



Rules for Solo Piping Competitions

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1 General Rules

1.1 Purpose

The BAG was founded with the aim of promoting the Piping and Drumming scene in Germany and continuously raising the level of play by organizing and supporting various competitions. Since 1990, several competitions have been established in Germany. These rules are intended to ensure consistency, but above all, clarity in the design of the competition among competitors, organizers, and judges.

Competitions are divided into different levels (Grades). This is to ensure that players of the same level compete against each other. In addition, organizers can offer different stages of individual disciplines.

1.2 Validity

The present revision of the rules is valid from the 2026 season. The Solo-Board of the BAG is responsible for updating and interpreting the rules as well as final decisions (solo-board@bagev.de). The old regulations lose their validity from the 2026 season. Beginning and end of a season correspond to the beginning and end of the calendar year.

2 Rules for organizers

The organizers of competitions appoint at least one contact person who is authorized by the BAG to make decisions that will become necessary on the day of the competition. Judges and helpers must be informed about this person(s). The contact persons must ensure that the order

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of the contestants in the individual game levels is announced in advance of the event and stewards are deployed to ensure the smooth running of the event. A short-term registration on the day of the event itself is possible after individual agreement with the organizer.

In addition, at least one member of the BAG Management Board and / or the Solo-Board should be present at these BAG events.

The judges should rate at least the first six places of each event, depending on the overall size of the field. The organizer shall inform the judge. The organizer also informs the judge about the requirements of the respective events.

The placement of the first six places must be published right after the award ceremony. In the week following the competition, a list of all competitors, arranged according to levels and results, must be sent to the BAG Solo-Board (solo-board@bagev.de).

Critique sheets must be handed out to the competitors directly after the award ceremony. However, organizers are not obliged to forward critique sheets to previously departed competitors.

Organizers provide tuning rooms for indoor competitions, which are available to the participant about 30 minutes before the performance. Outdoor Competitions uses an open space near the stage.

Organizers should grant discounts to BAG members on start-up fees.

The organizers are free to offer further competitions beyond the events mentioned here, e.g. Practice Chanter or Open Competitions. The participants must be informed about the valid rules for these events when registering.

3 Rules for Participants

3.1 Classification ("Grading")

Newcomers to the competition must send grading recordings to the Solo-Board, which will monitor the playing quality of the player at least 14 days before registration deadline. Grading is then carried out by the Solo-Board. The player will receive feedback on this as soon as possible. A self-classification is not possible. If you are unsure, you can consult the Solo-Board.

The distinction between professional and amateur competitions usual in Scotland or North America does not exist in Germany. If this is the case, players who have successfully participated in professional competitions will automatically be classified in Grade 1 (Light Music and Ceol Mor).

The newly created Open Grade should also be included. If an Open Grade is offered, professional players accept this part and don't play in amateur Grade 1. Amateur players are allowed to play in Open Grade as well. Professional Players play in Grade 1 only, when an Open Level is not offered.

The player usually stays in the respective game level, at least until the end of the season (end of the calendar year). A change of the classification (Up- or Down- Grading) can only be made on request to the Solo-Board. For this purpose, references must be submitted (competition results, certificates, audio, or video recordings), which justify the change of the level of play.

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The final decision is up to the Solo-Board. Unauthorized Up- / Downgrading or compulsory Up-grading after winning a competition is not possible.

At the end of a season - even if no request is made by the player - the Solo-Board reserves the right to review the classification of individual players and, if necessary, to adapt it to the respective level of play. In exceptional cases, this can also happen during a current season.

The grades in Light Music and Piobaireachd should be considered separately so that, for example, a player playing Light music in Grade 2 might play Piobaireachd in Grade 4.

The BAG Solo-Board, with the support of the organizers, will try to ensure compliance with the rules. However, it is requested that all participants abide by the rules and personal grades to the best of their knowledge and belief. The Solo-Board reserves the right to disqualify players in case of non-compliance with the rules for the respective event or withdraw a supposed victory.

The BAG and the Solo-Board will maintain and regularly review and update a list of all competitors and their current grade. This will be made available to the organizers before competitions so that they can check compliance too. The list of grades is for publication.

3.2 Further rules

On the day of the events, the competitors will contact the organizers before the start of the competition. During the competition and award ceremony, the competitor is asked to wear Highland dress.

In online competitions, Highland Dress is desirable or recommended. If this is not possible in individual cases, at least other adequate clothing is desirable. Below are some suggestions on how to design the Highland Dress can be or what is to be understood by appropriate clothing:

Dress 1: Band outfit: kilt, kilt hoses, flashes, gillies, sporran, shirt, tie, west (jacket and glengarry optional).

Dress 2: Light outfit: kilt, kilt hoses/(fine) tights, possibly flashes, gillies /ladies gillies, possibly sporran, polo shirt, possibly kilt belt.

Dress 3: "Appropriate" clothing: This does not have to be the Highland dress, but can also be made from adequate clothing, e.g. B. black trousers, white shirt/polo shirt or similar consist of. Inappropriate clothing is e.g. B. large, printed T-shirt, shorts, and flip flops. Also, sweatpants and similar clothes are among the more inappropriate clothing.

In case of pieces or settings that differ greatly from the standard, the player should, in his own interest, submit the notes to be presented to the judge.

Competitors should use the opportunity to review the scores with the judges.

Judges are allowed to take part in competition events. They are participants in accordance with the rules, but they are not allowed to participate at events and grades, which they evaluate themselves.

4 Levels of Solo Piping

The terms in Solo Piping are:

Light Music *Piobaireachd*

Practice Chanter

Grade 5

Grade 4

Grade 3

Grade 2

Grade 1

Grade 4

Grade 3

Grade 2

Grade 1

Open Grades (including Open Grade 50+ for amateur and professional players)

If the number of competitors is small, the organizer may reserve the right to combine degrees, whereby the requirements should be based on the respective lower level. It is desired that at least one Light Music and one Piobaireachd event are offered for each grade. The events of each level and the requirements for the Solo Piping Competition are the following:

4.1 Light Music

The following applies to all events:

1. The pieces are to be played from memory without any sheet music
2. Should fewer parts of a song be required than it includes, the piece must still be played in its entirety. It is not permitted to shorten a song on your own initiative.

Practice Chanter:

- Slow March or Slow Air: min. 2 parts, each repeated, own choice.
- March (2/4, 4/4, 3/4 or 6/8): min. 2 parts, which are repeated (exception: 4/4 March), own choice.

Tune suggestions see Grade 5.

Grade 5:

- Slow March or Slow Air: min. 2 parts, each repeated, own choice
- The common, available time signatures are 4/4, 3/4, 6/8, 2/4. (Songs like Amazing Grace, Highland Cathedral, or Skye Boat Song aren't a part of this category).

Tune suggestions:

6/8	4/4	3/4
Morag of Dunvegan	Loch Skerrols	Craigmillar Castle
Leaving Lismore	...	Banks of Allan Water
Leaving port Jude		...
Loch ranoch		

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Highland Cradle Song My Home Scots Wha Hae ...		
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- March (2/4, 4/4, 3/4 or 6/8): min. 2 parts, which are repeated (exception: 4/4 March), own choice.

Tune suggestions:

2/4	3/4	6/8	4/4
The Brown-Haired Maiden Mhairie's Wedding A Man's a Man for a That Highroad to Gairloch Teribus Corriechoillies's Welcome to the Northern Meeting ...	When the Battle is Over Colin's Cattle Green Hills Castle Dangerous ...	Bugle Horn Steam Boat ...	Rowan Tree Wings The Roses of Allendale Murdo's Wedding ...

Grade 4:

- 2/4 March: min. 4 parts, which are repeated each time, own choice.

Tune suggestions:

The 79th's Farewell to Gibraltar
The Haughs of Cromdale
Siege of Delhi
Achany Glen
Lady Lever Park
...

- Strathspey / Reel: min. 2 parts each, own choice.

Strathspey: Tune suggestions:

The Inverness Rant
Loudon's Bonnie Woods and Braes
Devil in the Kitchen
Orange and Blue
The Piper of Drummond
...

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Reel: Tune suggestions:

The Kilt is my Delight
The Devil Among the Tailors
Dancing Feet
Highland Hoolie
The Fairy Dance
...

- 6/8 March: min. 4 parts, each repeated, own choice.

Tune suggestions:

Angus MacKinnon
Leaving Port Askaig
Rab's Wedding
Ishabel T. MacDonald
Farewell to the Creeks
The 10th Battalion HLI
Crossing the Rhine
...

Grade 3:

- M / S / R: consisting of a minimum of a four-part „competition type" 2/4 March, and one at least two-part Strathspey and Reel of own choice.

March: Tune suggestions:

The Atholl and Breadalbane Gathering
The Barren Rocks of Aden
Achany Glen
King George's 5th Army
The Taking of Beaumont Hamel
...

Strathspey: Tune suggestions:

Aspen Bank
Because He Was a Bonny Lad
The Braes of Mar
The Keel Row
Miss Ada Crawford
Stirling Castle
...

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Reel: Tune suggestions:

Highroad to Linton
Jock Wilson's Ball
The Kilt is my Delight
The Piper of Drummond

...

- Slow Air or Slow March/Jig: consisting of a at least two-part Slow Air / March, where each part is repeated and a min. four -part Jig, own choice.

Slow Air Tune suggestions see Grade 5.

Jig: Tune suggestions:

Corkhill
Paddy's Leather Breaches
The Curlew
Donella Beaton

Grade 2:

- M / S / R: consisting of one at least each four-part „competition type" 2/4 March, Strathspey and Reel of own choice.

March: Tune suggestions:

Donald MacLean's Farewell to Oban
South Hall
The Inverness Gathering
Duncan MacInnes
Dr. E. G. MacKinnon
Major Manson Farewell to Clachantrushal

...

Strathspey: Tune suggestions:

The Caledonian Society of London
Highland Harry
The Firth of Lorn
Lady MacKenzie of Gareloch
Maggy Cameron

...

Reel: Tune suggestions:

Loch Carron
Jock Wilson's Ball
Captain Lachlan MacPhail of Tiree
Kalabakan

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The Brown Haired Maid
Lexy MacAskill
The Sound of Sleat
...

- Hornpipe / Jig: each at least four parts, own choice of piece.

Hornpipe: Tune suggestions:

The Walrus
Londonderry Hornpipe
Bobby Cuthbertson
Lucy Cassidy
Duncan Johnston
Train Journey North
...

Jig: Tune suggestions:

Donald Cameron's Powderhorn
The Seagull
Donella Beaton
Jig of Slurs

Grade 1:

- M / S / R: the player submits 3 tunes of his choice (3 at least four-part 2/4 Marches , Strathspeys and Reels), the judge selects the set.

March: Tune suggestions:

John MacDonald of Glencoe
The Pap of Glencoe
The Braes of Castle Grant
...

Strathspey: Tune suggestions:

Arniston Castle
Bob of Fettercairn
Lady Loudon
Monymusk
...

Reel: Tune suggestions:

The Grey Bob
The Rejected Suitor
W. Cumming's Rant
Cecily Ross
...

- Hornpipe / Jig: the player submits 3 tunes each of his choice (at least four-part each), the judge selects the set.

Hornpipe: Tune suggestions:

Crossing the Minch
Train Journey North
PM George MacAllan
Tam Bains Lum
The Man from Skye
...

Jig: Tune suggestions:

Donald Cameron's Powderhorn
The Centre Bonnet
Jig of Slurs
Donella Beaton
The Curlew
...

Open Grade:

- M / S / R: the player submits 3 tunes of his choice (3 at least four-part 2/4 Marches , Strathspeys and Reels), the judge selects the set.

Tune suggestions see Grade 1.

- Hornpipe / Jig: the player submits 3 tunes each of his choice (at least four-part each), the judge selects the set.

Tune suggestions see Grade 1.

- Medley: the player arranges a medley own choice between 4 and 7 minutes with changes in tempo and time change.

Tune suggestions: The RSPBA website might help, but for medley competition only!!!

- 6/8-March: the player submits three 6/8-Marches, the judge selects two, which the player must play in a set.

Tune suggestions: any four parted 6/8 marches.

- 50+ (50 years and over): it is an open competition for players who are 50 years old and over. It is an event for amateur and professional players. The Light Music events are slow air and march (s. Grade 5).

Tune suggestions see Grade 5.

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In online competitions, the rules for selecting pieces in grade 1 and in Open grade can be different, so that pieces of your own choice can be played, and no piece suggestions are made to the judge.

4.2 Piobaireachd / Ceol Mor

In general sources, the books of the Piobaireachd Society (Books 1-16) or the Kilberry Book are recommended. In all different settings, the participant is required to provide the judge with the music in printed form to be presented without being asked.

Grade 4:

- The Ground / Urlar of a Piobaireachd is to play, own choice of tune.

Tune suggestions:

Corrienessan's Salute
The Little Spree
Duncan MacRae of Kintail's Lament
...

Grade 3:

- The Ground / Urlar and the following two variations of a Piobaireachd are to play, own tune selection. As independent variation counts e.g. the doubling of a Ground or the singling or doubling one of a variation.

Tune suggestions:

Duntroon's March
Glengarry's Lament
March for a Beginner
Sir James MacDonald of the Isle's Lament
...

Grade 2:

- A complete Piobaireachd is to play, own choice of tune.

Tune suggestions:

Too Long in this Condition
The Piper's Warning to his Master
Lament for Mary MacLeod
...

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Grade 1:

- The player specifies three songs of his choice. The judge chooses the tune to play.

Tune suggestions:

The Battle of Auldearn No. 1/No. 2

The Desperate Battle of the Birds

MacLeod of Raasay's Salute

Beloved Scotland

...

Open Grade:

- The player specifies three songs of his choice. The judge chooses the tune to play.

Tune suggestions see Grade 1.

50+ (50 years and over):

- The Ground / Urlar of a Piobaireachd is to play, own choice of tune.

Tune suggestions see Grade 4.

In online competitions, the rules for selecting pieces in grade 1 and in Open grade can be different, so that pieces of your own choice can be played, and no piece suggestions are made to the judge.

If there are any questions or unclarities, the participant can contact the BAG Solo-Board (solo-board@bagev.de) at any time.

Solo-Board of the Bagpipe Association of Germany e.V.

Bremerhaven, 15th December 2025