



## IRISH PIPE BAND ASSOCIATION CONTEST RULES

### IPBA Contest Rules

1. Preliminaries
  2. Definition of Competitive Units
  3. Grading
  4. Musical Requirements
  5. Administration of Contests
  6. Complaints Procedure
  7. Physical Layout of Contest Area
  8. Adjudication
  9. Allocation of Points
  10. Ties
  11. Conduct of Bands at Contest
  12. Champion of Champions
  13. All Ireland Championships
- APPENDIX 1 Placing System
- APPENDIX 2 Adjudicators Panel

## 1.0.0 Preliminaries

1.1.0 These Contest Rules are a code of practice for the conduct of contests held under the auspices of the I.P.B.A.

1.1.1 Contests may be sponsored by member Groups/Bands/Branches or by non-association promoters approved by the N.E.C.

1.1.2 Persons wishing to compete in I.P.B.A. approved contests must be registered members of bands of the I.P.B.A. or R.S.P.B.A. or affiliated organisations.

1.1.3 Each contest must be approved and licensed by the N.E.C.

1.1.4 No I.P.B.A. member or band will be permitted to participate in a pipe band contest or piping or drumming contest held within the I.P.B.A. jurisdiction, without I.P.B.A. approval.

1.2.0 An individual competitor, band or its sub-units may be referred to as a 'competitor' in these rules and terms are interchangeable, where appropriate.

1.2.1 The terms Pipe Major/Musical Director and also Drum Sergeant/Leading Drummer, will henceforth be interchangeable.

1.3.0 The N.E.C. is empowered to make bye-laws to cover any contingencies which may arise within the contest rules.

1.3.1 The N.E.C. shall be the ultimate arbiter where disagreements arise due to interpretation of these rules.

## 2.0.0 DEFINITION OF COMPETITIVE UNITS

2.0.1 Any band participating in a band contest shall consist of a minimum of:-

Grade 5 - 6 Pipers, 2 Snare drummers & 1 Bass drummer.  
Grade 4 - 6 Pipers, 2 Snare drummers & 1 Bass drummer,  
Grade 3B -7 Pipers, 3 Snare drummers & 1 Bass drummer,  
Grade 3A -7 Pipers, 3 Snare drummers & 1 Bass drummer,  
Grade 2 - 8 Pipers, 3 Snare drummers & 1 Bass drummer,  
Grade 1 - 8 Pipers, 3 Snare drummers & 1 Bass

## 2.0.2 MINI BANDS

Grade 5, 4, 3B and 3A: 4 Pipers, 2 Snare Drummers, 1 Bass Drummer and Tenor Drummer (optional)

Grades 2 and 1: 6 Pipers, 2 Snare Drummers, 1 Bass Drummer and Tenor Drummer (optional)

Note: The Musical Director (Pipe Major), Leading Drummer (Drum Sergeant) and Bass Drummer may play with more than one competitive unit.

### 2.0.3 Other Groupings

(a) Quintet: 3 Pipers, 1 Snare Drummer and 1 Bass Drummer.

(b) Quartet: 4 Pipers

(c) Trio: 3 Pipers

Note: All subdivided units of a band shall play in the Grade allocated to that band (not applicable to solo players).

2.0.4 Competitors may compete in other combinations or permutations, not previously mentioned, subject to the approval of the N.E.C.

### 3.0.0 GRADING

3.0.1 General: The grading of individuals or competitive units will be determined by the National Executive Committee on the advice of the National Advisory Committee.

3.0.2 The N.A.C. shall maintain records of contest results for each grade. These records shall be the basis for the grading of bands.

3.0.3 Where a change in grading occurs, from one season to another, bands or individuals to whom the changes apply will be notified accordingly, unless, pre-determined and specific rules govern the situation.

3.0.4 Any individual or group will have the right to appeal to the N.E.C. with respect to their grading. This must be done in writing, outlining their case, within a month of the notification of change of status.

3.0.5 No band or individual will be permitted to compete in a lower grade than the grade allocated to them.

3.0.6 Bands may, at specific contests approved by the N.E.C., compete in up to one grade higher than they are allotted, provided they have first played in their own grade at that contest.

3.0.7 In a contest, approved by the N.E.C. where an open grade exists, such will be open to all bands irrespective of grading, provided they have first played in their own grade at that contest.

### 3.1.0 BANDS

3.1.1 Bands shall be allocated grades as determined by the N.E.C., and consistent with their performance. The current system places bands in one of the following categories:

Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3A, Grade 3B, Grade 4, Grade 5:

### 3.2.0 SOLO COMPETITORS

3.2.1 Practice Chanter/Drum Pad: A competitor may take part in a practice chanter/drum pad contest, provided he/she has not participated in a piping/ drumming contest previously.

Note: Competitors remain in these grades for one competitive season only.

3.2.2 Under Age Contest: A competitor may participate in an Under Age contest provided he/she has not reached the specified age on the date of commencement of the contest.

3.2.3 Novice: Confined to players over sixteen years of age who have not received a 1st place in an Under Age solo contest.

Note: Competitors may remain in this grade until achieving a 1st place and will be up-graded to Junior level from the following season

#### 3.2.4 Junior:

(a) A competitor designated as such by the N.E.C.

(b) Competitors who have achieved a 1st place in an Under Age or Novice contest.

#### 3.2.5 Intermediate:

(a) Competitors designated as Intermediate Grade by the N.E.C.

(b) Competitors who have achieved a first, second or third placing in an All-Ireland Solo Championships at Junior level.

#### 3.2.6 Senior:

(a) Competitors designated as Senior Grade by the N.E.C.

(b) A Competitor who has achieved a first placing in an All Ireland Solo Championships at Intermediate level.

(c) A Competitor who has achieved a second placing in an All-Ireland Solo Championships at Intermediate level has the option of re-grading to Senior level or remaining at his/her existing grade.

In relation to Senior Grade Drummers cf decision of JAC 2017

#### 3.3.0 DRUM MAJORS

3.3.1 The grading for Drum Majors shall be as follows:

(a) Under 14 years of age - Juvenile

(b) Over 14 years of age and under 18 years old - Junior

(c) Over 18 years of age - Adult.

Note: A Competitor may compete in an under age contest provided he/she has not reached the specified age on the date of the Contest.

#### 3.4.0 DRESS, MARCHING AND DEPARTMENT

3.4.1 Contests for Dress, Marching and Department may be held on:

(a) a grade basis, where separate contests will be held for each grade, or

(b) an overall basis where all bands at a specific championships compete against each other irrespective of grading.

#### 4.0.0 MUSICAL REQUIREMENTS

##### 4.0.1 (DELETED AGM 2003)

##### 4.0.2 BANDS & MINI BANDS

###### GRADE 1

(a) March, Strathspey, Reel ( Minimum 4 parts each)

Two sets must be submitted in each.

OR

(b) Medley Selection 5 - 7 minutes

Two sets must be submitted in each.

OR

(c) March, Strathspey & Reel ( Minimum 4 parts each)

Two sets must be submitted plus Medley selection 5 - 7 minutes.

OR

(d) Medley Selection 5 - 7 minutes

Two sets must be submitted plus March, Strathspey & Reel (minimum 4 parts each)

Note: The draw for selection to be played where 2 sets submitted will take place on line just prior to the band competing.

GRADE 2

March, Strathspey, Reel ( Minimum 4 parts each) OR a Medley selection of 4 to 6 minutes. In certain contests two sets of March, Strathspey, Reels may have to be submitted, one to be played.

GRADE 3

March, Strathspey and Reel of at least four parts each OR Medley selection of 3 to 5 minutes.

GRADE 4 4a will play MSR - 4 Parts March Tempo (This can be 1 x 4 parted March or 2 x 2 parted Marches where Bands may choose Parts 1 and 2 of any of the 4 parted tunes offered on the list), 2 x 2 parted Strathspeys and 2 x 2 parted Reels. All tunes played must come from the "RSPBA Prescribed Tune List"

GRADE 5 / 4b will play 2½ to 4 minutes in quick march tempo.

4.0.3 SOLO PLAYERS

Under 14:

Piping: 4 parts in quick march tempo OR 4 part march.

Drumming: 4 parts in quick march tempo OR 2 parts slow air plus 2 part march (slow air must be played first).

Under 16:

Piping: 4 part march

Drumming: 4 part march OR 2 part slow air plus 4 part march (slow air must be played first) OR 4 part march 2 part Strathspey and 2 part Reel.

Novice:

Piping: 4 parts in quick march tempo OR a 4 part march.

Drumming: 4 parts in quick march tempo OR a 4 part march.

Junior/ Intermediate:

Piping: March, Strathspey, Reel of at least 4 parts each OR a Medley selection of 3 to 5 minutes.

Drumming: March, Strathspey, Reel of at least 4 parts each.

Senior: Piping:

\* March, Strathspey, Reel of at least 4 parts each of which two sets must be submitted

OR

\* Medley selection of 4 - 6 minutes of which two sets must be submitted.

\* Choice of set to be played will be determined by draw.

Drumming: March, Strathspey, Reel at least 4 parts each.

4.0.4 Promoters may organise contests in which individuals or groups, previously or not previously defined, compete with musical requirements varying from the norm, only if approval has been granted by the N.E.C.

4.0.5 When All-Ireland Championships are run the musical requirements shall be determined by the Joint Association Council.

4.1.0 INSTRUCTORS: A Piper from any grade Band may register as Instructor and play in contest with a Grade 4 or 5 Band.

4.1.1 One Drummer registered with a higher grade band and registered as Instructor with a Grade 4 or 5 band, may play in contest with, but only in addition to, a Grade 4 or 5 Drum Corps, but may not act as Lead Drummer.

#### 5.0.0 ADMINISTRATION OF CONTESTS

5.0.1 A Contest Committee will be constituted each year by a Branch for the efficient promotion and running of contests within its geographical jurisdiction.

Note: All Ireland contests are under the control of the Joint Association Council.

5.0.2 The Contest Committee will, at all times, ensure that the Constitution and Rules of the Irish Pipe Band Association are upheld.

5.0.3 Competitors must be registered with a band for at least 14 days prior to competing in a contest.

5.0.4 A € 25 fine be introduced for bands who fail to inform contest secretaries about a band's non-ability to attend a contest, having previously entered that contest.

#### 5.1.0 POWERS OF THE CONTEST COMMITTEE

5.1.1 A Contest Committee properly constituted will have the power to deal with all complaints, protests and disputes relating to that contest. If unable to reach a decision they will refer the matter to the Branch.

5.1.2 The Contest Committee has the power to disqualify or de bar a competitor, being satisfied that the Constitution or Contest Rules are being violated. Being thus satisfied, the Contest Committee may exclude the guilty party from the prize list, suspend the decision of the Judges and award the prizes to the Competitor next in order of merit. A disqualified Competitor will not receive Adjudicator's sheets.

5.2.0 The minimum composition of the Contest Committee shall be as follows:-

#### A. CONTEST OFFICER

- i A Contest Officer will be appointed each year by the Branch Committee.
- ii The Contest Officer will be responsible for conducting a draw for each Contest in a bona-fide manner for the order of play.
- iii The Contest Officer will be obligated to post the following in a prominent position, accessible to all, on the day of a contest.
  - (a) Name of Contest Officer.
  - (b) Order of Play of Participating Bands.
- iv In the event of a protest being lodged the Contest Officer will convene the Contest Committee to deliberate on the issue, the findings of which will be conveyed to the protesting party prior to the issue of prizes.
- v The Contest Officer will forward copies of the Adjudicators and Compilers sheets to the Hon. Sec. of the N.E.C.

#### B. COMPILER

- i A Chief Compiler will be appointed each year by the Branch Committee.
- ii He/She will maintain a list of people who will act as Compiler within the jurisdiction of the Branch.
- iii The Chief Compiler will be responsible for the accurate collation of Contest results.
- iv Compilers shall receive all result sheets, check the Adjudicators arithmetic and enter the results immediately on the Compiling Sheet.
- v At the end of the Contest, compilers should submit their completed sheets to the Contest Officer.
- vi Compilers must ensure that their work is conducted in the strictest confidence at all times and must divulge nothing during or after the Contest relating to individual bands or competitors performances.

#### C. BRANCH STEWARD

- i A Branch Steward will be appointed, each year, by the Branch Committee.
- ii He/She will maintain a list of people willing to act as steward at contests, and will be responsible for stewarding all branch events.
- iii Stewards will not be held responsible for the failure of Competitors to perform when requested
- iv The Branch Steward may disqualify any competitor who does not perform when requested or fails to perform the stipulated requirements.
- v Any band failing to comply with the minimum numbers requirement for their grade will be disqualified by the Branch Steward.

#### D. N.E.C. REPRESENTATION

Two members of the N.E.C. will be co-opted to the Contest Committee.

These representatives must check the computed result summaries and verify that they are correct.

#### 6.0.0 COMPLAINTS OR PROTESTS

6.0.1 Any individual or band wishing to lodge a complaint/protest must do so before the distribution of prizes.

6.0.2 Such complaint/protest must in writing to the Contest Officer and accompanied by a deposit of € 6.00

6.0.3 The deposit will be refunded if the complaint/protest is justified but will be retained by the N.E.C. if unjustified, trivial, groundless or malicious.

6.0.4 The Contest Committee will, within its empowerment, deal with such protests/complaints but if unable to reach a decision, shall refer it to the Branch.

6.0.5 If an aggrieved party disagrees with the findings of a Contest Committee/Branch they may appeal to the N.E.C. whose decision shall be binding on all parts

6.0.6 Notwithstanding the above the N.E.C. will have the power to investigate and adjudicate any errors or any breach of the rules.

#### 7.0.0 PHYSICAL LAYOUT OF CONTEST AREA

7.0.1 Indoor Contests: Adjudicators shall determine the relative position of Competitors, but must not encroach on the location so as to disturb the Competitors.

7.0.2 Band Contests: A start line of minimum length 4m shall be marked on the ground, a perpendicular distance of 14m from the centre of two concentric circles.

These circles shall be drawn with a radius of 4.0m and 4.5m respectively.

A band about to compete will 'draw-up' with the front line of Pipers on the start line.

#### 8.0.0 ADJUDICATION

8.0.1 The I.P.B.A. shall maintain a panel of adjudicators for Piping, Drumming, Drum Majors and Marching and Department contests. This panel shall be the prime responsibility of the N.A.C. who will recommend the list annually to the N.E.C.

8.0.2 In the event that the original Adjudicators do not turn up on the day, the Contest Committee has the right to appoint Substitute Adjudicators provided they are properly licensed.

8.0.3 Should an Adjudicator bring the organisation into disrepute, be considered incompetent or fail to carry out his/her duties in accordance with the Constitution and Rules of the I.P.B.A., the N.E.C., on the recommendation of the N.A.C. has the authority to suspend and/or remove his/her name from the panel of Adjudicators.

8.0.4 Adjudicators may not converse with members or officials of competing bands during a contest. Any required information should be sought from the Contest Officer.

8.0.5 Adjudicators are instructed to have no ties within the range of prizes to be awarded.

8.0.6 Adjudication of piping and drumming will commence on the first beat of the first three pace rolls and shall cease on the playing of the last note in the last piece being played.

8.0.7 Adjudicators will be issued with a supply of official I.P.B.A. sheets, suitably printed for the allocation of points and remarks.

These sheets should be completed in duplicate with the points and remarks.

These sheets should then be passed to the steward at the end of the Grade.

Where less than the maximum marks are awarded, the Adjudicator will provide constructive criticism in the space provided on the form.

8.0.8 At the end of the Contest, and after the distribution of prizes, the top copy of the Adjudicators sheets should be given or posted to the Band.

8.0.9 Adjudicators are allowed, after reflection on completion of Contest, to alter marks and positions allocated. Alterations must be signed on both copies of Adjudication Sheets.

8.0.10 When a band or solo performer has been disqualified the Competitor it shall be regarded as not having played and the relative sheets retained by the Association.

8.0.11 Where a full adjudication team has been engaged, i.e. one or more piping Adjudicators plus one or more drumming Adjudicators and one or more ensemble Adjudicators, a period of 15 minutes will be allowed on completion of the contest for consultation under the supervision of the ensemble Adjudicator. Adjudicators may alter marks and positions allocated.

8.0.12 After halting at the starting line, no bandsman/woman will be allowed to withdraw.

8.0.13 Placing System as per Appendix 1 may be used.

## 9.0.0 ALLOCATION OF POINTS

9.0.1 – 9.0.5 Deleted Obsolete

## 10.0.0 TIES

### 10.0.1 Solo Performances

(a) Where one Adjudicator is allocated no ties are allowed within the range of prizes to be awarded

(b) Where two or more Adjudicators are allocated, ties must be sorted out by the Adjudicators and no ties will be accepted within the range of prizes to be awarded.

### 10.0.2 Band/Miniature Band Performances

1st Preference Higher Ensemble Points

2nd Preference Higher Piping Points

3rd Preference Higher Drumming Points

All Ireland Band Championships Grade 1.  
4th Preference Higher Ensemble March/Strathspey/Reel  
5th Preference Higher Piping March/Strathspey/Reel  
6th Preference Higher Drumming March/Strathspey/Reel

In the event of a tie in the All-Ireland Drumming Championships the Corps with the higher total in March/Strathspey/Reel takes preference.

#### 11.0.0 CONDUCT OF BANDS AT CONTEST

11.0.1 Bands must be in readiness to take up their position immediately the preceding band retires. Pipe Majors should bring their bands to attention with the pipes in the "down" position at the starting line.

11.0.2 Any band not ready to start in order of draw may risk disqualification.

11.0.3 Pipe Majors must be on the right flank of their bands. The lead drummer may take up any position within the snare drum section.

11.0.4 The Pipe Major shall be responsible to see that all his/her band and members comply with the directions of the officials and stewards and adhere to the I.P.B.A. rules.

11.0.5 The Pipe Major or Drum Major, as the case may be, shall use the authorised words of command only. They shall observe due care that the "cautionary" word of command is distinct from the Executive Command.

Example of Authorised words of command:-

Cautionary Executive Cautionary Executive

Band Atten-"shun" Buidhean "Aire"  
Band Get "ready" Buidhean Biodaidh "Reidh"  
Band Ready Buidhean "Reidh"  
By the right Quick March Do reir Dheis "Go mear Miarseal"  
Band reform Quick March Buidhean Line "Atharraigh"

11.0.6 Any band (Grade 4 or above) must comply with officials when asked to play for a heat of the Drum Majors' contest, provided they have completed their own grade performance.

#### 12.0.0 CHAMPION OF CHAMPIONS

12.0.1 For the purpose of keeping a true and accurate record of the Champion of Champions Contest, Contest Officers must forward a copy of the summary sheet for each grade to the National Secretary at the earliest possible date after the completion of a contest and not later than two weeks after the contest.

12.0.2 A band's best five results will be taken into account when points are being calculated.

12.0.3 Where a tie exists after this process the title will go to the band with the highest number of 1st prizes in any particular grade.

Should a tie still exist, the highest number of 2nd prizes shall be taken into account.

Should this fail to break the tie, a band's fifth best result will be taken into account.

12.0.4 Points will be awarded on the following basis:

- 1st prize - 3 points
- 2nd prize - 2 points
- 3rd prize - 1 point

A band may only be awarded maximum points for winning a Grade where three bands from that Grade have competed. Where fewer than three bands from that Grade have competed in the Grade the points awarded will be reduced as follows:

One band competed from the Grade: 1st prize - 1 point

Two bands compete from the Grade:

- 1st prize - 2 points
- 2nd prize - 1 point

12.0.5 Points will be awarded for wins in the All-Ireland Championships irrespective of whether the Championships are held North or South.

Points will be awarded on the following basis:

- 1st prize - 6 points
- 2nd prize - 5 points
- 3rd prize - 4 points
- 4th prize - 3 points
- 5th prize - 2 points

12.0.6 A trophy officer will be appointed by the N.E.C. to look after the Champion of Champion trophies.

12.0.7 Champion of Champions trophies must be returned to the trophy officer before the 30th November.

12.0.8 The trophies for Champion of Champions will be awarded at the A.G.M. of the I.P.B.A. each January.

#### 13.0.0 ALL IRELAND CHAMPIONSHIPS

13.0.1 A forum called the Joint Association Council (JAC) shall be held annually between the I.P.B.A. and the Northern Ireland Branch of the R.S.P.B.A. for the All-Ireland Championships for Pipe Bands and Solo Players.

13.0.2 The Contests will be under the control of the J.A.C. Normally, the venues will alternate annually between North and South and when held in the jurisdiction of the I.P.B.A. will be the responsibility of the N.E.C.

13.0.3 Winners in the various grades shall hold the title All Ireland Champion from the date of the contest until the following year's Championships.

13.0.4 I.P.B.A. representations on the J.A.C. shall consist of:

- (a) Chairperson of the N.E.C.

(b) Secretary of the N.E.C.

(c) A competent Piper and Drummer appointed by the N.E.C.

13.0.5 A trophy officer shall be appointed by the NEC who has responsibility for All Ireland Solo and Pipe Band Championship trophies and the IPBA Champion of Champions awards.

13.0.6 Trophies for the All Ireland Pipe Band Championships must be returned to the National Trophy Officer before 31st. May preceding the All Ireland each year. Failure to do so will result in an automatic fine of € 60.

13.0.7 A band will not be allowed complete on the day of an All Ireland Pipe Band Championship unless any trophy won by that band in the preceding All Ireland has been returned.

13.0.8 A player will not be allowed compete on the day of an All Ireland Solo Piping and Drumming Championship unless any trophy won by him/her in the preceding All Ireland has been returned.

## PLACING SYSTEM

The system requires each adjudicator to write critique sheets as each band performs.

The adjudicator completes the sections for Introduction and Tone but does not allocate points for Musical Performance.

The adjudicator then allocates a position or Placing on his/her own Personal Record Sheet on completion of the band performance.

At the end of the contest the adjudicator will have a personal record sheet showing all the bands ranked in order of merit from first to last.

This information is then transferred to an Adjudicator's Result Sheet and this sheet is then given to the compiler.

Adjudicator's Result Sheets are then transferred to the Contest Master Sheet putting the placing numbers allocated to each competitor.

The placing numbers are then totalled.

The competitor with the lowest total is the winner.

## ALLOCATIONS

### BAND AND MINI BAND CONTEST

Two Piping, One Drumming and One Ensemble Adjudicator Single Placing

Two Piping, One Drumming Adjudicator Single Placing

One Piping, One Drumming and One Ensemble Adjudicator Single Placing

One Piping and One Drumming Adjudicator Piping Double Placing

Drumming Single Placing

### SOLO CONTESTS

All Adjudicators Single Placing

### N.B. DOUBLE PLACING

Double placing is calculated by multiplying Single Placing by two, i.e., 1st Place gets Two Placing Points, 2nd Place gets Four Placing Points and so on.

## APPENDIX TWO

ADJUDICATORS PANEL  
PASSED AGM 2001

To address the present worrying shortage of adjudicators in the IPBA area, the criteria for admission to the Adjudicators Panel will be broadened to include the following categories of personnel:

(a) Holders of the RSPBA Advanced Certificate who have satisfactorily completed three trial runs in Northern Ireland or Scotland.

(b) Pipers and Drummers who have a minimum of three years continued experience in a leadership role at Grade 1 level (Pipe Major; Drum Sergeant)

(c) Solo Pipers and Drummers who have placed in the top three in the Senior Grade of the All Ireland Solos (solo adjudicators only)

1. Responsibility for the induction of new adjudicators will rest with the College of Piping and Drumming.

2. Personnel in all categories must attend an adjudicators seminar, or tutorial, organised by the College of Piping and Drumming prior to taking their place on the Adjudicators' panel.

3. In the case of new adjudicators, the backing sheets from three trial run contests adjudicated will be reviewed by a panel of at least two piping adjudicators and two drumming adjudicators set up from the present adjudicators panel.

A written report on these proceedings will be presented to each new adjudicator in the form of constructive feedback.

4. If, after these trial runs have taken place, it is considered that serious errors are being made or that there are deficiencies in adjudication technique, a new adjudicator may be referred for further training, including further trial runs in the IPBA area or Northern Ireland.

5. Should a person from category (B) or (C) fail the induction process, he/she can then only join the adjudicators' panel through category (A) as stated above i.e. Advanced Certificate plus three approved Trial Runs in Northern Ireland.