



2021 Berlin Fiddlers Convention Official Contest Rules. (Page 1 of 3)

The Berlin Fiddlers Convention (BFC) Bluegrass Instrument and Band Contest goes worldwide! In an effort to implement precautionary Covid protocol and foster a safer, more diverse competition, this year we will move to a **video submission based, "Winner-takes-all" contest**. That means that competitors will now submit a YouTube video recording of their performance(s) to be judged in advance of the festival. They will be judged by a qualified and anonymous panel on the same technical and artistic standards as always. We reserve the right to revise these rules as needed. Only the **Winners will perform live at the event and receive cash prizes and awards!** (See table below)

Instrumental and Youth Band Category Winners will be required to come to Berlin on Saturday, September 25, 2021 to perform their submitted tunes in order to claim their prize(s). **The Winning Adult Band** will be required to perform on Friday, September 24, 2021 as the opening act of the festival. Anyone failing to perform their submitted entries live with a reasonable facsimile to their video submission will be disqualified and not receive any prizes.

All instrumental competitors will be required to submit a video of 2 tunes to be judged but will have the option of performing a 3rd tune at the event if they win.

Categories are as follows: Fiddle, Guitar, Banjo, and Mandolin. People age 16 and older will compete in the Adult division and people age 15 and younger will compete in the Youth division. People younger than 16 may choose to compete in the Adult division but people older than 15 may not compete in the Youth division. Competitors must declare in their videos and on their registration form which Division and Category they are competing in. Contestants may compete in multiple Categories but must submit a separate video and registration for each one. Contestants may not place in both the Youth and Adult divisions.

All Band competitors will be required to perform 3 tunes. 2 tunes must have lead and harmony vocals and 1 tune must be an instrumental. Bands must have at least 3 members with instruments being from the traditional genre, ie. Fiddle, Guitar, Banjo, Mandolin, Bass, and Resophonic Guitar. (Harmonica and Dulcimer may also be included). No drums, other percussion instruments or electric instruments other than the electric Bass are allowed.

Deadlines:

All Videos must be submitted on or before midnight September 5, 2021.

Winners will be notified by phone or email before September 15, 2021.

The Winning Adult Band will perform on Friday, September 24, 2021 at 7pm as the opening act for national recording artists The Gina Furtado Project.* **The Winning Youth Band** will perform on Saturday, September 25, 2021 as part of the winners performances and open for The West King String Band and The U.S. Navy Band Country Current.* Acts subject to change.

2021 Prizes

Instrumental (Fiddle, Guitar, Banjo, Mandolin) and Band

	Adult	Youth	Adult Band	Youth Band
1st)	\$300	\$200	\$500	\$300

Plus, the Adult Guitar Winner shall be awarded the title of Maryland State Flatpicking Guitar Champion, receive a special trophy and an Eastman Guitar, (\$500+- MSRP).

The Youth Guitar Winner will receive a \$200 Guitar Man of Salisbury, MD Gift Certificate.

Total: \$2800 cash, \$700+- Prizes.

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Additional Competition Rules and Regulations

Category and Division Guidelines:

YOUTH DIVISION- 15 and under

ADULT DIVISION - 16 and up

Youth are permitted to compete in adult categories. Adults not permitted, other than as an accompanist, in youth categories. You must indicate on the Contest Registration Form which category you are competing in.

Categories include Fiddle, Guitar, Banjo, Mandolin, and Band.

Instrument and Band 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 - Flat picking style, 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 guidelines as above.
7. NO DRUMS
8. NO SIX-STRING BANJO/GUITARS

Registration Guidelines

1. Contestants MUST submit an official BFC 2021 Contest Registration Form along with a YouTube link to a current recorded video of the performance that they wish to be judged.
2. Videos must be recorded between August 5, 2021 and September 5, 2021 and clearly demonstrate both visually and audibly that the performance is being played live by the person or persons entering a specific Category and Division.
3. All contact information must be completed with the name(s), age(s), address(s), phone number(s), email(s), and competition category(s) and division(s) clearly declared within the registration form.

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. For the sake of recording adequate audio and video, acoustic instruments may be played into microphones and through a Sound Board, PA or audio interface into a camera or other Audio/ Visual recording devices with no effects like Reverb, Delay, Chorus, Etc. You will not be judged on video production but judges must be able to clearly see and hear your performance.
4. Contestants must play from memory. NO sheet music.
5. Contestants performing in individual instrument 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) tunes with No Singing in their video. Be prepared to play an optional 3rd tune if you win and time permits.
7. Band Contestants must play (3) tunes in their video and fill up to 45 minutes on stage if they win. Two songs must have lead and harmony vocals and one song must be an instrumental.

8. Band contestants must limit their total video time to 15 MINUTES. Excessively exceeding this time limit will result in disqualification.

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9. Individual contestants must limit their total performance time to FIVE (5) MINUTES. Excessively exceeding this time limit will result in disqualification.

10. Playing in such a manner as to render the melody of your chosen song unrecognizable will result in lost points.

11. **Please introduce yourself (band members), Category, Division, at the beginning of your video and announce the song title before you play it.** Example: “Hello, my name is Bill Smith and this is my video for the Berlin Fiddlers Convention. I am competing in the youth fiddle category and my first tune is Berlin Mountain Breakdown.”

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 play two instrumental tunes 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.

Judging guidelines

Judging is based on a 100 point scale per tune.

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. By submitting a competition video, contestants agree to allow the Berlin Maryland Chamber of Commerce to use that video and any associated images and recordings of your performance(s) for promotional purposes.