

## INFORMATION FOR NEW DANCERS

Scottish Highland Dancing is a celebration of the Scottish spirit. Dances are a combination of strength, agility, movement, music, and costume. In competition, dancers typically dance to traditional Scottish music all played by an accompanying bagpiper. The dances are made up of different parts, called steps and there are usually four or six steps to a dance. Highland dancing was traditionally performed by men but is now performed by men and women. It is one of few areas of competition where men and women compete equally.

### Recreational or Competitive Dancing?

Highland Dancing can be done for recreation or in preparation for competitions. It is a great way to develop good coordination, posture, aerobic capacity and strength.

Highland Dancing is known to be competitive, but dancers also have the opportunity to track their personal dancing progress through annual exams, which measure a dancer's progress against a "standard" level rather than other competitors. SDTA (Scottish Dance Teachers Alliance) Exams are offered once a year when an examiner is on tour

The decision to start competing in Highland Dance should be a joint one with your dance instructor/coach. If you are not sure if your dancer is ready to take on the world of Highland Dance competitions, please talk to Jessica!

Dancers that enter competitions, must be registered with ScotDance. Registration forms are available through the ScotDance Canada website. With your registration, you are required to review the Scottish Official Board of Highland Dance (SOBHD) Code of Ethics, which is applicable to Judges, Teachers, Organizers, Parents and Dancers.

As the dancer's skill, knowledge and technique improve, they will graduate to higher levels. At each level, the dancers are judged by increasing standards and expectation. Costume requirements are minimal for those just starting out. For example, a primary dancer requires black ghillies (dance shoes), white socks, a kiltie and a blouse. As the dancer moves up into higher levels, the costume requirements increase and change.

There are also opportunities for your dancer to demonstrate their skills through various shows and events, which occur throughout the year. Dancers from our studio are often invited to join in celebrations for St. Andrews, Robbie Burns Day, and local community shows, which are celebrating Scottish heritage! Performances at such shows are done on a volunteer basis, and are a great opportunity for timid dancers to become accustomed to dancing in front of a crowd!

## What do I need to bring to a competition?

Your packing list will depend on if the event is indoors or outdoors. Regardless, you will need to bring your dancer registration card, and the required outfits (including socks/hose, underwear) and shoes for your dancer.

For an outdoor competition you may also want to bring chairs, tents, blankets, sunscreen, umbrellas, and slip on shoe covers to avoid ruining the shoes in the dirt or grass. For an indoor competition there will likely be seating and no need for protection from the elements, however your dancer should bring practice mats for warm ups and a blanket to put on the ground to stretch on.

For any competition no matter where it is held it is always important to bring the following: plenty of water for the dancer to drink, some healthy snacks, and standard supplies (hair supplies, tape, extra elastic or laces, safety pins, etc.). If you ever forgot something, don't hesitate to ask another dancer or dancing parent for some help - we are ALWAYS willing to help out!

## How does scoring/judging work?

Dancers compete in groups which range from Primary to Premier.

Highland Dancers are awarded merit for their timing, appearance, position, and execution of the dance steps. Dancers are judged by the Scottish Official Board of Highland Dancing adjudicators.

Medals are awarded on the basis of points gained by placing in each dance. Points for individual placings are awarded as follows:

1st – 88 points	4th – 25 points
2nd – 56 points	5th – 16 points
3rd – 38 points	6th – 10 points

Trophies are awarded to the dancer with the most points within their age group and category. Trophies are not awarded to primary dancers.

## Procedure for Dancers receiving medals:

The dancers' numbers who place, are called out to receive awards. When a dancers' number is called, this means that they must go to the designated line up area (backstage) to line up. Dancers must be in full costume to receive awards, and should take their Scotdance card with them.

When they announce the medal placings, dancers are expected to bow or curtsy nicely, step to the front to receive their medal and return to the line by walking behind the row of dancers. Dancers leave the stage with the others when all the medals have been handed out. Dancers that win first, second or third in certain dances will get their Scotdance card stamped.

Typically, all primary dancers are called to the stage to receive a participation gift prior to medals being awarded. Primary dancers do not get their cards stamped.

## Supporting our Dancers:

All of our dancers (recreational and competitive) are all part of the Alberta Rocky Mountain highland dance school team, and our goal as parents, family and friends is to help make Highland Dance a positive experience. Good sportsmanship is an important life lesson for our dancers, and parents have the ability to lead by example. Displaying the right attitude is not always easy, but it is always the right thing to do!

Some tips for our dancers:

- Be prepared to always try your best.
- Encourage fellow dancers.
- Be respectful of others when you place well in competitions.
- Be respectful of others when they place well in competitions.
- Learn from your mistakes and don't make excuses.
- Work on your corrections, and try again!

## Dancer Categories

### 1. Primary

A dancer under the age of seven may compete in this section until the seventh birthday is reached after which that dancer is classified as a Beginner dancer and is not eligible to enter a Primary event. A Primary dancer may elect to compete in a more advanced category at any time before reaching the age of seven, but thereafter must continue in the new category and/or advance in accordance with the Pre-Premier registration scheme.

### 2. Beginner (no age limit)

Beginner status is held until the competitor either a) gains a first, second or third prize in a highland dance in six separate Beginner competitions (National Dances, Lilt & Flora, do not count for beginner stamps), or b) until twelve months following the first beginner stamp which ever a) or b) is the later, after which that competitor is classified as a Novice.

Dances:

- Fling
- Sword
- Seann Truibhas
- Scottish Lilt
- Flora McDonald's Fancy
- Strathspey and Highland Reel
- Strathspey and 1/2 Tulloch
- 1/2 Tulloch

### 3. Novice (no age limit)

This status is held until the competitor either a) gains a first, second or third prize in SIX separate Novice competitions, or b) until twelve months following the first novice stamp which ever a) or b) is the later, after which that competitor is classified as an Intermediate

Dances:

- Fling
- Sword
- Seann Truibhas
- Scottish Lilt
- Flora McDonald's Fancy
- Strathspey and Highland Reel
- Strathspey and 1/2 Tulloch
- 1/2 Tulloch

#### 4. Intermediate (no age limit)

For Intermediate dancers starting in January 2016, this status is held until the competitor either a) gains a first, second or third prize in SIX separate Intermediate competitions, b) until twelve months following the first intermediate stamp which ever a) or b) is the later, after which the competitor becomes a Premier dancer. Intermediate dancers who are seriously injured or seriously ill during their one-year term and are looking for an extension of that term are asked to submit a doctor's certificate for review by the registration Committee on the SOBHD. Each case is reviewed on an individual basis.

Dances:

- Fling
- Sword
- Seann Truibhas
- Scottish Lilt
- Flora McDonald's Fancy
- Strathspey and Highland Reel
- Strathspey and 1/2 Tulloch
- 1/2 Tulloch
- Irish Jig
- Sailors Hornpipe
- Barracks Johnny
- Highland Laddie
- Full Tulloch

#### 5. Premier (no age limit)

This status is the final level a dancer can achieve in competition. Once a dancer has become a Premier dancer they remain at this level and are eligible to compete at regular Competitions, Pre-Championships and Championships. A dancer under the age of 7 cannot enter to compete as a Premier. A 'restricted Premier dancer is a premier dancer that has won a trophy in the last 2 years.

Championship Dances: (Short steps for ages 11 & Under)

- 6 step Fling
- Sword Dance 3 & 1 (or 2 & 2)
- Sean Truibhas 4 & 2
- a Reel

Additional dances:

- Fling
- Sword
- Seann Truibhas
- Scottish Lilt
- Flora McDonald's Fancy

- Strathspey and Highland Reel
- Strathspey and 1/2 Tulloch
- 1/2 Tulloch
- Irish Jig
- Sailors Hornpipe
- Barracks Johnny
- Highland Laddie
- Full Tulloch
- Blue Bonnets
- Village Maid
- Earl of Errol
- Scotch Measure