



PPBSO COMPETITION RULE BOOK

(Revised 14th February 2026)

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Definitions

Affiliated Organization means the Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association, the Eastern United States Pipe Band Association, or any other organization which is the subject of an affiliation resolution adopted by the PPBSO.

Board of Directors means the body holding powers and authority to manage the affairs of the PPBSO.

Competing Band means any pipe band competing in a PPBSO sanctioned contest.

Competition or Contest means any piping, drumming, drum major or band contest sanctioned by the PPBSO.

Competitor means any individual piper or drummer competing in a PPBSO sanctioned contest.

Music Committee means a PPBSO standing committee created to help the PPBSO reach its goals of improving piping and drumming in the Province of Ontario.

PPBSO and Society means the Corporation known as The Pipers' and Pipe Band Society of Ontario.

PPBSO Operations Manager (previously called the PPBSO Administrator) Person appointed by the Board to manage the day-to-day operational affairs of the PPBSO, including (but not limited to): management of PPBSO highland games administration; management of PPBSO memberships, and; management of PPBSO general administration.

PART A - GENERAL CONTEST RULES

A-1

- a. The following Contest Rules are used for PPBSO piping, drumming, drum major and pipe band contests.
- b. **Competitor Responsibilities:**
- **Know the Rules.** Each competitor and pipe band is responsible for knowing and adhering to the PPBSO Contest Rules.
 - **Code of Conduct.** Each competitor and PPBSO member is responsible for reading and conducting themselves by the Code of Conduct document. The Code of Conduct is a separate document on the PPBSO website. Each competitor will treat PPBSO workers, officials and other competitors with respect and courtesy.

A-2 **Entries**

Master Entry Form for Solo and Band Contests will be available on the PPBSO website (<https://www.ppipebandsontario.org/forms>) by May 1st each year. To be eligible to compete, entry forms must be received with full entry fee by the respective contest closing date.

Refund of Fees. No refund of entry fees will be made for contests entered but not played in, except where a contest has been cancelled.

Cancellation of Contests is at the discretion of the PPBSO in consultation with the relevant Games Committee.

A-3 **Contests - Penalties, Discipline and Protests**

a. **Penalties**

Competitors: A breach of any PPBSO Contest Rule may result in a penalty as outlined below. The Steward for each contest, in consultation with the Senior Steward and Judge, will have full discretion in enforcing the rules. Penalties include:

- Verbal Warning
- Disqualification (and, if necessary, results will be amended accordingly)

Competing Bands: A breach of any PPBSO Band Contest Rule may result in a penalty as outlined below. The Senior Steward for each contest, in consultation with the Ensemble Judge, will have full discretion in enforcing the Rules.

Any member may report a suspected breach of a rule by a competing band to the Senior Steward at the contest or anytime within seven days to the PPBSO Operations Manager. If the breach is substantiated and is of a serious nature the PPBSO executive will be consulted prior to assessing any penalty.

Penalties may include:

- Written Warning
 - Fine of up to \$100.00 (which must be paid prior to any future contest)
 - Disqualification (and, if necessary, results will be amended accordingly)
- b. **Discipline**. Disciplinary proceedings under the Code of Conduct may be taken for any breach of these rules which is considered to be willful, flagrant or indicative of disrespect for the integrity and authority of the PPBSO or its members.
- c. **Protests against Contest Results**
- Competitors or a competing band that wishes to lodge a protest against a contest result may do so by submitting their case in writing or by e-mail, to the PPBSO Operation Manager within seven days of the contest.
 - Within three days of receipt of the protest by the PPBSO, all judges presiding at the contest in question, the Senior Steward, as well as any competitors or competing bands potentially affected by the decision, will be notified of the protest, and will be given seven days to make any submission to the PPBSO Board of Directors. In consultation with the Music Committee, as necessary, the Board of Directors will then make a final decision.

A-4 Technology or Assistance Devices

Competitors may not use any technology or assistance devices during a contest that may enhance their performance without prior permission as follows. Requests to use any technology must be submitted to the PPBSO Operations Manager in writing no later than the closing date of entries for that contest and approved by the PPBSO before the contest.

PART B: SOLO CONTEST RULES

B-1 Contest Registration and Admission Refunds

- a. **Eligibility.** A competitor must be a current, paid-up member of the PPBSO or an affiliated organization, with the exception of the first competitive season of a solo competitor entering Grade 5 Drumming, Grade 5 Piping, practice chanter and practice pad. Members of an affiliated organization must be eligible to compete in solo competitions within that organization.
- b. **Deadline.** The registration deadline is 21 days in advance of the contest. No entries will be accepted inside the deadline or on the field.
- c. **Solo Admission Passes.** Solo competitors competing at Highland Games without a pipe band must request a games admission pass by sending an email to the PPBSO Operations Manager (admin@ppbso.org) at least 2 weeks before their first solo contest.

B-2 Order, Time of Play, Tuning and Accompaniment for Drummers

- a. **Order of Play Available.** The order of play will be available on the PPBSO website at least eight days in advance of the contest (<https://www.pipebandsontario.org>). The PPBSO reserves the right to cancel a contest or change the number of prizes awarded if fewer than four competitors have enrolled in the contest at the closing date.
- b. **Report to Steward.** Competitors must report to the Steward for each contest no later than the commencement of the contest. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.
- c. **Time of Play.** A competitor will play at his or her assigned or adjusted time or position, or when required to play by the Steward for the contest. The order of play will be enforced excepting incidents of overlapping contests in that grade.
- d. **Pipe Tuning.** All competitors will perform final tuning without assistance, except for Grade 4, Grade 5, and Novice Amateur contests. Tuning time is a maximum of five minutes for piobair-eachd, and a maximum of three minutes for all other contests. Individuals exceeding the allowable tuning times may be disqualified.
- e. **Accompaniment for Drummers.** Each drumming competitor (snare, bass or tenor) will be accompanied by one piper (maximum two pipers). In addition, tenor and bass drummers are encouraged to be accompanied by one snare drummer. In lieu of live accompaniment, the Amateur drumming competitor may use a recording. Competitors are responsible to provide their own recording and sound equipment. In the case of failure of the live or recorded accompaniment, before or during the performance, the competitor will be expected to play as if the accompaniment were continuing. Failure to do so will be considered a Did Not Play (DNP) or a Breakdown (BD) (as appropriate).

B-3 Grade Structure for Contests

Youth competitor A competitor under 19 years of age on June 1st may compete as a youth for that calendar year. A competitor who is 19 years of age on or before June 1st will compete as an adult for that calendar year.

Piping

- Professional
- Amateur Grades 1, 2, 3, 4 (Youth and Adult), 5 (Youth and Adult), Practice Chanter
- Amateur Piobaireachd - Senior, Intermediate, Junior, Novice

Drumming

Snare Drumming

- Professional
- Amateur Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 (Youth and Adult), Practice Pad

Tenor Drumming

- Professional
- Amateur Grades 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

Bass Drumming

- Professional
- Senior Amateur
- Junior Amateur
- Novice

Drum Major

- Professional
- Novice

B-4 **Grading and Upgrading**

Specified Grades. The PPBSO Board of Directors, on the advice of the Music Committee, will specify the grade of competition for a solo competitor. Any solo competitor affected by a specified grade change will be notified in writing by January 1st. Solo competitors must compete in the grade specified by the Board of Directors.

Solo Competitors from Affiliated Organizations will play in the same grades in which they play in their home organization, unless otherwise notified by the PPBSO.

Playing in Different Grades. A solo competitor will compete at the same grade level in all events, except for pipers competing in piobaireachd. Piobaireachd competitors may be assigned a separate grade by the PPBSO Board of Directors. A solo competitor, who chooses to compete outside the jurisdiction of the PPBSO in a grade other than their PPBSO specified grade, must return to their PPBSO assigned grade for all PPBSO contests.

Re-grading. A solo competitor dissatisfied with the assigned grade may petition the PPBSO Board of Directors through the PPBSO Operations Manager for a reconsideration of the grading a maximum of one time per year or once per change in grade, whichever is more frequent. All appeals must be filed by April 1st using the upgrading form on the PPBSO website. Any variation of a solo competitor's specified grade is within the sole discretion of the PPBSO Board of Directors.

Professional Piobaireachd Classification. For Professional Piobaireachd, the Music Committee will assign each competitor an "A" or "B". At certain contests, due to the number of competitors, the contests may be divided into "A" and "B".

Within any given season, a competitor having a Competing Pipers Association (CPA) grading of at least B for that year will be given an A classification. All other competitors will have a classification assigned to them by the Music Committee. The Music Committee will take items such as prior success at certain contests (such as the Piobaireachd Society Gold Medal (Canada) and the Maxville Professional Piobaireachd) and the competitor's general competitive record into consideration when making its decision.

Contest divided into two Groups. At certain contests, due to the number of competitors, the contest for any solo contest may be divided into two groups.

B-5

Solo Piping (Light Music) Contest Requirements

Solo Piping (Light Music) Contest Requirements	
When multiple tunes are required, the Judge will pick one tune (except for Professional Jig contest - see below).	
Practice Chanter	One March (2 parts, any time signature, played once) Competitor must never have competed on a bagpipe in a solo or band contest
Grade 5 (Youth and Adult)	One March (2 parts, any time signature, played once) With advance PPBSO approval, a competitor may use an assisted blowing device, such as an E-Bellaire System
Grade 4 (Youth and Adult)	One 2/4 March (minimum 4 parts) With advance PPBSO approval, a competitor may use an assisted blowing device, such as an E-Bellaire System
Grade 3	One 2/4 March (minimum 4 parts) One Strathspey (minimum 4 parts) + one Reel (minimum 4 parts)
Grade 2	Two 2/4 Marches (minimum 4 parts) One Strathspey (minimum 4 parts) + one Reel (minimum 4 parts) One Jig (minimum 4 parts) One 6/8 March (minimum 4 parts)
Grade 1	Two 2/4 Marches (minimum 4 parts) Two Strathspeys (minimum 4 parts) + two Reels (minimum 4 parts) Two Jigs (minimum 4 parts) Two 6/8 Marches (minimum 4 parts)
Professional	Four 2/4 Marches (minimum 4 parts) Four Strathspeys (minimum 4 parts) + four Reels (minimum 4 parts) Four Hornpipes (minimum 4 parts) + four Jigs (minimum 4 parts) or Four Jigs (minimum 4 parts each, of which 2 different Jigs of the Judge's choice to be played back-to-back)

B-6

Solo Piping (Piobaireachd) Contest Requirements

Solo Piping (Piobaireachd) Contest Requirements	
A written copy of the music must be provided to the Judge where a tune or setting is from a source other than The Piobaireachd Society Collection or Kilberry Book of Ceol Mor.	
Novice	One Piobaireachd (play only the ground and the next two passages)
Junior	One Piobaireachd
Intermediate	Two Piobaireachd (Judge will pick one tune)
Senior	Three Piobaireachd (Judge will pick one tune)
Professional	Four Piobaireachd (Judge will pick one tune)

B-7 Solo Snare Drum Contest Requirements

Solo Snare Drum Contest Requirements	
Practice Pad	Play one of the following New Massed Band Cadences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2/4 March (2 parts) • 3/4 March (2 parts) • 4/4 March (2 parts) Competitor must never have competed on a snare in a solo or band contest.
Grade 5 (Youth and Adult)	One 2/4 March (2 parts)
Grade 4	One 2/4 March (4 parts)
Grade 3	MSR – Set of one 2/4 March, Strathspey, Reel (minimum 4 parts each)
Grade 2	MSR – Set of one 2/4 March, Strathspey, Reel (minimum 4 parts each) HP/J – Set of one Hornpipe and one Jig (minimum 4 parts each)
Grade 1	MSR – Two Sets each with 2/4 March, Strathspey, Reel (minimum 4 parts each) (Judge will pick one set) HP/J – Set of one Hornpipe and one Jig (minimum 4 parts each)
Professional	MSR – Two Sets each with 2/4 March, Strathspey, Reel (minimum 4 parts each) (Judge will pick one set) HP/J – Selection of tunes with two Hornpipes (the first dot cut/pointed, followed by dot cut/pointed or straight/round Hornpipe) and two Jigs (minimum 4 parts each)

B-8 Solo Bass Drum Contest Requirements

Solo Bass Drum Contest Requirements	
Judged on both rhythm and flourishing components.	
Novice	One 2/4 March (minimum 4 parts)
Junior Amateur	MSR – Set of one 2/4 March, Strathspey, Reel (minimum 4 parts each)
Senior Amateur and Professional	MSR – Set of one 2/4 March, Strathspey, Reel (minimum 4 parts each) HP/J – Set of one Hornpipe and one Jig (minimum 4 parts each) <u>Overall Professional and Senior Amateur Winner.</u> Prizes are based on the combined result from the two contests. The rank from each contest will be added together, and first place will be awarded to the competitor with the lowest score. All other ranks will be assigned in increasing order. All ties will be awarded based on the best rank in MSR.

B-9 Solo Tenor Drum Contest Requirements

Solo Tenor Drum Contest Requirements	
Judged on both rhythm and flourishing components.	
Grade 5	One 2/4 March (minimum 2 parts)
Grade 4	One 2/4 March (minimum 4 parts)
Grade 3	MSR – Set of one 2/4 March, Strathspey, Reel (minimum 4 parts each)
Grade 2	MSR – Set of one 2/4 March, Strathspey, Reel (minimum 4 parts each)
Grade 1 and Professional	MSR – Set of one 2/4 March, Strathspey, Reel (minimum 4 parts each) HP/J – Set of one Hornpipe and one Jig (minimum 4 parts each) <u>Overall Professional and Grade 1 Winner.</u> Prizes are based on the combined result from the two contests. The rank from each contest will be added together, and first place will be awarded to the competitor with the lowest score. All other ranks will be assigned in increasing order. All ties will be awarded based on the best rank in MSR.

B-10 Drum Major Contest Requirements

- Professional and Novice Drum Majors compete simultaneously with all other competitors in the contest, unless the contest requires division into heats.
- Drum Major competitors are judged on dress and deportment while at the halt, and on marching and deportment during the contest of a Slow March and 6/8 March by the duty band.

B-11 Contest Results

Posting. Results for contests will be posted as soon as possible after available.

Recognition. Winners may be formally announced at the closing ceremonies.

Proper Dress. If a prize is formally presented the competitor will wear proper Highland Dress.

Pipers and Drummers of the Day. The following awards will be given to the competitors who receive the highest number of Champion Supreme points on the day of the Contest.

Top Solo Awards	Contests	Tie Broken
Amateur Piper of the Day	Grade 1 March Grade 1 Strathspey and Reel Grade 1 Jig or 6/8 March Senior Amateur Piobaireachd	Tie broken by the Senior Amateur Piobaireachd result. If none of the competitors tied have placed in the piobaireachd contest, the tie will be broken by the 2/4 March result.
Professional Piper of the Day	Professional March Professional Strathspey and Reel Professional Hornpipe/Jig or Jig Professional Piobaireachd	Tie broken by the Professional Piobaireachd result. If none of the competitors tied have placed in the piobaireachd contest, the tie will be broken by the 2/4 March result.
Amateur Drummer of the Day	Grade 1 March, Strathspey and Reel Grade 1 Hornpipe and Jig	Tie broken by the March, Strathspey and Reel result.
Professional Drummer of the Day	Professional March, Strathspey and Reel Professional Hornpipe and Jig	Tie broken by the March, Strathspey and Reel result.

B-12 Solo Champion Supreme Point Structure

Eligibility. Only PPBSO members who are members three weeks prior to the contest will be awarded points for placing in contests.

Points. Although medals will be presented for the first three places only, Champion Supreme points will be awarded as follows:

# of Competitors that competed	1 st Place	2 nd Place	3 rd Place	4 th Place	5 th Place	6 th Place
10 or more	7	5	4	3	2	1
5 to 9	6	4	3	2	1	-
4 or less	4	2	1	-	-	-

Champion Supreme Solo Awards. Total points from all contests at each Highland Games or Branch Contest will be compiled for each competitor. The competitor with the highest total from their best five Highland Games and/or Branch Contest will be awarded Champion Supreme. If there is a tie, the Award will be given to the competitor with the greater number of first places at their five best contests. If a tie still remains, multiple awards will be presented.

Where a solo event has been split into two groups as described in **B-4 Grading and Upgrading, Contest divided into two Groups** champion supreme points will be awarded for each placement in both prize lists.

PART C: PIPE BAND CONTEST RULES

C-1 **Band Rosters and Contest Registration**

Eligibility. All band members must be current, paid-up members of the PPBSO or an affiliated organization. Member dues must be paid a minimum of fourteen (14) days prior to any contest to be eligible to compete with the band. A one-time exemption of up to two contests may be allowed for a band that has never been registered with the PPBSO for competition.

Master Entry Form and Band Roster. All bands must submit a roster that includes all player names to the PPBSO Operations Manager with the master entry form. Only players on the submitted roster seven days prior to a contest may compete with the band (additionally, see C-14 on transfers). A player on a lower-grade band roster who is also designated “developmental” on a higher-grade band roster may be allowed to compete up to three designated contests with the higher-grade band, only as set out in Appendix 3.

Juvenile Band A band member under 19 years of age on June 1st may compete in a juvenile band for that calendar year. A band member who is 19 years of age on or before June 1st is not eligible to compete in a juvenile band for that calendar year except as noted in C-5. Juvenile band rosters must include the date of birth for each player and proof of age may be requested.

C-2 **Band Passes and Entries**

Delivered in Advance. The PPBSO will send out band passes for each Games entered to the bands at least two weeks in advance of the contest.

Penalty for Withdrawal without Notice. Bands that have entered to play at a contest and wish to withdraw must notify the PPBSO at least 48 hours prior to the contest. Failure to do so, subject to discretion by the PPBSO Board of Directors, will result in a fine of \$200.00 and the band will not be permitted to compete again until the fine is paid.

C-3 **Pipe Band Grading**

Specified Grades. Pipe Bands will be assigned to Grade 1, Grade 2, Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5, or Juvenile. The PPBSO Board of Directors, on the advice of the Music Committee, will specify the grade of competition for pipe bands, based on the pipe band rosters received and previous results. Any pipe band affected by a specified grade change will be notified in writing by January 1st.

Re-grading. A pipe band that is dissatisfied with a re-assigned grade may petition the PPBSO Board of Directors through the PPBSO Operations Manager for reconsideration within four weeks. The PPBSO Board of Directors will notify the pipe band in writing of a final grade decision by March 1st.

Pipe Bands from Affiliated Organizations will play in the same grade in which they play in their organization.

When no Juvenile grade is offered, a registered juvenile band will play in the grade assigned by the Music Committee.

C-4 Minimum Numbers of Players Required for Band Competitions

Grade	Pipers	Snares	Bass	Tenor	Total
1	8	3	1	2	14
2	6	2	1	-	9
3, 4, 5, Juvenile	5	2	1	-	8

C-5 Playing Instructors

- a. **A piping instructor** may play in addition to the minimum pipers required as follows:
 - Grade 2 and Grade 3 – A higher grade piper as the Pipe Major only.
 - Grade 4, Grade 5 and Juvenile – A higher grade piper as the Pipe Major or Pipe Sergeant only.
- b. **A snare drum instructor** may play in addition to the minimum snare drummers required as follows:
 - Grade 2, Grade 3, Grade 4, Grade 5 and Juvenile – One higher grade snare drummer.
- c. **Tenor drumming instructor.** One higher grade tenor drumming instructor may play in addition to at least one other tenor drummer in Grade 2, 3, 4, 5 and Juvenile.

C-6 Substitute Bass Drummer

If a bass drummer is unable to compete with their band, a temporary replacement can be found using the following guidelines in order:

- A player on the band roster can play the bass drum, provided the minimum numbers of players are met – see C-4.
- A bass drummer from the same organization, but in a lower grade, may replace the registered bass drummer.

- C-7 Music Director/Conductor.** Each band may designate one member to act as a music director during medley contests. The designated music director will perform no other function during the contest.

C-8 Music Requirements

Band Music			
Grade	MSR	Medley	Medley Duration
1	Two MSR sets (2/4 March, Strathspey, Reel (minimum 4 parts each))	2 Medleys	5 to 8 minutes
2	Two MSR sets (2/4 March, Strathspey, Reel (minimum 4 parts each))	1 Medley	4 to 7 minutes
3	One MSR set (2/4 March, Strathspey, Reel (minimum 4 parts each))	1 Medley	3 to 6 minutes
4	One Mini MSR (2/4 March, Strathspey, Reel (4 parts each*)) *4 parts can be a 4-parted tune or 2 x 2-parted tunes	1 Medley	3 to 5 minutes
5		1 March Medley	2:45 to 4:30 min
Juvenile		1 March Medley	2:45 to 4:30 min
Definition of Medleys			
Medley for Grade 1, 2, 3, 4	Minimum of 4 different tune categories		
March Medley for Grade 5 and Juvenile	Tunes that are 'march-able' in simple or compound time signatures, played in quick time.		
Duplication of Tunes			
Grade 1, 2, 3 - No Duplication of Tunes between or within the sets or medleys. Grade 4 may duplicate strathspeys between their mini-MSR and medley.			

C-9 **A Tune List** of all MSR sets and medleys (including the name of each tune, time signature and type) must be submitted to the PPBSO Operations Manager prior to the initial draw made at the PPBSO office one week before the contest (see C-10). Any change in the submitted tunes must be re-submitted to the PPBSO Operations Manager prior to the draw for playing position and time (11:00 a.m.) on the day of the contest.

Choice of Set or Medley Played. Where a band is required to submit more than one set or medley, the choice of the set or medley to be played will be determined by draw at the starting line on the contest field. If a band is unable to perform the selected set or medley, they will be disqualified from the contest.

Medley Time Limits. Bands playing medleys of time duration other than listed may be disqualified.

Draw for Order of Play, Playing Times, and Contest Performance

- a. **Initial Draw for Order of Play** will take place at the PPBSO office about one week before the Games and posted to the PPBSO website. Contest order in each circle will be lowest grade band to highest grade band, unless otherwise requested by the Games committee.
- b. **On the morning of Games Day**
 - Prior to or at the 11:00 a.m. meeting, each band must register with the PPBSO Games office. Failure to do so prohibits the band from competing. In special circumstances, the PPBSO may allow such a band to play first in the contest, provided that the order of play or the playing times of the other bands are not changed from those drawn.
 - All bands must send a representative to the 11:00 a.m. meeting at the PPBSO Games office.
 - Bands requesting to play first in any contest must request to do so prior to the 11:00 a.m. meeting and the request will be considered by the PPBSO.
 - Confirmation of playing times will be announced at the 11:00 a.m. meeting. For contests where bands play twice, the order for each contest will be the same.
- c. **Contest Performance the Field**
 - **Runners Required.** Each band must provide someone to co-ordinate their prompt arrival at the contest field.
 - **Final Tuning Area.** All bands are required to move through the final tuning area before moving to the starting line. Any band which competes without first moving all competitive players through the final tuning area will be subject to the penalty of playing first at the next contest in which it competes.
 - Except as pre-approved by the PPBSO, bands are required to begin their performance at the starting line.
 - Bands will arrive at the starting line for their contest ready to play at their scheduled time, or their adjusted time as advised by the Steward. It is the duty of each succeeding band to move forward as directed by the Stewards, in accordance with the playing time provided. The final responsibility rests with each band to be at the starting line when required and any band failing to do so and not complying with official instruction is subject to a penalty. Stewards may be provided as an aid to bands, but they carry no responsibility for the non-attendance of any band in the contest arena.
 - Bands will arrive at the starting line properly dressed including headdress and come to a halt.
 - After halting at the start line, any withdrawal of a band player may result in a penalty.
 - The Ensemble Judge will ensure that the other Judges are ready. On a signal from the Ensemble Judge, the Steward will let the Pipe Major know to commence the band's performance.
 - **Lateness.** A band that is up to three minutes late will be penalized by having to play first at the next contest in which it competes. A band more than three minutes late may be

disqualified. Any disqualification for lateness must be imposed before a band begins their performance.

- The playing field is marked with 3 concentric circles. The inner circle (radius no less than 4 metres) sets out the band position. The second circle (radius no less than 7 metres) defines the distance the Judges stay back from the bands. The third circle (no less than 9.5 metres) defines the closest approach by spectators.
- Bands must leave the contest field immediately upon completing their contest and are prohibited from further playing on the contest field.

C-11 Challenging up

Bands registered with the PPBSO may challenge up one grade at designated PPBSO-sanctioned contests, provided all of the following conditions are met:

- The band finished in the top five in the previous year's PPBSO CS in its current grade.
- The band informs the PPBSO Operations Manager of its intention to challenge up by April 30.
- Bands are subject to all requirements for each contest and submit a repertoire conforming to the tune requirements of the grade into which it intends to challenge up during the season.
- Bands challenging up must submit entries as per PPBSO rules and registration deadlines.
- Bands challenging up must register and compete in their assigned (lower) grade for any contest where they wish to challenge up. Failure or refusal to compete in, or disqualification from, the assigned (lower) grade contest will result in disqualification from the higher grade contest.
- For the challenge up contest to occur, there must be at least one band graded at the higher grade. If there is not at least one band at the higher grade registered in the contest, then the challenge up band will not compete at the higher grade and entry fee will be refunded for the challenge up contest.
- Bands challenging up will receive placing but no prize money.
- Bands challenging up may only receive Championship Supreme (CS) points on results achieved in their assigned (lower) grade.
- A band may only challenge up a maximum of twice in any one season.
- A challenge up will only be allowed if "time permitting" - as determined by the Operations Manager. No challenge up is permitted at the North American Pipe Band Championships.

C-12 The Duty Band for the drum major contests will be drawn from all participating grade 1 and 2 bands in rotation.

C-13 Massed Bands

Requirement to Play in Massed Bands. All bands must take part in both massed band performances at approximately 1:00 p.m. and at the conclusion of the Contests, unless exempted as specified below. Failure of any non-exempt competing band to participate in a massed band performance may result in a penalty or disciplinary measures.

Exemption. Bands will be exempted from first massed bands as needed to ensure at least one hour of pre-contest preparation as determined by the Senior Steward, in conjunction with the Operations Manager. Bands exempted will be notified at the 11:00 am band meeting.

Minimum Number of Players. For first massed bands only, each band is required to field at least the minimum numbers of players required to compete within their grade.

Massed Band Drum Majors. Drum majors responsible for massed bands at PPBSO sanctioned Games must be pre-qualified by the PPBSO.

Massed Band Discipline: Drill, dress and deportment expectations for massed bands performances.

- The PPBSO owes a duty to the Games / Festival committees to deliver a high-quality performance during the two massed band appearances.
- Uniform band highland dress is required to be properly worn by all band members. (Appendix 2)
- Participants are expected to follow standard military marching and drill.
- The consumption of beverages, including alcohol, and food while on the field of play is not permitted.
- Failure of any band, or members of a band, to conform with these expectations may result in band travel funds being withheld, and / or other sanction.

C-14 Transfers of Players between Bands

Band Member Release/Transfer Form. Players transferring from one band to another must use the PPBSO release/transfer form and obtain the signatures of both Pipe Majors unless specifically exempted by the Board of Directors. All transfers must be received by the PPBSO Operations Manager in writing at least 14 days prior to the first contest in which that player will compete with the gaining band.

Transfers Prohibited. A player who is on the roster of a competitive band that is registered with the PPBSO, and has competed with that band in a competition season, is permitted one transfer the remainder of that season to another band. All such transfers will be subject to review by the PPBSO Music Committee to ensure that the competitive grade of the band which the player is transferring into is not materially affected as a result of the transfer. Based on a recommendation from the Music Committee, the PPBSO may either permit or deny the transfer request.

Juvenile Bands. Registered players may also join a juvenile band without having to transfer from the non-juvenile band.

Amending Band Rosters. On the transfer of a player, amended band rosters must be signed and dated by the Pipe Major or Band Manager and submitted to the PPBSO Operations Manager, along with a copy of the respective release/transfer form. Players of eligible juvenile age on the roster of a Juvenile band may be on the roster of one non-Juvenile band.

Refusal to Release. If a band refuses to release a member, the member may take his or her complaint to the PPBSO Board of Directors. The Board of Directors may allow the member to transfer when satisfied that equipment disputes (specifically uniform components, musical instruments, and components of musical instruments that belong to the band) have been resolved. Any other disputes or considerations will not be considered by the Board of Directors.

C-15 Method of Determining Winning Positions in Contests

Ranking Method. Winning positions at all contests will be determined by a ranking method as follows:

- Each Judge's preference will be ranked in order (1, 2, 3, 4 etc.)
- The lowest total of all the ranking positions from piping, drumming and ensemble wins first place, second lowest wins second place, third lowest wins third place, and so on.
- All band ties are broken by ensemble. If a tie remains, it is broken by piping.

More than One Performance. Winning positions will be based on the lowest total of ranking points from all performances. Ties are broken by lowest aggregate ensemble total. If a tie remains, it is broken by MSR ensemble.

Errors. Where an error is made in the calculation of prizes, the PPBSO will ensure that all legitimately won prize monies are paid within 14 days of the contest and seek to recover prizes and monies awarded in error.

C-16 **Additional Awards for Each Grade**

Best Pipe Section in each grade will be determined by the combined scoring of the Piping Judges.

Best Drum Corps in each grade will be determined by the Drumming Judge.

Best Bass and Tenor Section in each grade will be determined by collaboration between the Ensemble and Drumming Judges.

C-17 **Band Champion Supreme Awards**

Contest Titles. The PPBSO may assign Championship titles including the North American, All Ontario, and Canadian.

The Band Champion Supreme Award is given to the band in each grade with the highest total of Champion Supreme points at the end of the season as calculated below.

Band Champion Supreme Points					
# of Bands Competing	1st Place	2nd Place	3rd Place	4th Place	5th Place
PPBSO Contests other than North American Championships					
6 or more	7.5	6	4.5	3	1.5
5 or less	5	4	3	2	1
North American Championships					
Any number of bands	10	8	6	4	2
<p>* Ties – To break a tie for highest total of Champion Supreme points, the band which has placed ahead of the other bands involved in the tie more often at contests shall win the Award. If a tie remains, the band placing higher at the North American Championships will win the Award.</p> <p>** Eligibility – Only PPBSO registered bands, made up of PPBSO members, and who are competing in their assigned grade, will be awarded points for placing in contests. If a non-PPBSO band, or a PPBSO band that is challenging up in a contest, places in what would be a points awarding position, the associated Champion Supreme points will not be awarded to any band in the contest.</p>					

Appendix 1 – Judging

1. Judging

Panel. Contest Judges will be drawn from the approved panel of PPBSO Judges as set by the Board of Directors, or from the approved panels of affiliated organizations. Judges must be current members in good standing with either the PPBSO or an affiliated association.

Criteria. The decision of a Judge will be based on his/her best honest judgment of the relative merit of the respective performance, based on the criteria set by the Board of Directors, and as prescribed in the PPBSO Judges' Certification Training Program or the Judges' Code of Practice.

Finality. The decision of the Judge(s) is final.

Improper Influence. No member will attempt, directly or indirectly, to improperly influence the selection of or a decision of a Judge. Breach of this rule may subject the member involved to disciplinary proceedings.

2. Assignment of Judges

Assignment. Judges will be assigned for each contest by a group consisting of one representative from the Board of Directors, a piping representative and a drumming representative, as assigned by the Music Committee and approved by the Board of Directors.

Publication of Assignments. Judging assignments for all band contests will be published on the PPBSO website the week after entries close. Final assignments to be published two weeks before the contest date.

Limitation. Whenever possible, no Judge will be assigned to judge a band in the same role (i.e. Piping, Drumming, or Ensemble), nor judge a solo contest at the same grade and event, at more than two contests in a single season.

Conflicts of Interest. Judges must be mindful of potential conflicts of interest. Practice should only be guided by the best interests of the contest, competitors and local rules. In any PPBSO sanctioned contests judges will refrain from judging family members and should avoid, where possible, judging pupils. Any such conflicts should be declared to organizers and fellow judges as soon as they become known. *(See Judges Code of Practice for further details)*

Judging Bands. Judges will not judge a band with which they were associated for one year after leaving that band.

Judges Playing in Bands. Judges will not play in a PPBSO band and judge band contests in the same grade in that competition season.

3. Judges' Certification Process

- a. The PPBSO attempts to provide the highest quality of judging for its contests. The Judges' Certification Training Program, and professional development seminars and clinics are the means by which the PPBSO strives to achieve this goal.

- b. Judge’s training and testing is a multi-step program that begins with a Common Training element (which all prospective Judges must take) in December of each year, followed by Solo, Band, and Ensemble Training over the course of the winter.
- c. A prospective Judge who meets the prerequisites can apply using the PPBSO’s application form - which is due by October 15. Although prospective Judges may apply at any time, the program is only offered in its entirety once a year.
- d. The PPBSO is committed to the promotion of equality of opportunity. All candidates will be treated fairly and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, colour, nationality or gender.
- e. **Judges’ Prerequisites**
 - The minimum prerequisite to becoming a PPBSO Judge will be based on the candidate’s playing experience and competitive success at the Grade 1 pipe band, or professional solo level (as applicable). This requirement is essential to ensure that the pipe band or solo community has respect for the knowledge, experience, and abilities of our judging panel. The prerequisites to become a PPBSO Judge can be found in the charts below.
 - In special circumstances on the recommendation of the Music Committee, the Board of Directors may grant an exception to the prerequisites.
- f. **Unsuccessful Applicants**. Candidates who do not complete any section in the Judges’ Certification Training program, may reapply up to twice more. The candidate must wait at least one year for the first retake. The second retake may take place no sooner than two years from the first retake.
- g. **Judges’ Certification Committee Approval**. The Music Committee will recommend the classification level to which the Board of Directors will certify members who have successfully completed any section in the Judges’ Certification Training program.

4. **Certification of PPBSO Solo and Pipe Band Contest Judges**

Judging Paths. Prospective PPBSO Judges who meet the prerequisites can choose to follow one specific path or multiple paths:

- Solo Piping Judge
- Band - Piping Judge
- Piobaireachd Judge
- Drumming Judge (solo/band for snare drumming and bass-tenor drumming)

Certified PPBSO Pipe Band Judges (piping, snare drumming and bass-tenor drumming) who meet the prerequisites in the chart below can apply to become a PPBSO Ensemble Judge.

Pipe Band Judging – Ensemble, Piping and Drumming Classifications

Practical Qualifications of Candidates*

	Piping Candidate	Drumming Candidate
Band Ensemble Judge	Minimum of 10 years piping experience Competed in a Grade 1 pipe band for 5 years within last 15 years Capable of an ensemble assessment of a pipe band performance Hold an “A” classification and have judging experience prior to taking the Ensemble certification exam	Minimum of 10 years playing snare, bass or tenor drum Competed in a Grade 1 pipe band for 5 years within last 15 years Capable of an ensemble assessment of a pipe band performance Hold an “A” classification and have judging experience prior to taking the Ensemble certification exam
Band Piping or Drumming Judge “A” Classification	Minimum of 10 years piping experience Competed in a Grade 1 pipe band or been Pipe Major of a Grade 2 pipe band for 5 years within the last 15 years	Minimum of 10 years playing snare, bass or tenor drum Competed in a Grade 1 pipe band or been Lead Snare, or in a bass & tenor leadership role of a Grade 2 pipe band for 5 years within the last 15 years
Band Piping “B” Classification	Minimum of 10 years piping experience Competed in a Grade 1 or Grade 2 pipe band for 5 years within the last 15 years	N/A

Effect of Classification – What each can judge in Band Contests

	Piping Judge	Drumming Judge
With Ensemble Classification	Can judge Piping and Ensemble for all Grades	Can judge Drumming and Ensemble for all Grades
Band Piping or Drumming Judge With “A” classification	Can judge Piping for all Grades (not judge Ensemble)	Can judge Drumming for all Grades (not judge Ensemble)
Band Piping With “B” classification	Can judge Piping for Grades 2 and lower Grades (not judge Ensemble or Grade 1 Piping)	N/A

* Note: Exemption from Practical Qualifications. The Practical Playing Qualifications do not apply to individuals granted equivalent status by the Music Committee and PPBSO Board of Directors.

Solo Piping and Drumming Contest Judging Classifications

Practical Qualifications of Candidates*

	Solo Piping Judge Candidate (Light Music and Piobaireachd)	Solo Drumming Judge Candidate (Snare, Bass & Tenor)
Experience	<p>Experience in Light Music for Solo Light Music Judges</p> <p>Experience in Piobaireachd for Solo Piobaireachd Judges.</p>	<p>Minimum of 10 years playing snare, bass or tenor drum</p> <p>Competed in a Grade 1 pipe band or been Lead Snare, or in a bass & tenor leadership role of a Grade 2 pipe band for 5 years within the last 15 years</p>
Piobaireachd Judge “A” Classification	<p>Minimum of 15 years piping experience in piobaireachd</p> <p>Demonstrated a reasonable degree of success in Professional Piobaireachd contests (interpreted by the Music Committee)</p>	N/A
Piobaireachd Judge “B” Classification	<p>Minimum of 10 years piping experience in piobaireachd</p> <p>Demonstrated a reasonable degree of success in Professional Piobaireachd contests (interpreted by the Music Committee)</p>	N/A
Solo Light Music Piping or Drumming Judge “A” Classification	<p>Minimum of 15 years piping experience in solo light music</p> <p>Demonstrated a reasonable degree of success in Professional Light Music contests (interpreted by the Music Committee)</p>	<p>Minimum of 10 years playing experience on snare, bass or tenor drum</p> <p>Competed in a Grade 1 pipe band, or been Lead Snare, or in a bass and tenor leadership role of a Grade 2 pipe band, for 5 years within the last 15 years</p>
Solo Light Music Piping “B” Classification	<p>Minimum of 10 years piping experience in solo light music</p> <p>Demonstrated a reasonable degree of success in at least Grade 1 Amateur Light Music contests (interpreted by the Music Committee)</p>	N/A

Effect of Classification – What each can judge in Solo Contests

	Solo Piping Judge (Light Music and Piobaireachd)	Solo Drumming Judge (Snare, Bass & Tenor)
With “A” classification	<p>Can judge Professional** and all Amateur Grades of Solo Light Music or Piobaireachd</p> <p>**Note –Candidates for “A” classification who have not previously judged solo piping</p>	<p>Can judge Professional ** and all Amateur Grades of Solo Drumming</p> <p>**Note –Candidates for “A” classification who have not previously judged solo</p>

	but who meet all other Practical Qualifications and pass the examination must judge Amateur Solo Piping contests at a minimum of two Highland Games in each of at least two seasons before being permitted to judge Professional contests.	drumming but who meet all other Practical Qualifications and pass the examination must judge Amateur Solo Drumming contests at a minimum of two Highland Games in each of at least two seasons before being permitted to judge Professional contests.
With “B” classification	<p><i>Can judge Amateur Solo Light Music for Grade 1 and lower Grades (not Professional).</i></p> <p>Solo Piobaireachd – Can judge Intermediate Amateur Grades and below (not Senior Amateur or Professional)</p>	N/A

* Note: Exemption from Practical Qualifications. The Practical Playing Qualifications do not apply to individuals granted equivalent status by the Music Committee and PPBSO Board of Directors.

Appendix 2 – Proper Highland Dress

- **PPBSO Workers** (Board of Directors, Judges, Stewards and Runners) are encouraged (but not required) to wear Proper Highland Dress.
- **Competitors**, excluding practice chanter and practice pad competitors, must wear Proper Highland Dress.
- **Judges' Headdress**. Judges may wear headdress as defined below, headdress appropriate for the weather or no headdress if so chosen.

Proper Highland Dress:

Headdress	Feather bonnet, Glengarry, or Balmoral
Shirt	Collared shirt. More formal dress may include a military-style doublet (for which a shirt will not apply), Prince Charlie-style jacket, police/military-style jacket or vest. Tie is optional, but encouraged.
Kilt or Highland Trews	Kilt will be worn with knee-length hose and sporran
Shoes	Oxford-style dress shoes or ghillie brogues

Note:

Although all possible apparel cannot be covered in the description above, it is expected that the spirit of the definition will be followed at all times.

Deviations will be considered, but must be approved a minimum of three weeks in advance of the applicable Highland Games by the PPBSO Board of Directors. Requests will be submitted with the band master entry form or in writing to the PPBSO Board of Directors.

Minor deviations for individual pipers/drummers, due to obvious or documented medical conditions, do not require prior approval.

Adverse Weather

Inverness capes are considered acceptable dress for wet weather conditions.

Extra Protection from the Sun. During massed bands, alternate headdress that allows extra sun protection (such as bucket hats) may be worn provided that:

- The entire band should have one uniform style of hat.
- These hats are only worn when standing “at ease” and not while playing in massed bands.
- At all other times headdress such as Glengarry, Balmoral or feather bonnet should be worn.

Appendix 3 – Developmental Players

A player on a lower-grade band roster who is also designated “developmental” on a higher-grade band roster may be allowed to compete in a maximum of three designated contests with the higher-grade band within the criteria that follow:

1. Notification that a developmental player plans to compete at a particular contest or contests must be in writing to the PPBSO Operations Manager, no less than 72 hours prior to the contest, signed by the Pipe Major, or the Drum Sergeant, or the Band Manager.
2. Once the Notification is filed, the player is deemed to have played, regardless whether the player actually plays or not.
3. The lower-grade and higher-grade bands must be in the same organization, or must jointly acknowledge that a formal player development arrangement exists between the two bands.
4. A developmental player for whom a notification is received may compete in the lower-grade band and the higher-grade band on the same day. The higher grade band may have a maximum of two (2) developmental players in any one contest.
5. The higher-grade band must satisfy minimum numbers without counting any developmental player.
6. This rule applies to developmental players who are PPBSO members playing in PPBSO registered bands.

Appendix 4 – Inclement Weather Policy

Policy: The PPBSO sanctions contests with due regard for the safety and health of competitors and members.

Context: When PPBSO officials anticipate severe weather or lightning, a decision will be taken that considers the safety hazards associated with changing circumstances. Such a decision may result in the suspension, or cancellation of some or all of the events, and in extreme conditions, may result in declaring that areas deemed high hazard be evacuated.

Criteria:

- PPBSO officials will use their best judgment in considering all available weather information and this policy in making and communicating decisions.
- When the time interval between lightning being seen and thunder being heard is 30 seconds or less, the PPBSO will halt contests and activities, and instruct competitors to seek shelter.
- The PPBSO will sound an Evacuation signal - three blasts of the air horn – to signal competitors to vacate the playing field and seek shelter. If possible, loudspeaker announcements will be made: “Attention everyone. Please leave the area immediately.”
- When possible to do so, competitors already competing may finish any performance that is in progress. No further performances will begin until PPBSO officials have determined that there is no longer a threat to safety.
- When the PPBSO is satisfied that it is safe to resume events, a signal to resume – two blasts of an air horn – will signal that solo contests will resume in 20 minutes and band contests will resume in 40 minutes. If possible, loudspeaker announcements will be made: “Attention everyone. Contests will resume.”
- In extreme situations, cancellation of the Games may be necessary. The PPBSO president (or delegate) and the Highland Games Committee senior representative will usually consult one another and make such a decision jointly. If this occurs, a Cancellation of Games signal - four blasts of the air horn - will signal cancellation of the Games. If possible, loudspeaker announcements will be made: “Attention everyone. The Games are cancelled.”

Responsibility:

- It is the responsibility of the senior PPBSO representative present in consultation with other PPBSO executive members to ensure that this policy is fairly implemented.
- Once notified, members are responsible for their own actions in reacting to safety hazards.

Application:

This rule book is enacted or amended by the Board of Directors on the latest date below.

All previous versions in relation to contest rules are rescinded on the date this policy is enacted or amended.

Enacted	8 March, 2025	New – Major Revision
Amended	23 May 2025 (Executive)	Minor change page 23
Amended	14 February 2026	Amend A3, B5, B7, B12, C8, C11 & C13

Signed:



President

Signed:



Secretary