



COPS SUMMER COMPETITION

The Future of Judging with AI

Our camera club's experience in developing an AI assisted solution

Presented by Stan Tetrault

7 / 15 / 2026

AI joke?...Nope.

OBJECTIVES

What We Set Out to Do



Run a Mock Competition

Use claude.ai to evaluate and score member images



Ensure Consistency

Keep image analysis feedback and scoring algorithms aligned



Import Scoring Data

Feed results into Visual Pursuits competition software

From Problem to Prototype

- **The Problem**

Our ongoing issues with judging consistency and the difficulty of obtaining judges
- **Two Months of Rubric-Crafting**

We spent roughly two months writing and refining rubrics (instructions sets)
- **Training the Tool**

We created the commands needed to produce the results we wanted — over a dozen rubrics in all: one per category, plus others for file management
- **Trial and Error**

Learning how AI tools behave, iteration, played a large role in obtaining successful results

MAJOR POINTS

Recruitment of judges and
inconsistent image evaluation
will be a thing of the past

The core promise driving this whole project



MAJOR POINTS

Consistent Analysis, Every Time

Every image gets the same consistent, rubric-driven analysis — no fatigue, no drift between judges

Concise feedback on every image covers four areas:



Technical

Exposure, focus,
composition, color



Artistic

Creativity, storytelling,
emotional impact



Critique for Maker

Short, constructive,
shareable



Suggestions

Concrete ways to
improve the shot

Valuable information for the photographer to improve their skills

MAJOR POINTS

COPS-Based Scoring Algorithms

Tailored to mimic club competition rules

79:21 Weighted Scoring

General criteria (visual impact, composition, technical quality) carry most of the weight, with category-specific criteria factored in

Example: Open Category

General criteria — Visual Impact, Emotional Response, Storytelling, Composition, Creativity — each scored at 25 points, along with category-specific technical and artistic criteria with miscellaneous score values

MAJOR POINTS

Scoring Example: Open Rubric

Use Weighted Criteria Scoring

Criterion	Max pts
Visual Impact	25
Emotional Response	25
Storytelling	25
Composition	25
Creativity	25
Focus & Sharpness	6
Exposure	5
Color Rendition	4
Lighting	3
Tonal Range	3
Noise & Artifacts	3
Shutter Speed	1
Presentation of Subject	
Subject Clarity & Primac y	6
Subject Isolation/Separation	5
Peak Moment/Expression	5
Subject Rendering Quality	4
Category Max =	170

This scoring scheme shows the level of detail behind every AI-generated score

MAJOR POINTS

Scoring Algorithm Example:

Making the scoring result look familiar to what camera club members are accustomed to

Normalized Score = (Raw Score ÷ Category Max) × 10 × 3

- Raw Score = sum of scores derived by AI image evaluations
- Category Max = total possible score per category
- × 10 = Multiplier for conversion of percentage to decimal (normalized score)
- × 3 = Multiplier to represent summing 3 human judge scores where max score is 30

RAW SCORE: 128 / 170

Normalized Score: 7.53

Extrapolated Score: 22.59 This is the score posted to Visual Pursuits

Scoring algorithm is applied to all categories

MAJOR POINTS

Feedback Example 1:



=== SALON CLASS ===

[Image 1 — OA-Foxglove_and_Friend — Club Member Name]

Criterion Table

Visual Impact	22 / 25
Emotional Response	17 / 25
Storytelling	18 / 25
Composition	20 / 25
Creativity	15 / 25
Focus & Sharpness	4 / 6
Exposure	4 / 5
Color Rendition	4 / 4
Lighting	3 / 3
Tonal Range	3 / 3
Noise & Artifacts	3 / 3
Shutter Speed	1 / 1
Subject Clarity & Primacy	4 / 6
Subject Isolation/Separation	3 / 5
Peak Moment/Expression	4 / 5
Subject Rendering Quality	3 / 4

RAW SCORE: 128 / 170

Normalized Score: 7.53

Extrapolated Score: 22.59

MAJOR POINTS

Feedback Example 2:

Technical Feedback:

Exposure is well balanced, holding detail in both the pale blossoms and the dark green backdrop. Focus & sharpness are excellent, with tack-sharp rendering of the water droplets and flower texture at the plane of focus. Composition uses the vertical stem as a strong central spine with the blooms fanning outward in a pleasing radial arrangement. Tonal range is full, running from bright petal highlights to deep shadow in the throat of each bloom. Color rendition captures the magenta-to-cream gradient of the foxglove accurately without oversaturation. Noise & artifacts are a non-issue at this magnification, with clean smooth backgrounds.

Artistic Feedback:

Visual impact is strong, driven by the intricate speckled patterning inside the blooms and the bonus of a bee frozen mid-flight at the frame edge. Creativity is solid in the choice of angle and the patience required to catch an insect in motion within a macro composition. Storytelling comes through in the implied narrative of pollination, though the story is more observational than dramatic. Emotional response is a quiet appreciation of natural detail rather than a visceral pull.

Feedback will be distributed to members as part of competition results reporting after each competition

Feedback Example 3:

Critique for Maker:

This is a beautifully executed macro study. The droplets on the petals add a fresh, just-rained-on quality, and the layered composition of near and far blooms gives real depth. The bee at right is a lucky, well-timed addition that elevates the shot from a simple flower study to a moment of interaction. The one thing holding it back from top marks is that the bee is small and slightly soft at the frame edge — it reads more as a bonus detail than a co-subject.

Suggested Improvements 1:

In post, a light vignette would help draw the eye more decisively toward the central bloom and away from the busier lower-left cluster. A subtle increase in local contrast on the speckled throat of the central flower would enhance the three-dimensional feel. Consider dodging the bee slightly to give it a touch more presence without over-brightening it.

Suggested Improvements 2:

If reshooting, framing tighter around the central bloom with the bee in sharper focus — perhaps by pre-focusing on the flower and waiting for the bee to enter that plane — would turn this from a nice macro shot into a genuine action-macro image. A slightly lower shooting angle, looking up into the throat of the central flower, could also add drama and make the composition feel less top-down.

MAJOR POINTS

AI Tools Are Not Perfect



Errors Do and Will Occur

We challenged the tool when faulty analysis results were detected during testing. AI acknowledged errors and recommended solutions.



It Forgets and Gets Lazy

Long batches can see brevity creep in to critique language or steps can be quietly skipped. Reliance on data kept in cached memory.



Challenges Welcome

For future competitions: Makers who feel the tool underperformed can lodge a reasonable challenge.



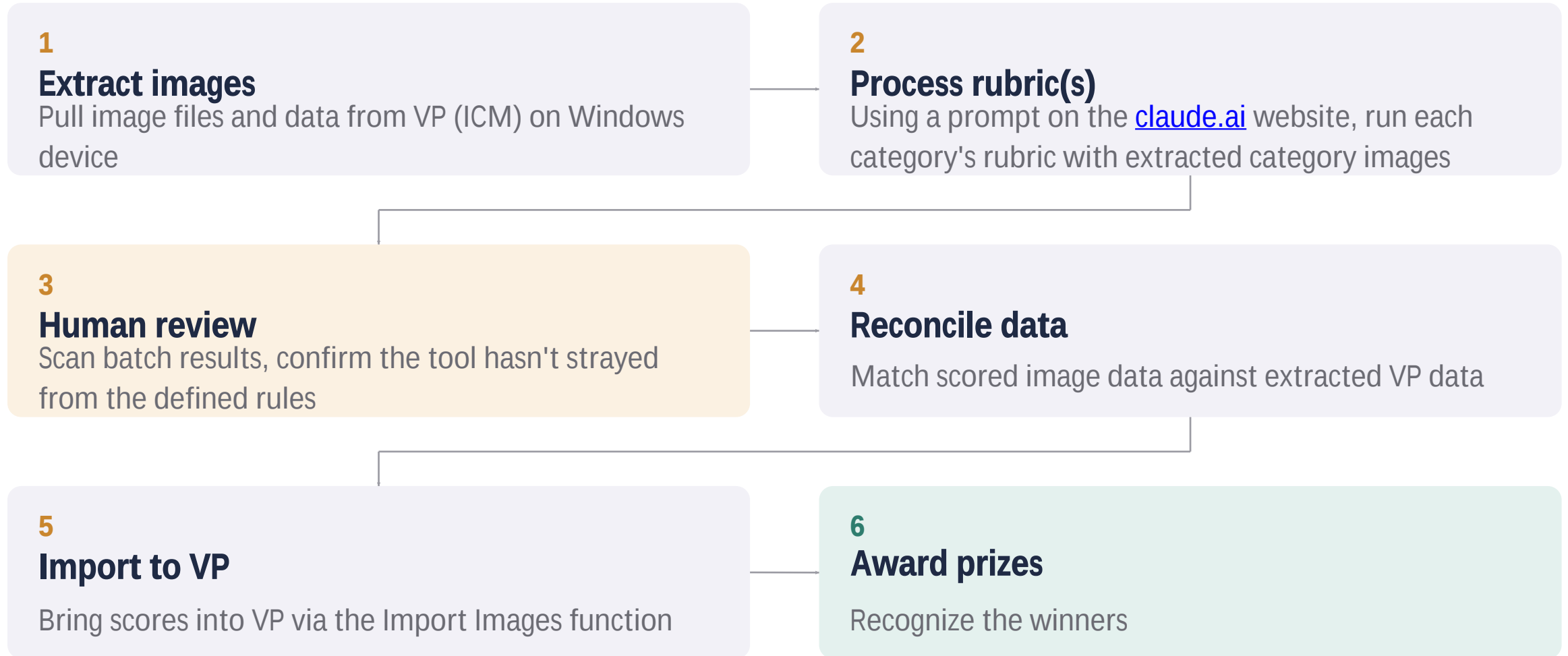
Keeping humans in charge

Hard to say yet if these process changes save time. This is a hybrid use of AI and humans still have the final say.

PROCESSING

How a Competition Gets Processed

A volunteer works with the AI tool and Visual Pursuits (VP) through six steps.



PROCESSING

Skills the Volunteer Needs

-  Logical thinking
-  Ability to interact with and construct prompts for the AI tool
-  Familiarity with all the rubrics
-  File management
-  Review tool results to determine process success or if corrective action is needed
-  Ability to modify rubrics if and when needed

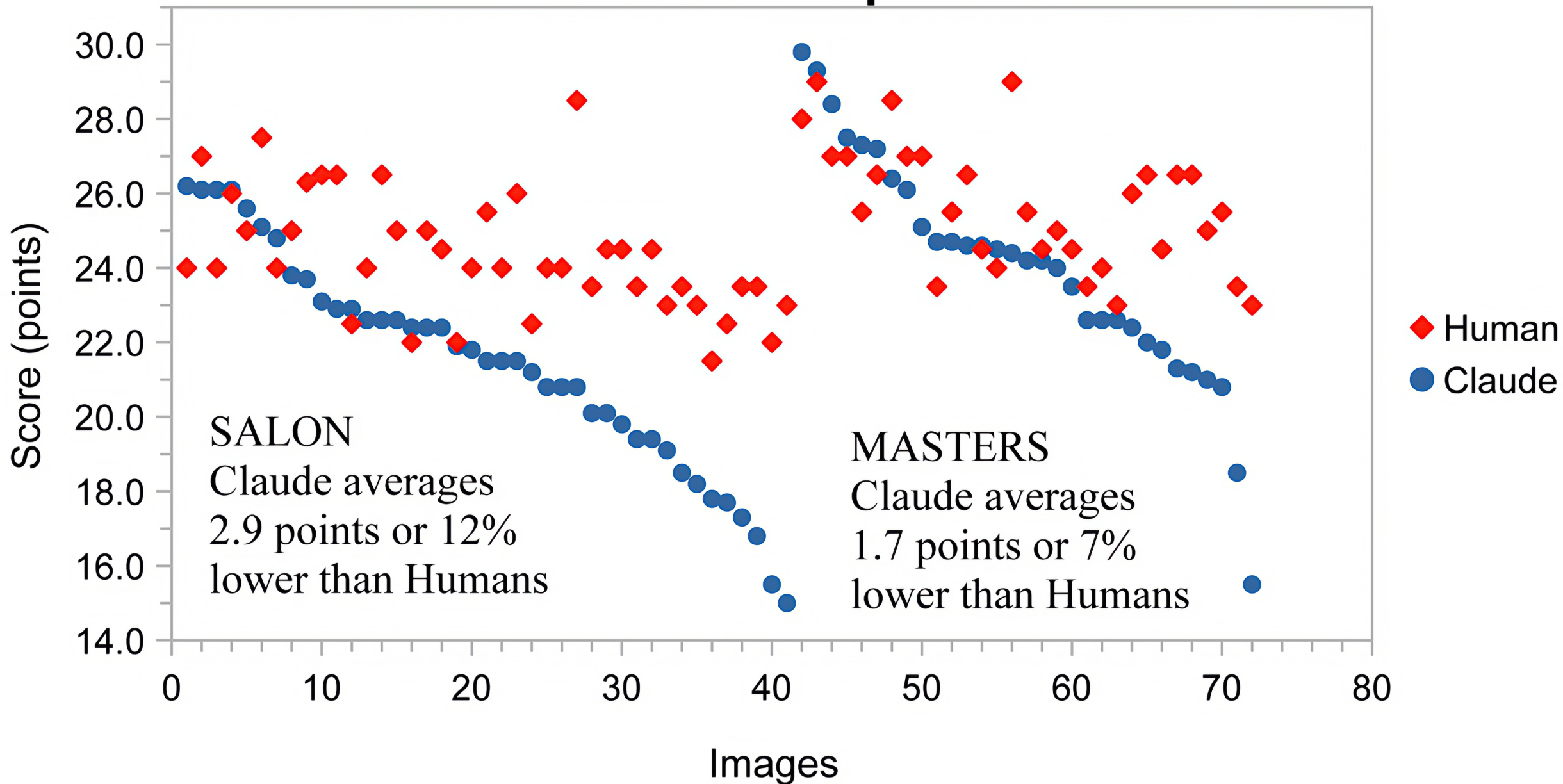
What the Numbers Show



Results consistently show AI scores are generally lower.

Steve Potashner will talk about why in detail.

2025-11 Competition



SUMMARY

In spite of known shortcomings, the AI tool meets our objectives — and we endorse its use going forward.



We encourage your feedback.



On with the Show

COPS Summer Competition • 7/15/2026