

*Southern*

*United*

*States*

*Pipe*

*Band*

*Association*



*Rules and Requirements  
for Competition*

**Effective Date: June 3, 2006**

**S.U.S.P.B.A. COMPETITION**  
**RULES AND REQUIREMENTS**

**SECTION 1**

**General Rules**

All SUSPBA sanctioned contests, including Pipe Band, Solo Piping and Drumming, Quartet, Mini Band, Drum Major, and Drum Corps Competitions shall be open to the following individuals or Bands:

- Members in good standing of the SUSPBA.
- Individuals and Bands who are members in good standing of pipe band associations recognized by the SUSPBA.

**A. Grading System**

**1. Bands:** Bands shall be graded as follows: Grade I, Grade II, Grade III, Grade IVA, Grade IVB, and Grade V. The SUSPBA Music Advisory Board shall assign a grade to all competing bands. Each band will receive notification of its classification, with the grade assigned being the minimum level at which the band may compete. Bands will be notified of their grade at the SUSPBA Annual General Meeting (AGM).

**a. Challenges**

All sanctioned contests shall permit bands to challenge to the next grade level provided they meet all of the requirements of the higher grade and at least one band of the higher grade is competing at that competition. Challenging bands will be awarded points toward year-end Champion Supreme standings in their present grade only. If a band wins prizes in both grades, the Games shall award both monetary prizes. Challenging bands may submit entry and registration fees prior to or on the day of the sanctioned contest.

**b. Band Grading**

All band grades shall be reviewed at the end of each competition season by the SUSPBA Music Advisory Board and the band may be re-graded if appropriate. All band requests for re-grading will be considered at that time. The effective date of all re-graded bands will be September 1 of each year. Bands may be re-graded after their first competition if deemed appropriate by the Music Advisory Board and approved by the Executive Board. Bands may be downgraded only after petitioning the SUSPBA Music Advisory Board. Request for downgrading will be reviewed by the Music Advisory Board and their decision will be final.

**2. Individuals:** The SUSPBA Music Advisory Board shall assign a grade to all individual competitors. All competitors will be notified of their grade at the SUSPBA AGM. Individuals may be assigned different light music and *piobaireachd* grades. Individuals will be graded as follows:

**a. Piping:**

(1) Light Music (*Ceol beag*) Professional, Amateur Grades I, II, III, IV- 29 & under, IV- 30 & over, V- 29 & under, and V- 30 & over.

(2) *Piobaireachd* (*Ceol mor*) Professional, Amateur Grades I, II, III, IV – 29 & under, IV – 30 & over.

**b. Drumming:** Snare – Professional and Amateur Grades I, II, III, IV; Professional and Amateur Tenor Drum; and Professional and Amateur Bass Drum.

**c. Drum Major:** Professional, Amateur, and Juvenile.

Individual competitors may not compete in a lesser grade than they are assigned. A competitor may move up one or more grades, but must remain in that higher grade, and it shall become their permanent new grade for the remainder of that competition season. Competitors may be downgraded only after petitioning the SUSPBA Music Advisory Board by the deadline posted to the Website. Requests for downgrading will be reviewed by the Music Advisory Board and their decision will be final.

The SUSPBA Music Advisory Board shall review all individual grades at the end of each competition season and make their recommendations to the executive board that will approve or disapprove their recommendations.

**B. Contest Results**

The results of all contests held at sanctioned Games shall be retained by the SUSPBA Statistician until the end of the competition season.

**C. Rule Changes**

Any and all competition rules and requirements may be changed only at the official SUSPBA AGM. Rule changes covering competition need not be submitted prior to the AGM, with the exception of changes made by the (ANAPBA) Alliance of North American Pipe Band Association. In this case the Executive Committee will announce such changes to the membership via the SUSPBA Website.

**SECTION 2**

**Rules and Requirements Governing Pipe Band Competition**

**A. Band Member Requirements**

For Pipe Band Competition, each band must meet the minimum player requirements according to grade. Those requirements are:

<u>GRADE</u>	<u>PIPERS</u>	<u>SNARE DRUMS</u>	<u>BASS</u>	<u>TENOR</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
I	8	3	1	1	13
II	8	3	1	1	13
III	6	2	1	1	10
IVA&B	5	2	1	1	9
V	5	2	1	0	8

**B. Pipe Band Tune Requirements**

- 1. Requirements** fall into three basic musical categories, March, Strathspey and Reel (M/S/R); Medley; and Quick March Selection. The March, Strathspey and Reel will contain a march in 2/4 time and all three tunes will consist of at least four parts. The Medley will be a selection of tunes of any length, type, tempo and time signature, which varies in overall length according to grade and may not include an M/S/R set that would qualify to meet the M/S/R requirement. The Quick March Selection must consist of traditional quick march music only – slow airs and slow marches are NOT eligible for competition.

2. **Grade 4A, 4B and 5 bands:** The Quick March Selection must consist of traditional quick march music only. Slow airs and slow marches are not eligible for this competition. Grade 4 bands – Medley and Quick March Selection **MUST** consist of different tunes.
3. The number of submissions and the time limits for each band grade are as follows:

Grade	M/S/R	Medley	Quick March Selection
1	2	2 (5 to 7 minutes)	N/A
2	2	1 (4 to 6 minutes)	N/A
3	1	1 (3 to 5 minutes)	N/A
4A	N/A	1 (3 to 5 minutes)	2 min 45 sec to 4 min 30 seconds
4B	N/A	1 (3 to 5 minutes)	2 min 45 sec to 4 min 30 seconds
5	N/A	N/A	2 min 45 sec to 4 min 30 seconds

### C. Band Membership and Roster

1. **Member:** A band member is defined as any individual whose dues are current with the association. A playing member is defined as a piper or drummer whose name appears on the band roster submitted to the SUSPBA Secretary. The SUSPBA competition season officially starts September 1 and ends May 31 of each year. Memberships are valid from September 1 to August 31 of the following year.
2. **Membership Dues:** Dues must be paid at least 30 days before the next sanctioned contest where the band wishes to compete for the band to be eligible to participate. Members joining after January 1 of each calendar year must submit an additional \$5.00 per member with the yearly membership fee.
3. **Roster:**
  - a. **Changes:** Any changes to the band roster must be sent to the secretary **POSTMARKED** at least thirty (30) days prior to the sanctioned event for which the change is to come into effect. Each change has an administrative charge of \$2.00 and must be accompanied by the full band roster showing all changes requested. The Executive Committee shall decide when the band will be recognized and graded for competition purposes.
  - b. **Two Bands within the same organization:** A member of a single organization can be on two band rosters within that organization only if:
    - The member plays a different instrument on each roster, and
    - Both bands can play simultaneously on a competition circle.
4. **Instructors:** Full time piping and drumming instructors are defined as persons recognized on a band's competition roster and who instruct the band on a regular basis. One full-time piping and/or one full-time drumming instructor may register and compete with one lower graded band, provided they are not one of the minimum number of players, and also provided that they complete a signed registration form and submit it to the Secretary least thirty (30) days prior to the sanctioned event. Instructors may compete as instructors with Grade V and IV bands only. Instructors may be a part of another band, but may not be an instructor for more than one band. Instructors may not compete as a lead piper or lead drummer.
5. **Penalty for not adhering to the conditions of the instructor rule:** The penalty for first offense will be to forfeit the prize money and results of the competition in question. The second offense will result in the band being suspended from competition for a period of one year.

- 6. Dual Musician:** A musician who plays more than one instrument, (whether it be pipes, snare, tenor, or bass) may play one instrument with one band and a different instrument with a band of a different grade, provided that he or she is registered with the Secretary on both band's rosters with the appropriate instrument.

**D. Band Representatives**

Each band shall have an official representative present at the Games. This individual may be present for all drawings and shall be responsible for having their band at the competition area at the scheduled time.

**E. Draw for Position. Selection of Tunes. Order of Play**

- Tune Selections for the year will be chosen by the Executive Committee after the Highland Games/ Sanctioning meeting, announced to all bands and posted to the SUSPBA Website. If the Quick March selection is chosen for the Grade 4A Bands, then Grade 4B Bands will play a medley. If a medley is selected for the Grade 4A Bands, then the Grade 4B bands will play a quick march selection.
- The draw for playing position within a grade will be held at 10:00 a.m. on the day of competition. The Contest Committee shall conduct the draw, and all bands may send a representative to the draw. The Committee will draw for any band not providing a representative. For order of play, all bands entered in a particular grade will have their names submitted to a ballot. Playing position shall be submitted to a separate ballot with the two ballots being drawn simultaneously. Grade I and Challenging Grade II bands shall submit printed manuscripts of their tunes at the time of the draw. These will be available to judges on the field, and will be returned to the bands with their score sheets. In the event that a band is disqualified or withdraws after the draw has been made, their allotted time slot will be left open before the next band is expected on the field.
- Grade I bands (and challenging Grade II bands) will submit tune listings for two M/S/R's or two medleys with the entry form for each games and will submit these lists at the draw on contest day. There will be a second draw (a.k.a. shotgun draw) as each band comes to the start line of the contest area to determine which of the two M/S/R's or (if selected) medleys will be played. Names of the tunes for M/S/R's # 1 and # 2 or (if selected) manuscripts of the tunes for medleys # 1 and # 2 will be presented to a steward at the shotgun draw, who will then hand them to the judges.
- Grade II bands (and challenging Grade III bands) will submit tune listings for two M/S/R's or one medley with the entry form for each games and will submit the lists at the draw on contest day. If the M/S/R is chosen for Grade II, the same procedure for selection of which M/SR to play will be followed as in Grade 1 M/S/R contest.
- Band Competitions will occur in the following order: Grade V, Grade IVB, Grade IVA, Grade III, Grade II, Grade I, and Special Contests.

**F. Substitute Bass or Substitute Tenor Drummers**

In the event that a bass drummer or a tenor drummer is unable to compete with his or her band, that band may choose a bass drummer or a tenor drummer from another band or one that is an SUSPBA member and not affiliated with any band, if that drummer is so willing, or the band may select any member that appears on their band roster to perform as a substitute drummer.

**G. Performance on the Field**

**Time is considered started when the voice command is given to quick march.**

**1. Grade V:**

**Quick March Selection** Bands have the following options:

a. Begin marching on the first three pace roll or drum intro, form a circle, and finish the selection in the circle.

**OR**

b. March into a circle (to a drum tap), start and finish the selection in the circle.

**2. Grade IV(A&B):**

**Quick March Selection**

Begin marching on the first three pace roll or drum intro, form a circle, and finish the selection in the circle.

**Medley** Bands have the following options:

a. Begin marching on the first three pace roll or drum intro, form a circle and finish the selection in the circle.

**OR**

b. March into a circle (to a drum tap), start and finish the selection in the circle.

**3. Grade III:**

**M/S/R**

Bands must begin marching on the first three-pace roll, form a circle while playing and finish the set.

**Medley** Bands have the following options:

a. Begin marching on the first three pace roll or drum intro, form a circle and finish the medley in the circle.

**OR**

b. March into a circle (to a drum tap), start and finish the medley in the circle.

**4. Grade II:**

**M/S/R** Bands must begin marching on the first three-pace roll, form a circle while playing and finish the set in the circle.

**Medley** Bands have the following options:

a. Begin marching on the first three pace roll or drum intro, form a circle and finish the medley in the circle.

**OR**

b. March into a circle (to a drum tap), start and finish the medley in the circle.

**5. Grade I:**

**M/S/R** Bands must begin marching on the first three-pace roll, form a circle while playing and finish the set in the circle.

**Medley** Bands have the following options:

a. Begin marching on the first three pace roll or drum intro, form a circle and finish the medley in the circle.

**OR**

b. March into a circle (to a drum tap), start and finish the medley in the circle.

**6. Leaving the field**

At the conclusion of each competition performance, bands may play off the field.

See Section 4D for general rules of judging.

## H. Judging the Outcome of Competition

### 1. Each Band's performance will be evaluated as follows:

- a. Pipe Section: Performance will be evaluated on the following areas:
  - Introduction
  - Tempos, breaks and finish
  - Tuning and tone of chanters and drones
  - Execution
  - Expression
- b. Drum Section: Performance will be evaluated on the following areas:
  - Rolls
  - Tone
  - Tempos
  - Execution
  - Rhythm and expression
  - Quality and variety
  - Blend

### 2. Determining Band Placing and Champion Supreme

- a. Band scoring will be an unweighted ranking with equal weight between Piping, Piping, Ensemble and Drumming judges. Simply add up the unweighted ranks and low score wins.

Piping # 1	25 %	Ensemble	25 %
Piping # 2	25 %	Drumming	25 %

In the event of a tie, Ensemble ranking shall determine the winner.

- b. The following scale shall be used to assign points to the placing position of each band.

1st--	88 points
2nd--	56 points
3rd--	38 points
4th--	25 points
- c. For Championship Supreme winner:
  - The band with the highest number of points from all games will be declared the winner.
  - There will be a Championship Supreme winner in each active band grade.

## SECTION 3

### Rules and Requirements Governing Individual Piping and Drumming Competition

#### A. Membership

Individual competitors who are not a member of a band must join as an individual member. Individual dues must be paid to the SUSPBA secretary at least 30 days prior to the contest in which the individual wishes to compete. Members joining after January 1 of each calendar year must submit an additional \$5.00 with the yearly membership fee.

**B. Registration**

All individual competitors should register for competition on the registration form(s) provided by the SUSPBA on the SUSPBA Website.

**C. Order of Play**

Competitors must register with the steward for their particular event prior to the start of that event. If an order of play has been established, all competitors must follow that order of play. Any competitor failing to report to the steward within five (5) minutes of their appointed time may be disqualified from that event.

**D. Individual Piping Competition Requirements**

Unless otherwise noted, all tunes are to be a minimum of 4 parts.

Grade	2/4 March	S&R	Piobaireachd	6/8 March	H/J	Jig
Professional	4	4 & 4	4	3, play 2	3 & 3	4, play 1 twice through
1	2	2 & 2	3	2	2 & 2	2, play 1 twice through
2	2	1 & 1	2	1	1 & 1	2 (play 1)
3	1	1 & 1	1	1	0	1
4	1	0	ground + 1st variation	1	0	0
5	1 (2 parts minimum) march, any time signature					

Beginner Practice Chanter: [Optional] One 2-part march in any time signature played on the practice chanter.

**E. Piping Competition Guidelines**

1. Each competitor's performance will be evaluated as follows:
  - Time, including tempos and breaks between tunes
  - Tuning and tone of chanter and drones
  - Execution
  - Expression
2. Judges will assign placings to the competitors, 1st – 6th.
3. Competitors in any march competition, except Grade V, **will be required to march during their performance**, unless physically handicapped.
4. In competitions where the competitor must submit more than one tune or set of tunes, the judge shall be presented with the required number of tunes and shall determine the tune(s) to be played.

**F. Individual Snare Drumming Competition Requirements**

Unless otherwise noted, all tunes are to be a minimum of 4 parts.

Grade	2/4 March	6/8 March	MSR	H/J	Drum Solo
Professional	0	0	Submit 2, play one set	Submit 2, play one set	1, 3-5 minutes
1	0	0	1	1	1, 2-4 minutes
2	0	0	1	1	0
3	0	1	1	0	0
4	See below	0	0	0	0
Beginner	See below	0	0	0	0

Grade 4: One 4-part march or two different 2-part marches or one 2-part march played twice. May be of any time signature.

Beginner - [Optional] Two parts of a march, any time signature, on the drum pad. No piper required.

**G. Snare Drumming Competition Guidelines**

1. Individual side drumming shall be held as a separate event with an individual judge evaluating each competitor's performance.
2. Each competitor's performance will be evaluated as follows:
  - Rolls
  - Tone
  - Tempos
  - Execution
  - Rhythm and Expression
  - Quality and Variety
  - Blend
3. Judges will assign placings to the competitors, 1st – 6th.
4. A minimum of one (1) and a maximum of two (2) pipers may accompany each side-drumming competitor. In the absence of accompaniment, a piping recording may be substituted. It is the responsibility of the competitor to provide the music and its operation.

**H. Tenor Drumming Competition Requirements**

Professional: A March, Strathspey and Reel set with each being a minimum of four (4) parts. Hornpipe/Jig (one of each) is optional

Amateur: A four (4) part march in 2/4 time signature.

Each tenor drum competitor will be accompanied by a minimum of one (1), and a maximum of (2) pipers provided by the competitor. The competitor may also provide one (1) snare drummer (optional). In the absence of accompaniment, a piping recording may be substituted. It is the responsibility of the competitor to provide the music and its operation.

**I. Tenor Drumming Competition Guidelines**

1. Tenor Drum competition will be held as a separate event with an individual judge evaluating each competitor's performance individually.
2. A second tenor competition may be conducted in a group or line format with a band providing the accompaniment but only in addition to the individual competition and not as a replacement for the individual event.

3. Guidelines for competition are:
  - a. Deportment – competitors must maintain proper stance at attention.
  - b. Competitors must perform:
    - Two three pace roll-offs
    - Rhythm beatings in the proper tempo in the piano segment of each part
    - Flourishes or swinging of the sticks, in the proper tempo in the forte segment of each part.
  - c. Competitors will also be judged on:
    - Their ability to display smoothness and rhythm while playing
    - Their ability to play in time to the music, regardless of which time signature is chosen.

#### **J. Bass Drumming Competition Requirements**

Professional: A March, Strathspey and Reel set with each being a minimum of four (4) parts.

Amateur: Will be adjudicated in the band competition circle and tune selection will vary among bands.

1. Each professional bass drum competitor will be accompanied by a minimum of one (1), and a maximum of (2) pipers provided by the competitor. The competitor may also provide one (1) snare drummer (optional). In the absence of accompaniment, a piping recording may be substituted. It is the responsibility of the competitor to provide the music and its operation.
2. Bass drum competitors will be evaluated in the following areas:
  - a. Drum tone – the drum must blend with, not overpower, the pipes and snare drum. It must be clear enough to be distinguished by the pipers and snare drummer, and must have a proper bass sound, with no “rumbling” or “ringing” during the band’s performance.
  - b. Breaks and tempos – tempos for all tunes must begin on the first beat of each tune.
  - c. Rhythm beats must coincide with the pipes and snare drums for a pointing effect.

#### **K. Bass Drumming Competitions Guidelines**

1. Professional Bass Drum competition will be held as a separate event with an individual judge evaluating each competitor’s performance individually.
2. Amateur Bass competition will be held during band competition and the best bass drummer for each grade shall be awarded.

#### **L. Drum Major Competition Requirements and Guidelines**

1. The Drum Major competition shall be held as a separate event, under the drum major contest regulations of the RSPBA.
2. The competition will be controlled by the following regulations:
  - a. Contest composition – The contest will be divided into three grades: “Juvenile” for competitors under the age of 18, “Professional” and “Amateur”. The contest will consist of a dress inspection, and a marching/flourishing evaluation (referred to henceforth as the “evaluation”).
  - b. Dress inspection - The dress inspection will be held before the evaluation. The dress inspection will commence with the command for the competitors to come to attention, and end with the command for the competitors to stand at ease.
  - c. Accompaniment - The evaluation will be held to musical accompaniment by a pipe band, provided by the Highland Games Committee, consisting of quick-time march(es) in 2/4, 4/4, or (preferably) 6/8 time. Depending on the playing ability of the pipe band, the adjudicator may incorporate a 2/4 slow march (this is recommended).

- d. Evaluation composition - The evaluation will consist of roll-offs, into quick-time marches played in succession until the judge signals the band to stop. If the adjudicator chooses to incorporate a 2/4 slow march (recommended), the pipe band will play 2 three-beat roll-offs, into one part (with a repeat) of slow march, directly into the quick-march. The band will continue playing quick-time marches until the adjudicator signals for the double-tap. The evaluation will commence with the command to the competitors to come to attention, and end with the command for the competitors to stand at ease. Competitors will be responsible for signaling the break between the slow-march and quick-march (if applicable), counter marching, halting, and signaling the double-tap. The adjudicator will be responsible for instructing the competitors where these items are to take place.
  - e. Evaluation length - The minimum length of evaluation will be equivalent to 1 ½ lengths (juvenile) or 2 ½ lengths (adult) of the defined contest field (if time/space permits, the duration may be increased at the adjudicator's discretion). The adjudicator will issue instructions to the competitors identifying the points on the field at which counter-marches will be performed and the position at which the competitors will halt.
  - f. Heats - The evaluation will be divided into heats. There will be separate heats held for juvenile and adult competitors. The maximum number of competitors permitted in any one heat is five.
  - g. Scoring - Each competitor will be given a place (1st, 2nd, 3rd...) in each applicable category. Placing will be awarded for each category across all heats combined for each grade (i.e., if there are more than five competitors, placing will be distributed across each category regardless of the number of heats). An average placing will be calculated for each competitor, and rounded to one decimal. Final placing will be calculated for each competitor by the average placing, from lowest to highest. In the event of a tie, the Foot Drill placing will determine the winner.
3. Competitors will be evaluated under the following categories:
- a. Dress Inspection – Competitors will be judged for the proper wear of the Scottish uniform. Uniforms will be broken into two categories: Civilian style and Military style. The adjudicator will decide which category the uniform of each competitor falls under. The following uniform items are required, unless specifically excluded by the adjudicator:
    - i. Civilian style uniform: Black or brown shoes, hose, flashes, kilt, sporran, belt, collared shirt, tie, jacket, hat (Glengarry or Balmoral).
    - ii. Military style uniform: Black shoes, hose / hose tops, spats, flashes, kilt, sporran, jacket, hat (Glengarry, Balmoral, or feather bonnet).
    - iii. Other items (sash, kilt pin, vest, cross belt, etc...) are not required, but may be worn at the discretion of the competitor. However, if worn, these items will be taken into consideration when placing the competitor.
  - b. Marching – Movement of and control of the “free” arm when marching, movement and control of the “mace” arm when marching, and execution of the “walk” when/if performed.
  - c. Deportment – Erectness of body, general bearing, and maintenance of “eye-line”.
  - d. Foot Drill – Coming to attention, stepping off, counter-marching, halting, and standing at ease (optional) at the end of the competition.
  - e. Mace Drill/Signals – Proper execution of the change of time (if applicable), counter-march, halt, and double-tap signals.
  - f. Flourish Variety – The variety between differing flourishes performed. A greater variety of flourishes performed will result in a higher placing.
  - g. Flourish Quality – Fluency with which the flourishes are performed, the confidence displayed by the competitor while flourishing, and the level of accuracy attained with each flourish.
  - h. Flourish Degree of Difficulty – General level of difficulty of flourishes performed. Attempting more difficult flourishes will result in a higher placing.

4. The maximum score will be 100 points. Scoring is divided as follows:
  - a. Dress Regulations - 20 pts maximum
  - b. Marching & Deportment - 40 pts maximum
  - c. Flourish - 40 pts maximum
5. An official SUSPBA drum major score sheet shall be completed listing the point tabulations for each competitor.

## **SECTION 4**

### **Rules and Requirements for Judging**

#### **A. Judging Qualifications**

Any Piping, Drumming, or Ensemble judge asked to judge at Highland Games sanctioned by the SUSPBA must be a member of the SUSPBA Adjudication Panel. Written approval may be granted on a case-by-case basis by the Judges Committee to guest judges who are listed on their home association's panel.

#### **B. Number of Judges per Contest**

1. There shall be at least two (2) Piping judges, (1) Drumming judge, and one (1) Ensemble judge for any Pipe Band contest.
2. All individual contests shall have a minimum of one judge.

#### **C. Use of SUSPBA Score Sheets**

1. The appropriate SUSPBA score sheets will be provided to each judge prior to the start of the contest. Judges are asked to make the fullest use of the score sheets provided in evaluating the competitor.
2. Each score sheet used by the judges must bear the judge's signature and all forms, used or unused, must be returned to the Games' Piping & Drumming administration area at the conclusion of the contest.

#### **D. General Judging Rules**

1. During any band performance, judges will not be allowed to converse with one another or to compare notes.
2. The center of the circle is to be **15 yards** from the starting line. The band circle shall have a diameter of **8 yards** and the judge's circle shall have a diameter of **14 yards**. Judges must remain outside the judge's circle
3. Judges will be allowed to compete individually on the day they are hired to adjudicate either individual or band contests, only in contests other than the instrument or discipline they have been hired to adjudicate.
4. No judge will award any two (or more) competitors within an event the same score/placing through sixth (6th) place for solos or through tenth (10th) place for bands. Year-end points will be awarded through four places for solos and bands.

## **SECTION 5**

### **Special Competition Events**

- Any special events, such as Quartet, Mini-Band or Drum Salute Competitions may be run at the Games Committees' discretion. The Games Committee will furnish their own Rules & Requirements for the special event.
- The SUSPBA will assist when requested.