



OFFICIAL CONTEST RULES
(Updated 08/2023)

Underlined information means it is “updated” information. Please pay special attention.

CONTESTANT: Any person who is of amateur status and has the ability to play banjo, fiddle, or mandolin. A person wishing to enter the contest with a mockery routine will not be qualified as a contestant.

1. Registration and Fees:

- a. Applications must be received by Saturday, September 23rd to be printed in the event program. If an applicant wants to register after Saturday, September 23rd ,they may do so up until 5:30pm the night of the competition.
- b. Every contestant (*including pre-registrants*) must register/check-in between 5:00-5:30pm to receive final instructions and to draw their playing number for the contest.
- c. A contestant may only enter in **one** category in each contest. There will be four contests: Clawhammer, Banjo, Mandolin, and Fiddle.

2. Drawing of Competition Numbers:

- a. The contestant drawing the **lowest** number in his/her category will perform first.
- b. Each contestant will draw a number to determine the order of his/her appearance. No trading of numbers is allowed. Each contestant who trades numbers will be disqualified. Each player will report to the “on deck area” as directed by the stage management team.
- c. The first contestant to perform will be given the opportunity to perform again, as a courtesy.

3. Song choice, Accompaniment and Guests:

- a. Contestants must play two different songs of their choice. If you enter more than one category (fiddle, banjo, mandolin), the 2 songs for each instrument **MUST BE DIFFERENT**. There will be a 10 point deduction if the same song is played on a second instrument.
- b. Songs must be confirmed before the competition begins. Selections may not be changed once the competition begins.
- c. Only **one** back-up player is permitted, should a contestant choose to have accompaniment. That one back-up player has free admission into the competition.

4. Promptness and Duration:

- a. The contestant is allowed 30 seconds to the stage after his/her number is announced by the emcee.
- b. The player will also receive a deduction of points if his/her performance goes over the four and a half (4 min 30 secs) minute time limit. Judges will take off two points for each ten seconds over the allowed limit. The Timing Judge will be responsible for the timing.

5. Microphone Use:

- a. Contestants shall refrain from talking into the microphone *unless* requested by the judge.
- b. The emcee will advise the judges of the playing number and the tunes selected to be played.
- c. The sound engineers will adjust the microphone for the best results. The judges will deduct two points for each violation.

6. Ties:

- a. In the event of a tie between players in the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd placement categories, said players will be asked to play two different tunes other than were played originally, (*paragraph 4 rules will be applied to the play-off as well*).

7. Gimmicks and Electrical Equipment:

- a. All instruments must be played acoustically, with no amplification other than that provided by the event organizers.
- b. Mechanical devices that unnaturally alter the instrument’s sound and that are not commonly used by other contestants are **not permitted**.

8. Judging Responsibilities and Rights:

- a. The judges will sit at the judging table one half hour prior to the contest to clear any special requests and to answer any questions. The judges are charged with the responsibility of conducting a fair and impartial contest, to uphold their decisions and rulings and uphold the good name of the contest.
- b. The judges reserve the right to call and recall any contestant at any time during the contest.
- c. **ALL DECISIONS MADE BY THE JUDGES ARE FINAL!** The judges will collectively make decisions on any questions, the evening of the contest, not covered here.

9. Grievances, Comments, and/or Suggestions:

- a. Registration and tune-up will be held in the auxiliary gym, located to the right side of the auditorium.
- b. Score sheets will be available for review after the evening's competition upon request.
- c. Any grievances, comments and/or suggestions must be directed in writing to:

Banjo/Fiddle/Mandolin Contest, c/o Nicole McCullough, 15 S. Third Street, Oakland, MD 21550

CASH & PRIZES will be awarded to all those who place in the top three in each category, with the exception of the "Clawhammer" category. Only 1st place will be awarded.

Junior (age 15 and under):

- 1st place
- 2nd place
- 3rd place

State champion (Open Class)

- 1st place: State Champion
- 2nd place
- 3rd place

Banjo ONLY: Clawhammer/[Frail](#)

- 1st place

Playing "level" is based on ability, not age.

JUDGING: Judging is based on a 110-point scale using the following guidelines:

BANJO	Points Possible
Tuning and Intonation	10
Rhythm	20
Difficulty	20
Technique	40
Stage Presence	10
Knowledge of Fingerboard	5
Combination of Styles	5

FIDDLE	Points Possible
Tuning and Intonation	25
Rhythm	20
Difficulty	20
Technique	25
Stage Presence	10
Knowledge of Fingerboard	5
Combination of Styles	5

MANDOLIN	Points Possible
Tuning and Intonation	10
Rhythm	20
Difficulty	20
Technique	40
Stage Presence	10
Knowledge of Fingerboard	5
Combination of Styles	5

CLAWHAMMER	Points Possible
Tuning and Intonation	15
Rhythm	20
Difficulty	20
Technique	40
Stage Presence	10
Knowledge of Fingerboard	5

EXPLANATIONS OF SCORING

Tuning and Intonation	Instrument properly tuned, individual notes the correct pitch.
Rhythm	Measure-to-measure as well as the entire number (<i>unintentional speed up/slowdown.</i>)
Difficulty	Level of mastery inherently required by the tune.
Technique	Technical competence, energy, finesse, drive, tastefulness.
Stage Presence	Performance elements not addressed in the musical criteria.
Knowledge of Fingerboard	Ability to play up the neck.
Combination of Styles	Ability to play different styles including, melodic, chromatic, and traditional.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:

Timing	Both numbers should be completed within five minutes.
Back-up	While no extra credit is given for the presence of a superior back-up, points may be deducted for a poor performance.
Original Material	Since the judges have no way of knowing the origin of music or style, only performance may be considered.

*****A 10-point deduction of the same song is played twice by the same performer. Each performer must play 2 different songs on each instrument.**