

SCOTTISH OFFICIAL BOARD OF HIGHLAND DANCING

2018 CHAMPIONSHIP STEPS OBSERVATIONS (22/06/17)

JUDGES SHOULD ENSURE THAT ALL DANCERS ARE PLACED TO GIVE EQUAL ADVANTAGE.

- *The foot supporting the weight of the body is called the Supporting Foot. The other foot is called the Working Foot. While dancing, it is always the ball of the supporting foot that is in contact with the ground.*
- *The landing from the elevated movements should be centred on the ball of the foot with the knee over the middle toe and the heel off the ground.*
- *When the working foot has to be placed in or raised to any specified position, whilst executing a movement of elevation, that foot arrives at the specified position simultaneously with the dancer landing on the ball of the supporting foot, unless otherwise stated.*
- Competitors are still lining up with the first dancer stopping opposite the first Judge and when Judges are sitting close together this leaves the 3rd & 4th Dancer at a disadvantaged angle.
- While the Technical Committee are looking for correct technique they are concerned that the style of dancing today is looking rigid and robotic, forced and too sharp.
- Please note that the body should be held in a natural manner without stiffness, strain or exaggeration (back should not be arched) and to achieve this, the dancer must develop a core strength and control, without losing the flow and grace of the movement.

HIGHLAND FLING

- The whole dance should be danced on the spot, unless otherwise stated within the step.
- The turnout should start from the hips.
- The turnout of the supporting leg is as important as the working leg.

First Step - Shedding

- Begins with a Disassemble – no extension of the left leg.
- Raised arms should be curved – not straight and should be slightly forward from the headline, palms facing inwards.
- ***Supporting foot and working foot should land at the same time when placing in 2nd Position – landing & 1 is wrong.***
- When placing 2nd Position, the full value of count of music should be used and dancer should not come out of position too early. There should be no weight on Toe in 2nd Position.

Shedding, Back Steps and Rocks

- Should be danced to Single Beat Rhythm.
- Shedding: The working foot should reach 3rd aerial and 3rd rear aerial positions and not stop on side of leg.
- No exaggerated lift of working foot in Rocks.
- *Back Steps must show a clear Round-the-Leg movement.*
- *Back Steps are NOT a series of Springs from third Aerial to third Aerial.*

Fourth Alternative Step – Shake and Turn

- Displace the supporting foot on count '1' of the turn

Shakes:

- Should show two heights with the leg finishing straight on both heights.
- There are two choices of rhythm in the 4th and 7th steps.
- The current way many dancers are executing the Shake is not as described in the Text Book. The 2nd Shake Movement is being started prior to the 2nd Hop but dancers are not using the counting as '1 (and) and a 2' Method of counting, which would permit them to execute both Shakes in conjunction with one Hop. In other words some dancers are using a combination of choices of counting the Shakes. They are also executing a Flick Movement rather than a Shake.

Fifth Alternative Step – Second Back-Stepping

- High Cut in Front should show imperfect Method A.
- Count 4 should show the full value
- Extension to 4th Intermediate Aerial – **NOT** forward 2nd aerial.

Sixth Step Fourth Alternative Method - Cross-Over with Low Cut:

- Low cut extends to 2nd aerial position low
- Travel sideways with minimal elevation

Sixth Step Fifth Alternative Method – Cross-Over with Shake and Low Cut:

- In the shake, extend the working foot to 2nd aerial position low then shake in 2nd aerial position low. The working leg lifts straight from 2nd position to 2nd aerial position low then hop and shake retaining the leg in 2nd aerial position low.
- Low cut extends to 2nd aerial position low
- Travel sideways with minimal elevation.

Premier dancers should use head positions throughout. The penalty for not doing so is minus 5 (-5).

SWORD DANCE

- *Pas de Basque, Open Pas de Basque and High Cuts are all imperfect ½ beat rhythm. This should be maintained throughout the dance.*
- *Spring Points danced in Single beat rhythm.*
- *Spring Point turns – care with 3rd point, body and position.*
- *Correct degree of body turns in all steps should be shown.*

Pas de Basque (Open and closed):

- Should be executed on the ½ point and not the tips of the toes.
- Third Pas de Basque in the 1st step should not extend to 2nd Aerial Low Position.
- When executing a pas de basque 'inside' the swords, there is no extension.
- When executing the first pas de basque after a high cut in the first step, the extension to second aerial low into the pas de basque does not fully extend.
- 3 beat pas de basques are **NOT** acceptable

Half Points:

- Are still being executed on the tips of the toes. Some argue that a Half Point Description states "Pads of Toes" and they define this as the Pads of tips of toes not the underneath pads. This does not make sense as the pads of the tips of toes are used when pointing. Therefore there would be no need to separate the definition of POINTING and placing on the HALF POINT.

Back Beat:

- Should be executed on the count of '2'.
- Back Beat should not be exaggerated or released too early – toe not higher than the heel of supporting foot and extensions should be to 2nd Aerial Position Low.
- In a Pas de Basque the front knee should not be straightened during the back beat as it is a ½ point placing.

High Cuts:

- The supporting foot should be on the ball and not the flat.
- High Cuts should be danced on the spot, unless otherwise stated.
- High Cuts are extended to 2nd aerial position – not splits in the air.
- Many dancers do not touch their legs at all when executing a High cut, care to place in 3rd Rear Aerial.

Toe & Heels:

- Should be danced in single beat rhythm
- When placing the heel, the sole of the foot is kept straight and inclined upwards
- Knee of the working leg is flexed in both the toe and heel placings
- No turn until 1st count in Bar 3.

SEANN TRIUBHAS

- Grace of movement of body and limbs, associated with precision in foot positions, is a characteristic of this dance.
- The full range of arm movements are used with the steps in slower tempo and the general impression given should be a graceful and flowing demonstration of Highland Dancing.
- When arms are circling they should be continuous.
- Dancers are not using 4th Position of the Arms when executing a Circle Movement.

Intro:

- Step LF towards 2nd position then make an 1/8th of a turn.
- On count 6 the toe of the Left foot is kept in contact with the ground.
- Arms from 3rd to 5th Position should be small circular action.
- Rise on count 8.

Brushes and Shuffles:

- Outward brushes should start in 3rd aerial position very low and should land almost simultaneously.
- They should be executed using the 1/2 point.
- It should be noted that all shuffles commence with a fully extended leg in mid 4th aerial position low.
- Correct positions, heights and rhythms should be noted in Brushes and Shuffles.

First Step – Brushing:

- When executing three circles of the arms, they should move in a continuous circle without stopping.
- The arms should come through fifth position during count 4 and continue circling.
- At the end of bar 3, the arms should finish in 5th position.

Second Step – Side Travel:

- Use a circular action to take arms to fifth position on count (and and a 1),
- take them upwards to fourth position and downwards through third position to finish in fifth position, count (2 & 3 & 4).

Seventh Step – Entrechat and Highcut:

- Both legs may be extended on the high cut after the entrechat
- Natural extension of the supporting leg when dancing the high cut in front.
- Execute three shuffles springing LF, RF, LF (count 5& 6& 7&);
- beginning with LF execute the elevation and inward brush as for shuffle but assemble with RF in front in fifth position (count 8).
- On bar 8, the last shuffle finishes in 3rd position.

Tenth Step Alternative – High Cut in Front and Balance (no travel)

- High cut in front finishes in 3rd aerial count “1 and (and)”
- Finish balance in 4th intermediate aerial position prior to the shuffle

Eleventh Step – Side Heel-and-Toe (2 shakes and 2 pivots)

- Place foot in 3rd crossed position facing the front prior to the pivot turn
- If stepping back into the pivot turn, the step back is **small** and on the **ball** of the foot.

Endings:

- Care with the timing of Bar 8.
- Entrechat Method 6, extend RF to 2nd aerial position prior to the assemble

STRATHSPEY AND REEL OF TULLOCH

- Keep correct pattern and alignment throughout the dance. Be aware this dependent on the other 3 dancers.
- The step of a Strathspey movement **must** be on the **Ball** of the foot.
- Strathspey should be danced in Single Beat Rhythm, and should be progressive.
- Care of body alignment and finishing position on count 2 of Strathspey.
- Finish 7th Strathspey movement facing partner on count 4.

Leaps

- Normal height should be executed – not splits on elevation.

Strathspey Ending

- Each leap takes 2 counts of music.

Toe and Heels:

- Should be danced to single beat rhythm
- No exaggerated lift of working foot

Sixth Step Second Alternative Method - Cross-Over with Pause:

- **STEP** to 3rd crossed position

Progressive Reel Movement

- If dancing the Progressive Reel movement with an extension, the extension into the 1st Progressive Reel movement is omitted.
- The second step in the movement is a step forward and not a place on the spot.

Second Step – Shake and Travel:

- Foot is pointed in 3rd position prior to the shake movement.
- The working leg is not held straight on count “&3” prior to the step

Third Step 1st and 2nd Alternative Methods– Balance and Pas De Basque:

- Extension towards 2nd aerial position prior to the high cut.

Seventh Step – Back-Step and Travel:

- High cuts are danced in perfect ½ beat rhythm.

High Cuts:

- Supporting foot should be on the ball and not flat.
- High Cuts should be danced on the spot and are all Perfect 1/2 beat rhythm.
- Many dancers do not touch their legs at all when executing a High Cut, care to place in 3rd Rear Aerial.

16 High Cuts:

- If standing at points A and D, begin first High Cut with a disassemble facing partner and then turn gradually on the spot.

Propelled Pivot Turns:

- Slight spring forward onto supporting foot.
- Outside foot is placed on the ½ point.
- Hold must not encircle the dancers arm.
- Arms released on count 7 on 2nd propelled pivot turn.

Finish of dance:

- Propelled Pivot Turn is a continuous movement to finish facing front.
- Continuous movement before step, close and bow.

Correct body turns should be shown throughout the dance

World Governing Body of
Highland Dancing