

Grade 4 snare drummers playing without accompaniment-Submitted by Tom Foley, WUSPBA adjudicator.

CURRENT WORDING:

3. Snare Drumming

3.2. Drummers' Accompaniment: Each snare drumming competitor in grade four (4) or higher will be accompanied by a minimum of one (1) and a maximum of two (2) pipers obtained by the competitor, or in the absence of accompaniment, a piping recording may be substituted. There can be no drum scores playing on the recording. It is the responsibility of the competitor to provide the music and audio device and its operation.

PROPOSED WORDING:

3. Snare Drumming

3.2 Drummers' Accompaniment: Each snare drumming competitor in **grade three (3)** or higher will be accompanied by a minimum of one (1) and a maximum of two (2) pipers obtained by the competitor, or in the absence of accompaniment, a piping recording may be substituted. There can be no drum scores playing on the recording. It is the responsibility of the competitor to provide the music and audio device and its operation. **Grade four (4) competitors have the option of playing with or without accompaniment.**

JUSTIFICATION:

This seemingly radical proposal arises from my disappointment in the poor entry level of snare drummers. I suspect that rather than apathy from the potential contestants, difficulty in obtaining a piper to a) play for the contestant, and/or b) be available at the requisite time, are more likely to be the major drawbacks.

We should recognize that for the most part, drummers of all grades will practice individually or collectively, where their only accompaniment is the music "in their heads." Flaws in tempo, expression, execution, etc. are readily noticeable and addressed. I submit that any qualified judge can listen to an unaccompanied performance (especially at the grade 4 level) and provide an accurate critique to the contestant-just as if it was in a practice or instructional situation.

It may be argued, correctly, that by removing the piper from the equation, the opportunity to assess the drummer's ability to maintain the tempo, provide dynamics, etc. is compromised. I would submit that oftentimes, a grade 4 performance is impacted by a piping problem...breakdown, wrong part, etc.