



## Competition Rules and Regulations (Updated September 2019)

### Category Guidelines:

YOUTH - 15 and under

ADULT - 16 and up

Youth are open to perform in adult categories. Adults not permitted, other than as an accompanist, in youth categories.

Categories include Fiddle, Banjo, Flatpick Guitar, Mandolin, Band, and Miscellaneous

### Instrumental Guidelines:

1. Fiddle - Contest is for traditional four string (five string is acceptable but not ideal), acoustic fiddles only. Standards such as "Listen to the Mockingbird," "Orange Blossom Special," or "Black Mountain Rag" are strongly discouraged.

2. Banjo - 4 and/or 5 string acoustic banjos okay. Standards such as "Foggy Mountain Breakdown," "John Hardy," and "Dueling Banjos" are strongly discouraged.

3. Guitar - Acoustic Steel String Guitars only

4. Mandolin - Acoustic Mandolins

5. Bass - Acoustic and/or electric basses allowed

6. Band - Must consist of a minimum 3 members. Band contestants are only allowed to compete in ONE band. Same song restrictions apply.

7. Miscellaneous - Any instrument not covered above, that is a part of the "bluegrass/old-time music family" - such as resonator guitar, finger-style guitar, spoons, jaw harp, mandola, bouzouki, accordion, other stringed instruments such as cello and viola.

**NO DRUMS**

**NO SIX-STRING BANJO/GUITARS**

### Registration Guidelines

1. Contestants **MUST** sign in upon arrival at the judges table.

2. No contestant is allowed to register after a category is completed.

3. Judges are not permitted to enter or perform in any category.

4. Contestants must be ready and available to perform when their category is called. Failure to do so may result in disqualification.

5. Tuning, warm-up, rehearsal, or any other audible actions **MUST** be done away from the stage, active competitor, and convention audience. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

## Performance Guidelines

1. This is a Bluegrass and Old Time music event. Contestants are expected to choose music from these traditional genres for competition. Irish, Celtic, and Cajun styles are acceptable but not ideal for competition.
2. NO electric or amplified instruments will be permitted in ANY category (bass okay)
3. No drums or percussion permitted in ANY category
4. Contestants must play from memory. NO sheet music.
5. Contestants performing in individual performer categories may perform solo or with up to two (2) accompanists. Accompanists MAY NOT play melody or take solos.
6. Individual Contestants must perform two (2) songs
7. Band Contestants must be prepared to play (3) songs
8. Individual contestants must limit their total performance time to FIVE (5) MINUTES. Excessively exceeding this time limit will result in disqualification.
9. Band contestants must limit their total performance time to TEN (10) MINUTES. Excessively exceeding this time limit will result in disqualification.
10. One false start will be allowed. Allowances will also be made for broken strings and other uncontrollable performance hitches.
11. Playing in such a manner as to render the melody of your chosen song unrecognizable will result in lost points.
12. INDIVIDUAL competitions are INSTRUMENTAL ONLY. NO SINGING.
13. Please introduce your songs. Furthermore, saying hello and/or thank you is okay.
14. BAND competition SINGING STRONGLY ENCOURAGED.
15. Contest organizers reserve the right to alter the time schedule, order of categories, or number of songs to be played, as needed given amount of registrants vs. event time constraints.
16. Anything not covered in the rules will be decided by the judges and/or organizers.

## MARYLAND STATE FLATPICKING GUITAR CHAMPIONSHIP RULES (Congruent with the rules of the National Flatpicking Guitar Championship held at the Walnut Valley Festival, Winfield, KS).

1. Contestants will be prepared to play two instrumental numbers in traditional fiddle tune or bluegrass style.
2. All contestants must play with a FLAT PICK. NO FINGER PICKING WILL BE ALLOWED. NO COMBINATION OF FLAT PICKING AND FINGER PICKING WILL BE ALLOWED.
3. Selected tunes should be played in standard tuning - E A D G B E. The only alteration from standard tuning allowed will be that of the low E (6th) string. The low E (6th) string can be changed to any note desired, not limiting the tuning of the 6th string to "Drop D" or a low D note but to any desired pitch. No other string tuning or deviation from the standard E (1), B (2), G (3), D (4), A (5) will be permitted.
4. Only a single, standard style capo may be used. Capos which allow the alteration of individual strings or partial capos depressing some, but not all strings will NOT be allowed. CAPOS, IF USED, MUST BE APPLIED ACROSS ALL STRINGS ON THE SAME FRET OF THE INSTRUMENT.

MISCELLANEOUS Category guidelines - This is an open category for instruments other than Flatpick Guitar, Mandolin, Banjo, and Fiddle. This could include resonator or fingerstyle guitar, mandola, jaw harp, harmonica, spoons, accordion, and even other stringed instruments such as cello, viola, or upright bass. ALL SONGS PERFORMED MUST STILL BE FROM THE BLUEGRASS/OLDTIME/IRISH MUSICAL TRADITION

#### Judging guidelines

Judging is based on a 100 point scale per song  
In the event of a tie, a one song playoff will be held.

#### Evaluated Categories:

1. Rhythm and Timing
2. Execution
3. Creativity
4. Confidence

#### Contestant Decorum

The Berlin Fiddlers Convention is a fun, family event. By electing to be a competitor, you are choosing to represent not only yourself but the Berlin Fiddlers Convention, as well. Just as you would (or should) respect yourself, you are expected to respect the countless families, children, fans, volunteers, performers, and organizers that make this such a fantastic event. Foul, abusive, combative language and/or behavior will not be tolerated and will result in immediate disqualification.

Play well. Be positive. Be cool. Most importantly... Have fun.