (This is the line between winners and losers.)
- **Variety In Singing.** In the words of Paul Gilman, baritone of *Marquis*: “*At any moment in the song, one of three things is happening. Either you're getting louder... or you're getting softer... or you're getting boring.*”
- **Practice In A Line, Not Just In A Box.** It is *amazing* to me how a quartet can improve just by switching the singing positions. It doesn’t have to be tenor/lead/bass/bari left-to-right. Mix a little. I was in one quartet where merely switching the bass/lead order improved things. Sometimes it’s the small mysterious stuff.
- **If Your Quartet Is Sharing A Singer.** Some quartets will share singers with another quartet. Sorry. Practice without them, do everything you can without them. Be kind - they are having to remember all the things for TWO quartets, you only have one.
  - **If You Are In Two Quartets.** Sorry. Try to be good and firm about time. If you have 20 minutes with each quartet, leave the first when 20 minutes are done. It’s only fair to the other quartet.
- **Talk About Entrance And Exits.** From the moment they say your quartet’s name, to the moment you take your seat in the audience after - you are performing. Use that well.
- **Don’t Worry, Be Happy.** If ever there is a time to relax and enjoy a quartet competition, it’s this one. Don’t get nervous, you are singing with friends, and singing for friends. And everyone else is doing the same thing - it’s the most loving and forgiving audience in the world.