



INFORMATION ABOUT COMPETING IN SCOTTISH STYLE FIDDLING



If you are new to Scottish Fiddling we hope the following information will be helpful to you in preparing for the COLONIAL HIGHLAND Scottish Fiddling Championships, which is sanctioned by [Scottish FIRE](#). Please read carefully.

PROCEDURE FOR SCOTTISH STYLE COMPETITIONS:

In Open Category: The competitors shall play first an air then pause, followed by a set of tunes – a March, Strathspey and Reel in that order without a pause. The Open category is for any fiddler who has placed in three Novice events or any fiddler who has competed previously in an Open Scottish event.

In Junior (or Intermediate): Play an air then pause, followed by a set of tunes, a March, Strathspey and Reel in that order without a pause. Competitors in this event must be under eighteen at time of the competition.

In Novice: Play an air then pause, followed by a set of tunes, a March, Strathspey and Reel in that order without a pause. However, the Novice competitor reserves the option to play only three tunes, either [1] an Air, followed by a pause, then without pausing between tunes, a Strathspey and a Reel; or [2] a March, Strathspey, and a Reel played without pausing between tunes. There is no judging preference for the number of tunes played and all Novice competitors will be evaluated equally. Novice is for any fiddler who has only played in the Scottish style for less than a year or playing fiddle for less than five years.

In event of a tie, a Strathspey and a Reel are played, including the same set which was played during initial competition.

JUDGING:

The judging of the play is as follows:

A. Rhythm/ Tempo (30 points)

Continuity of music: The tempo must be appropriate to the tune chosen and to the style of execution. The rhythm must be appropriate to the tune chosen (i.e., Reel, Strathspey, etc.)

While some variations may be appropriate for proper interpretation, the overall content and structure of the tune should not be lost to specific techniques of execution of expression.

B. Execution/ Technique (30 points)

Competitor must show command of the instrument, in fingering and bowing, technical skills in the playing of ornamentation, in correct intonation, and in the mastery of effects.

C. Style/ Interpretation (40 points)

Competitor should address the quality of the performance in appealing to the hearer's feelings, (expression), a reflection of the performer's judgment and ability in capturing and conveying the sentiment of the traditional associations of the tune.

D. Types of tunes permitted in each category:

The main criterion for the acceptability of any particular tune in any category should be how the tune is played, not how it was originally written. Transpositions from the original key and original tunes in the Scottish style are both permitted.

Specifically permitted in each category are:

1. Air: any slow air, pastoral, slow strathspey, lament, or other tune played as an air.
2. March: any march (pipe march or other) whether 2/4, 4/4/, 6/8, (or any other time signature) or any other tune played as a march.
3. Strathspey: any dance strathspey or other tune played as a strathspey.
4. Reel: any reel, Scots measure, hornpipe, or other tune played as a reel.
5. **Waltzes, jigs (6/8 and 9/8) and hornpipes played in the original manner will NOT be allowed as substitutions for any of the categories above.**

E. IN ALL ASPECTS: PERFORMANCE IN THE TRADITIONAL SCOTTISH STYLE WILL BE THE SIGNIFICANT ELEMENT IN DISTINGUISHING OTHERWISE TECHNICALLY COMPARABLE PERFORMANCES.

In the March-Strathspey-Reel sequence the following additional factors shall be considered as a part of expression.

Transition – March to Strathspey and Strathspey to Reel:

Does transition suit tunes, provide an effective bridge for the hearer in terms of melodic flow or rhythmic punctuation?

Overall Effect:

To what extent that the chosen tunes, as played, stand together as a coherent musical statement.

Scottish Fiddle music shares with other styles of Celtic fiddle music such forms as jigs, hornpipes, and reels. The Strathspey, however, is uniquely Scottish. It is to Scotland what the jig is to Ireland and the reel is to England. The Strathspey features the Scottish "snap", a combination of slow and quick notes found in no other music. Although not recorded and identified by name until 1743, the peculiar rhythm is surely linked to very early Scottish dance steps.

Another typically Scottish form of fiddle music is the March in which we can frequently hear the interplay that fiddle and bagpipe music have produced over the centuries and the influence that Scotland's military traditions have had on Scottish music. The Scottish Air and Lament have a unique character. In listening to these tunes, one can hear expressed on the fiddle, the Scottish romanticism and the Scottish capacity for depth of feeling and bittersweet melancholy.

Things to consider for the competition:

- All music should be memorized. Music sheets will be allowed under special circumstances.
- Competitors must compete in one class only.
- An additional strathspey and reel should be prepared for possible tie breaking.
- After placing twice in a category, competitors must move up to next category.
- All competitors will be expected to participate in a workshop provided by the Fiddle Judge.
- All male competitors must wear traditional Scottish dress – the kilt. Women must wear a white blouse and tartan skirt or white dress with traditional tartan sash. For Novice category, modified concert dress is allowed but Scottish dress is recommended.

Order of competition will be determined by date of receipt of entry form. First received will perform last, with the last received competing first.

Competitors must be ready to compete when called. The Competition area is in the Clan area. The Information Tent at the center of the Midway will give directions. Please be at the competition site to register between 8:00 – 8:30 A.M. Gates for the Games open at 8:00 am

The registration form for the competition, and the current rules and regulations for this competition are also available on this website. If unavailable, they may be supplied upon request of John Acuff at: fairhillhighlander@gmail.com.

As in all things, the current rules and regulations set by SFIRE and published as of the day of competition, hold sway. Competitors are responsible for checking the SFIRE website for the accurate and latest information.

<http://www.scottishfire.org/Public/Competitions/Competition-Rules.html>

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