

# OFFICIAL INDIGO INVITATIONAL YEAR 5 RULEBOOK



## CONTEST OUTLINE

---

The Indigo Invitational is the world's largest and most-inclusive denim fading contest. All brands, all weights, and all comers are welcome. There's no fee to enter. Your brand-new jeans are your ticket to ride.

There are three rules that cover just about everything:

- Rule 1: Denim must be raw.
- Rule 2: Fades must be natural.
- Rule 3: Support each other.

While straightforward, these rules leave some room for interpretation. We discuss each of these rules in detail below.

## RETURNING FOR Y5: SEA & ROW CONFERENCES

---

Last year, for the first time, we divided the competition into conferences. The Southeast Asian faders got their own conference, with their own prizes, and their own Top 50. This gives us the freedom to celebrate more of the great faders all over the world. A few important points:

- Rules and submission guidelines are the same for both conferences. Participants in both conferences must submit monthly updates via the website.

- Each conference will have its own showcases and spot prizes. We're hoping to have enough prizes to have Top 10 showcases for both conferences.
- The first place finishers from each conference go head-to-head at the end of the competition to determine our overall winner.
- The Southeast Asian Top 50 will be selected by long-time friend of the competition Mifflin Mabalot.

## RETURNING FOR Y5: RE(PAIR)

---

Re(Pair) is for those who want to return for a second lap of the track in their Y4 pairs. We know that some of you need at least two full years to fully fade your pairs. We also know that some exceptional faders want to push their pairs to (and beyond) the absolute limit. A few of the finer points:

- Registration is limited to 100 slots. Keep this in mind when registering. Only take a slot if you're fully committed to the year-long journey ahead.
- Registration for Re(Pair) opens on February 15<sup>th</sup> and will remain open until all the available slots have been filled. If you'd like to be placed on the waiting list for a Re(Pair) slot, email us at [submissions@indigoinvitational.com](mailto:submissions@indigoinvitational.com)
- Registration does not commit you to competing in Re(Pair). It just holds your spot.
- When you register, you'll be asked to provide your last submission photo and a more recent photograph of your pair featuring the #StitchInTime hashtag.
- Competitors are allowed to repair or alter their pairs between registration and the first day of the competition, but not to wear them.
- When the competition begins, we will compare the registration photos with the ones you submit at the beginning of the competition. Pairs that have clearly been worn between registration and the competition start date will be eliminated.
- Re(Pair) contestants will only be competing against each other. They will have their own winners and their own prizes.
- Winners will likely be selected by the same judging panel as the Indigo Invitational, but this is subject to change depending on judge availability etc.
- We will be partnering with denim repair specialists, who will provide some of our Re(Pair) prizes. We are encouraging all competitors to use these repair shops either before, during, or at the end of the competition. Remember, beautiful repairs, like our jeans, get better with age. Worn and torn repairs have a beauty all their own.

## THE INDIGO INVITATIONAL: RULES

---

1. Denim must be raw.

- Your competition pair must be brand new and raw (one-washed pairs are fine, but no factory-faded jeans).
  - All colors of raw denim are welcome. Some patterned denims (e.g., Wabash and sashiko) are also allowed. If you are unsure, email us [here](#).
  - We prefer pairs with their tags still attached.
  - We will also accept pairs without tags. If you've removed the tags, please make sure to submit high-resolution photos that show that the pair is in brand-new condition. You may be asked to submit additional photographs via email.
  - Keep your jeans dry until the start date. Please wait to soak your pair until after you've submitted raw proof.
  - Except for trying on for fit, first wear should be on the first day of the competition.
  - Other than hemming, alterations before the start date are strongly discouraged.
2. Fades must be natural.
- No sanding or pinching. Let the fades develop naturally.
  - No bleach or other caustic agents (you can use a little bleach in the wash, but do not apply bleach or any other lightening agent directly to your denim).
  - Ocean washes are fine, but sand scrubs are not. You can go for a swim in your jeans, but leave the sand on the beach.
  - Starching is strongly discouraged.
  - Allow creases to set naturally. Don't force them. Our judges tend to prefer fades that both feel and look entirely natural.
  - The Golden Rule: Do *nothing* that gives you an unfair edge over your competitors.
  - Wash (by hand or machine) as many times as you like.
  - Repair your jeans as many times as necessary. Hand repairs (e.g., sashiko or patching) are encouraged.
3. Support each other
- This is a tight-knit community with a shared love of raw denim and fades. We encourage and support each other. Abuse in any form will not be tolerated.

## HOW TO ENTER

---

To enter the competition, complete all of the required fields on the Indigo Invitational Registration Page.

When you have submitted your registration, a confirmation message will appear on the screen. You may also receive an email confirmation, but these automatic emails don't always work.

Registration will be open until September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and we will be accepting raw proof until the end of October. If your jeans will be arriving after September 15<sup>th</sup>, follow the instructions below for late submissions.

You will receive an email around the end of August informing you when submissions are open. As soon as you've submitted raw proof, you can start wearing the jeans.

## RAW PROOF

---

All competitors must provide raw proof: two pictures of your jeans that make it clear that your jeans are brand new on the start date. These photos must include the raw proof hashtag, which is released on the day that we open submissions (around the end of August).

Write the hashtag on a piece of paper and make sure it is clearly visible in all raw proof photos.

NB: Do NOT add the hashtag to your photos digitally.

Raw proof can take one of two forms:

1. One picture of your jeans folded with the tags still on them and another of the front side of the jeans (preferred)
2. If the tags have been removed, please make sure that you submit well-lit photographs that we can look at closely to ensure that your jeans are brand new. You may be asked to submit close-ups via email. Jeans that show *any* signs of wear will not be eligible.

We will release the Y5 raw proof hash tag on the day we open submissions. This hash tag must be included with all raw proof photographs. See RAW PROOF and UPDATE examples below.

NB: Do not wear your jeans until after you have submitted raw proof.

## MONTHLY UPDATES

---

On or around the first of every month, all competitors must submit two unedited photographs (front and back) on the website. You'll receive an email with a link to the submission page around the 27<sup>th</sup> of each month, and the submissions page will be active until the 7<sup>th</sup> of each month.

Either fit pics or lay flats are fine. Try to be consistent from month to month.

NB: Only those who submit updates EVERY month will be eligible for the Top 50 and raffle prizes. If a crisis intervenes, making an on-time update impossible, email us as soon as you can so we can get you caught up.

We share daily updates on our IG page. If you want to be featured in one of these, take high-quality pictures of your jeans.

NB: Do not edit official updates.

The best denim photographers consider things like the lighting and the background before taking their pictures. We encourage all competitors to read our [denim photography guide](#).

NB: Instagram and Facebook posts do NOT count as update galleries. Updates must be submitted through the website.

NB: By agreeing to participate in the contest, you agree that photos submitted via email, to the competition website, or posted in the FB group can be used at the organizers' discretion. We promise to use all photos tastefully and responsibly.

## LATE ENTRIES & SUBMISSIONS

---

Late starts are fine. If you're waiting for your pair to arrive, make sure to register before September 15<sup>th</sup> (you don't need to have your pair on hand to register). As soon as your jeans arrive, email us your raw proof before you start wearing them. Remember to include the hashtag in your raw proof photos.

We allow competitors to submit their updates after the submission window has closed via email, but we strongly encourage competitors to submit on time. Make late submissions a habit and you might be eliminated.

## JUDGING

---

Judging will be conducted in three stages:

1. After the final submissions, the organizers will pick the top 50 for the Southeast Asia and the Rest of the World conferences.
2. The top 50s will be posted on the Indigo Invitational website. Competitors will receive a link to the page and be asked to vote for their favorites. Based on these votes:
  - The top 16 will automatically go on to the next round.

- The organizers will select 4 deserving wildcard pairs from the Top 50 to round out the Top 20.
3. The 20 finalists will be reviewed by our judges, who will provide organizers with a ranked Top 10 for each of the conferences.
  4. The winners of each conference will go head-to-head to determine our overall winner.

NB: Judges can participate in the competition, but they are not eligible for prizes. Sponsors can compete and are eligible for prizes.

NB: Any disparaging remarks about our judges or their decisions represent a serious violation of our code of conduct. Celebrate our winners and thank our judges, who have volunteered their time and expertise, expecting nothing in return.

## PRIZES

---

Prizes are provided by generous sponsors from all over the world. These prizes will be bundled into showcases (10 showcases per conference). Winners will select the showcase of their choice in descending order.

Prizes are transferable within the competition, but these transfers must be organized by the founder. Do not sell or barter with your prizes. If you've won something you don't need, donate it back to our prize pool so we can make sure it goes to a deserving competitor.

NB: Prizes are subject to change and are awarded at the discretion of the founder.

Prizes are sent directly from the sponsors to the winners. Winners are connected to the sponsors via email, and, following this email, it is up to the winners and the sponsors to make the appropriate arrangements.

NB: Prize sponsors may ask winners to cover shipping costs. Duties and taxes are the sole responsibility of the winners.

## SAMPLE RAW PROOF & UPDATE GALLERIES

NB: #RAWPROOF WILL NOT BE THE Y5 HASHTAG

---

RAW PROOF



LAY FLATS



FIT PICTURES



## SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES

---

The **Facebook** group will be the main liaison point for all Indigo Invitational updates and conversations. The group will remain private for the duration of the contest; only approved members will be able to view, like, and comment on posts. Observers are welcome, but we want to restrict the membership to denim enthusiasts.

You can also find us on [Instagram](#). We'll be posting highlights from the group, engaging with denim lovers and makers all over the world, and sharing news from our sponsors. Use the [#indigoinvitational](#), [#indigoinvitationalY5](#) hashtags liberally and tag us in any updates or stories that you post on IG (we share all appropriate stories shared by competitors). Please do not ask us to collaborate on posts.

Finally, when engaging with posts on either FB or IG, follow the golden rule: don't disparage other competitors' efforts. Treat female competitors respectfully. Any racist or misogynist comments will result in immediate expulsion from the competition. We're all here to have fun. That fun should *never* be had at another competitor's expense.

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, YOU CAN REACH THE ORGANIZERS  
[HERE](#).

---