

TIPS FOR COMPETITORS

REMINDERS TO DANCERS (AND PARENTS) FOR THE DAY OF THE FEIS

- **Pack the essentials:** dance shoes, socks, costume, hair accessories (hair spray, wig, bobby pins), safety pins, black duct tape (to be worn on the bottoms of hard shoes if the stage feels slippery), water bottle, nutritious snacks, the registration and entry information, directions to the feis, and a pencil/pen/highlighter to mark the stage schedule.
- **Arrive early!!!** Plan to arrive at least 45 minutes before the anticipated start time of your competitions. Better to be too early than too late!
- Visit the registration table to pick up **competitor number**. Check to make sure that you are entered in all of the correct competitions.
- Find each of your **stages**. If the stage is empty (meaning, the judge and musician aren't there yet), do a quick practice on it to see how it feels. Otherwise, do a quick practice the designated practice area, or in a quiet corner of the venue. You should be warmed up by the time your competition starts, but not tired. Don't over-practice!
- Do not change your steps on the day of the feis, or start working on new adjustments of your technique that day. **Maureen must approve your steps in a practice leading up to the feis**. At that practice, she will also drill you with reminders for your technique. Just remember those!
- Allow plenty of time to change into your **costume** and fix your hair, if you haven't done it yet. If you are wearing a wig and/or a tiara, use enough bobby pins to keep them securely in place. Use sock glue to keep your bubble socks up.
- **Tie your shoes in double knots!** (If shoes come untied during competition, the dancer is disqualified.) Check them between competitions to make sure they haven't loosened.
- **Be patient!** Sometimes things run right on schedule, but often there are delays.
- When the competition two groups before yours is running, **check in** with the Stage Manager. As the group right before yours is running, you will be sitting in the "on deck" chairs to the side of the stage. Try NOT to sit next to another Teelin dancer because you'll likely be performing the same steps, so you don't want to compete next to each other.
- If you are competing in **Novice Grade hard shoe** dances, the Stage Manager will ask you if your music is slow or fast. (Here are some common Teelin steps: the Sock Glue treble jigs and the Cornpipe hornpipes are danced to fast music, also called traditional speed. Steppy's & C&M treble jigs and Back Front & 3 Toe hornpipes are danced to slow music.)
- When it's your turn, take a step forward and AWAY from the other dancer. SMILE! Keep your eyes up and your chin up; don't look down and don't move your neck. **LISTEN to your music and dance your steps with lots of controlled energy**. Remember to MOVE (practice this beforehand) the way the steps are supposed to take you. The judge won't be able to see you if you dance only at the back of the stage, and may deduct points.
- **Bow** to the judge at the end of your dance. Make sure you don't bump into the dancers that immediately follow you when you go back into line. While standing in line as the other competitors are dancing, stand nicely with your feet crossed. (Some judges will take points off your score if you are disrespectful to the other dancers by being too fidgety in line.)

After all of the competitors have danced, the judge will take a moment to review his or her scores, then all of the dancers will bow together and walk off the stage in line.

- You may not approach judges or musicians. Any problem needs to go through your teacher or a feis **Stage Manager**.
- **Scores** will be posted in a separate room shortly after each competition is completed. It is best to wait until you have finished all of your dances before going to the score room. In the score room you will also have the opportunity to pick up the judge's scores and comments (or to request them to be mailed, if they're not ready). Please do this! Log this information in your Teelin Feis Journal and share it with your teacher(s). It will help you to see your progress and to remember some of the things that you'll need to practice in class and on your own.
- Remember, winning a medal is always fun, but the real reason for competing should be because the dancing is fun! Judges are people, so **results vary**. Try your best, and remember that this is not the only feis.
- **Support** and encourage your Teelin classmates. Although some of the competitions are individual, you're all part of the same school team representing Teelin!
- **HAVE FUN!!!**

REMINDERS TO PARENTS...

- Please help to manage your child's excitement. Your child should be nervous enough to be **energetic and sharp**, but not so nervous that they are incapable of dancing their best.
- If your child is signed up for a dance that he or she is truly not ready for, **do not force** them to compete in that dance. It is common to have "no shows" in a category - there is no penalty. Make plans to attend as many Teelin feis classes as possible to prepare that dance for the next feis.
- Please help to manage your child's **nutritional needs**. You want your dancer to have enough fuel to do their best. Keep your child's digestive sensitivity in mind. If sugar makes your dancer overly-hyper, don't feed them doughnuts for breakfast! Keep a water bottle or other drink with you for last minute thirst quenchers.
- **Be calm**. Things will go wrong or get forgotten. To the extent possible, try to keep minor glitches from becoming major distractions.
- Please be familiar with the **feis rules** as posted on the syllabus (or on the NAFC web site). Any questions or concerns on the day of the feis need to be directed to a Teelin teacher, a stage manager, or another feis volunteer, **never to a judge or a musician**.
- **No photography** of any kind is allowed while dancers are on stage during competition, unless officially authorized by the Feis Committee.
- Maureen tries to attend as many competitions as her busy schedule allows – she loves to see her students perform! If Maureen is at a feis, she will want to see your daughter/son dance! **Call (or text)** her on her cell phone 443-629-7808. It is on vibrate in her pocket during the whole event.

- It is helpful to **gently remind** your young dancer which dance they are competing in as they check in at the stage. "This is your reel competition. Which ones are your reel steps? Dance those ones on this stage!"
- Once your child has checked in with the Stage Manager and is seated in the "on deck" chairs, you become simply **spectators**. Enjoy! Dancers will remain with their section until the entire group has completed that particular competition.
- Smile, nod, and encourage your dancer, but **don't coach** from the audience. It's not permitted.
- Compare your child's performance with their own past performance, not with the other competitors' performances. Unfortunately, judges don't always see what the parents see, or may see something that the parents did not! **Do NOT predict results!**
- Keep criticism **constructive**.
- **Enjoy your day, too!** You should be very proud of your dancer(s)! It took a lot of work to get here – celebrate together!

