

MISSOURI STATE FAIR FIDDLE CHAMPIONSHIP

Official Contest Rules & Judging Criteria

Each fiddler will play three tunes: a hoedown, a waltz, and a tune of choice (which may be any kind of danceable tune in any meter.) The tunes may be played in any order. No contestant may repeat a tune they have already played in subsequent rounds. Contestants may be limited to two tunes (hoe-down and a waltz) on any round of play at the discretion of the contest administrator.

Tune Selection is up to the individual contestants and should be done in the interest of showcasing the contestant's skill, technical ability, and musicality.

Style of play shall be a consideration. While all traditional styles are valid in the right context, they may not be judged equally depending on the intent of the contest and the preference of the judges. Generally, traditional fiddle styles and dancing go hand in hand, so it is advisable to play tunes at a danceable tempo. Styles of play which are not associated with old-time dancing may not receive the same consideration by the judges as more danceable styles of play. Recognized styles of play could include Missouri Old-Time, traditional Oklahoma/Texas/Western, Eastern Old-Timey, Canadian Old-Time, Bluegrass and traditional Celtic fiddle styles. Classical, jazz, blues, hot swing and various modern styles of play will not be permitted. Excessive improvisation is not encouraged and can result in point deduction.

The total performance time, excluding instrument failure or other emergency, shall not exceed nine minutes. A more restricted amount of time may apply if the number of contestants is large or to accommodate the total time permitted for the contest at the discretion of the contest administrator.

There is no restriction on the tuning of the violin, but no more than four strings shall be allowed.

No electronic amplification of instruments will be allowed other than through the provided sound system. However, if no acoustic piano is available, the contest administrator reserves the right to approve the use of an electronic keyboard, which shall be adjusted as far as possible to emulate the sound of an acoustic piano.

Each contestant will typically be allowed no more than two accompanists with three being the absolute maximum. In any case, only two accompanists may be on a microphone connected to the sound system. The intent of this limitation is two-fold: a) to prevent a contestant from bringing an entire band on stage and thereby creating an unfair advantage; and b) to minimize the time required to make microphone adjustments and get all the performers on and off the stage.

Accompanists shall not double or harmonize the melody line with the fiddler.

Broken performances (false starts, sound system problems, instrument failure, environmental difficulties, etc.) may be replayed with the express permission of the judges. Only one such restart shall be permitted per performance without potential point penalty.

A contestant's right to view his score sheets after the contest depends on the consensus of the judges and the contest administrator. In general, this is not permitted.

The judges and the contest administrator reserve the right to require call-back (play-off) rounds. Ties or even close scores may be broken by means of call-back rounds or a vote of the judges at the discretion of the contest administrator.

Call-back rounds are scored separately from previous rounds with no cumulative scoring.

A contestant's failure to appear within a reasonable time of being called to the stage may, in the discretion of the judges and the contest administrator, result in disqualification.

A contestant who arrives after the close of registration shall be admitted only with the express permission of the contest administrator. Any contestant admitted after the contest has started will be required to compete immediately after the currently performing contestant or be the first contestant in his or her division.

Clowning, showboating, or vocalizing (other than when traditionally compatible with a particular tune) may result in loss of points. The judges' discretion in this regard is final.

No sheet music or written scores are allowed on stage; all tunes must be performed from memory.

No contestant shall be disqualified from competition for the reason that he earns all or a substantial part of his income from playing the fiddle.

Any matter not expressly covered in the foregoing rules shall be ruled on by the judges and the contest administrator, and their decision in such regard shall be final.