

# Scottish Fiddling Competition

## Rules of Conduct of the Competition

This competition is sanctioned by Scottish FIRE, the national Scottish Fiddling Organization, and is conducted according to these rules (quoted from Rules for Scottish FIRE Sanctioned Competitions).

**Open and Junior** competitors will first play an air, followed by a pause. Then the competitor will play without pausing between the tunes a march, a strathspey, and a reel, in that order.

**Novice** class competitors will play 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. [Novice competitors may also choose to play an air, march, strathspey and reel as described above for Open and Junior competitors.]

**ORDER OF PLAY:** The order of play is determined by the sequence of registration. First registered plays last; last registered plays first, and so on. The steward's decision to accept or reject late entries will be final.

Highland attire (such as kilt for men, kilted skirt or dress with tartan sash for women) for competitors is strongly preferred and encouraged.

### Definitions of Classes of Competitors

**Open:** Any fiddler may compete in this class.

**Novice:** Open to any fiddler new to the art of Scottish fiddling, no age restrictions. When a novice competitor has won first place in three novice class competitions, that competitor will be required to enter in the open or junior class (if under 18).

**Junior:** Open to any fiddler under the age of 18.

The use of written music is optional in any class. [The Steward notes that it is customary not to use written music in Scottish competitions. Do not let this discourage you from competing: if you need written music, bring it!]

### Performance Standards

For the opening air and the march/strathspey/reel sequence, the following factors will be considered and weighted as follows:

**TIME**, 30 points: Tempo, continuity of music, rhythm. The tempo must be appropriate both to the tune chosen and to the style of execution. The rhythm must be appropriate to the tune chosen (i.e., strathspey, reel, etc.). While some variation may be appropriate for proper interpretation, the overall context and structure of the tune should not be lost to specific techniques of execution or expression.

**EXECUTION**, 30 points: Command of the instrument, both fingering and bowing, and technical skill in the playing or ornamentation, in correct intonation, and in the mastery of effects.

**EXPRESSION/INTERPRETATION**, 40 points: The quality of the performance that appeals to the listeners' feelings, reflecting the performer's judgment and ability in capturing and conveying the sentiment of the composer or the traditional associations of the tune. In the march/strathspey/reel sequence, the following additional factors will be considered as part of expression:

**Transitions**: March to strathspey and strathspey to reel. Does the transition suit the tunes and provide an effective bridge for the listener in terms of melodic flow, tonal and rhythmic punctuation?

**Overall coherence and effect**: Extent to which the tunes as played stand together as a coherent musical statement.

In all aspects, performance in the traditional Scottish style will be the significant element in distinguishing otherwise technically comparable performances.

**Fiddlers will perform without any other accompanying instruments.**

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:

**Air**: any slow air, pastoral, slow strathspey, lament, or other tune played as an air.

**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.

**Strathspey**: any dance strathspey or other tune played as a strathspey.

**Reel**: any reel, Scots measure, hornpipe, or other tune played as a reel.

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.

The above is a competitors' version of the FIRE competition rules copyrighted 1997. Full competition rules may be requested from FIRE.

Membership in Scottish FIRE is highly encouraged, but not required for this competition. You may obtain a membership form from your steward at the competition, or download from [www.scottishfiddling.org](http://www.scottishfiddling.org).