

WUSPBA Contest Rules Proposal: Remove Grade 4 Mini-MSR

This proposal would remove the Mini-MSR from the grade 4 band competition and restore the QMM as a grade 4 band contest.

Proposed Text – Replacement of section 7.3 with the omission of Mini-MSR definition and renumbering of subsequent paragraphs, and revision of Table 6.

7.3. Set Definitions: The following definitions will be used for band competitions.

7.3.1. March Strathspey Reel (MSR): An MSR shall consist of exactly one (1) 2/4 March, one (1) Strathspey, and one (1) Reel. Each tune shall have a minimum of four (4) parts. In grades that require the submission of two sets, a random draw will determine which set will be played. The random draw shall be conducted at the line prior to each band's performance.

7.3.2. Time Limit Medley (TLM): A TLM shall consist of any tunes in any time signature.

7.3.3. Quick March Medley (QMM): A QMM shall consist of any number of quick marches in any time signature.

7.3.4. March, Slow March, March (MSM): An MSM shall consist of two (2) to four (4) parts of march in any time signature, one (1) Slow March in any time signature, and another two (2) to four (4) parts of march in any time signature. The marches may be reused between this medley and the QMM. Bands must march into a circle using a traditional three (3) pace roll off.

7.3.5. Set Composition: Tunes in any set may not be used in another set during a contest.

7.3.6. Musical Instruments: Sets shall be restricted to the Highland Bagpipes, Snare Drum, Tenor Drum, and Bass Drum instrumentation only.

7.3.7. Grade Event Requirements: Event requirements are outlined in table 6.

| | MSR | TLM | QMM | MSM |
|---------|----------------|---------------|---------------------|----------------|
| Grade 1 | Submit two (2) | 5 - 7 minutes | N/A | N/A |
| Grade 2 | Submit two (2) | 4 - 6 minutes | N/A | N/A |
| Grade 3 | Submit one (1) | 3 - 5 minutes | N/A | N/A |
| Grade 4 | N/A | 3 - 5 minutes | 2:45 – 4:30 minutes | N/A |
| Grade 5 | N/A | N/A | 2:45 – 4:30 minutes | Submit one (1) |

Table 6. Grade Event Requirements

7.14.3. In the case of the March, Strathspey, and Reel (MSR), ~~Mini-MSR~~, Quick March Medley (QMM) and March-Slow March-March (MSM), bands shall execute the two traditional three-paced rolls to begin their introductions, and shall march into a circle formation.

Rationale:

I believe the grade 4 Mini-MSR is detrimental to advancement of grade 5 bands. For a grade 5 band to be promoted, they must learn two new sets of music, a 3 to 5 minute Time Limit Medley and a Mini-MSR. By contract any other band being regraded must learn at most one full set, and in the case of grade 4 to grade 3, only 2 tunes. Because of this requirement, we are making bands which are typically comprised of the least experienced and lower skilled musicians do more work.

In addition to the grade 5 difficulty, there is a philosophical question. What really is the difference between a grade 4 band and a grade 3 band at this point, especially if the expanded Mini-MSR proposal passes.

One rationale is that we should be like Scotland, except Scotland doesn't have grade 5, Scotland has prescribed tunes, Scotland doesn't have a TLM, and Scotland only uses Mini-MSR at championships, and only for Grade 4A bands. Almost all WUSPBA grade 4 bands (13 of 17) that have travelled to compete in Scotland have competed as Grade 4B.

Rules Comparison:

EUSPBA, MWPBA, BC Pipers all have the Mini-MSR, MWPBA has 4 parts of spey and reel, EUSPBA 4 parts are optional. The PPBSO has already gone back to QMM from MiniMSR, with the same concerns about grade 5 ability to be promoted.