

2025 Contest Rules

1. Contestants should pre-register online, via the 'Register Online' link on our website, www.paradeofthehills.org. There will also be on-site in person registration the day of the contest if spots are available. Contestants should sign-in from 4:00 pm – 5:30 pm on the day of the contest. No entry fee applies.
2. The contest will begin at 6:00 pm, please let us know if you are running late..
3. Contestants may have **two** accompanists..
4. You will receive your playing position when you sign in. Each contestant will be given their contestant number, and will not be referred to by name during contest performances.
5. Divisions:
 - a. 12 yrs and under
 - b. 13 yrs - 18 yrs
 - c. 19 yrs – 54 yrs
 - d. 55 yrs and older
6. Contestants should remain in the Opera House or close by to be ready when it's time to move to the stage area upstairs when their age group is called. 55 and over will go first, then 12 and under will go second, 13-18 will go third and 19-54 will go fourth.
7. If a string breaks, the *contestant* will have the option to continue or stop at that point. If the tune is completed, it will be judged as played. If the *contestant* stops play, due to a broken string, he/she will be allowed to begin with that tune and complete his/her program without penalty. A reasonable amount of time will be allotted for string replacement.
8. Each contestant must play a hoedown and a waltz in round one, and a hoedown, waltz, and a tune of choice if they qualify for the championship round. A hoedown is a tune in 2/4 or 4/4 time suitable for square dancing, for example a breakdown, reel, American hornpipe, or Cajun 2-step. A waltz is a tune in 3/4 time suitable for waltzing. Tunes of choice may be any other type of music with a danceable rhythm, such as a Jig, Scottish, Rag, March, Clog, Irish, or Scottish Hornpipe, Reel, etc. Tune of choice must be a tune other than a waltz or hoedown. Trick fiddling or tunes like: "Listen to the Mocking Bird," "Orange Blossom Special," or "Black Mountain Rag" are not allowed. **Play old-time style-danceable.**
9. All contestants will be allowed to play up to four minutes in round one (two tunes), and six minutes (three tunes) in the championship round. Five points will be deducted for each second over the allotted time, up to a maximum of twenty seconds, which will result in disqualification
10. Contact microphones and/or amplified or electric instruments will not be permitted during any portion of the competition. No cross-tuning is allowed on stage. Each contestant may have **two** accompanist.

11. Contestants will be judged on the following:

- a. **Traditional Fiddling Ability/Authenticity** – 25 points,
 - i. The ability to play danceable music in a manner appropriate to the style of the music. The fiddler should have a basic respect for the structure of the tune and the tradition and style of the tune's source. Variation and ornamentation should emphasize the distinctive flavor of the tune, not detract from, or obscure it.
- b. **Rhythm and Timing** – 25 points,
 - i. The ability to set and maintain a steady, danceable tempo, with no unevenness, breaks in rhythm or dropped beats. Extra beats or measures are allowed if they are part of the tune as traditionally played. Dotted notes or syncopation, when appropriate to the tune, are also allowed.
- c. **Clarity and tone** – 25 points,
 - i. Notes should be played clearly, on pitch, with good tone. Avoid running notes together in a fuzzy or indistinct manner. Good tone does not mean sounding like a classical violinist, but at the same time tone should not be too harsh.
- d. **Expression** – 15 points
 - i. The ability to move or 'connect' with the audience/judges.
- e. **Difficulty and Mastery** – 10 points.
 - i. 1-10 points will be awarded based on the judge's assessment of the tune's level of difficulty, and the contestant's proficiency.

12. Points will be deducted for any violation of the rules above (8-11).

Deductions will be 5 points per violation. Scores will be cumulative, and the judges will sit with their backs to the contestants during the performances.

13. In the event of a tie, a replay will be necessary (a hoedown in round one, three tunes(hoedown, waltz, choice) in the championship round).

14. No sheet music shall be displayed in the contesting area.

15. All contest winners must appear on stage to receive their awards, or the award will be forfeited.

16. The contest chair reserves the right to alter the time schedule, order of categories, number of contestants, or number of tunes to be played as needed.

17. In all cases, the decisions of the Judges and the Contest Committee will be final.