

Argument in favor of the Solo contest Rule Change submitted by John Partanen

The WUSPBA should not be in the business of directing, or ordering solo competitors which grade they should be competing in. The rationale given by the WUSPBA for assuming this control was to prevent "sand baggers" from staying in lower grades when they should be competing in upper grades. However, no actual instances, or individuals could be identified as these so called "sand baggers". Another rationale given is that other pipe band associations control which grade solo competitors compete in and that the WUSPBA should do so as well.

The WUSPBA should be in the business of recommending and encouraging solo competitors to compete in appropriate grades. By directing or ordering solo competitors which grade they may compete in, the WUSPBA is no longer recommending and encouraging solo competitors, it is controlling them. This is not what should be happening. Also, with this control by the WUSPBA there is now a political element that may come into decisions as to which grade solo competitors may compete in. A recommendation, is not a directive. There is a difference between saying to a competitor that we think, or recommend you move up, and you WILL move up. Nobody within the association intended for the association to have and utilize this level of control. Further, very few, if any solo competitors were present when the association decided to assume this level of control. There was nobody present to say "NO", when the association grabbed this level of control, and power over the solo competitors.

Solo competitors have been self regulated for over fifty years that the association has been in existence. Self regulation worked as the contests themselves sorted things out. Solo competitors winning regularly in their grade would move up to the next higher grade without being directed to do so. Most solo competitors want to move up to the next higher grade and did so at the beginning of each contest season if they themselves thought they were prepared to do so. Nobody told them they could, nobody ordered them to do so. They just did so on their own because they wanted to.

There have been some abuses of this power and control already by the association. For instance Ms Chelsea Wells has competed for several years as a Grade III solo piper. In 2016 she entered the Grade II solo contests at the Queen Mary Contests and played well. None-the-less, she received a phone call that she could not compete in Grade II as she had not applied to the association to move up. In other words, she had not received permission to move up one grade, into Grade II, a grade that she is able to compete in and prepared to compete in. When the association did this to this solo piper, they were not recommending or encouraging her to challenge herself, and to move up to the next grade, they TOLD her and DIRECTED her to remain in the lower grade. This should never have happened, and is contrary to the rationale used by the WUSPBA to grab and control this power over solo competitors. This should NEVER happen again.

In another instance, Mr. Sean Campbell has been competing in Grade II as a solo piper. Members of the Music Board, and the "Grading Committee" are unhappy with this.