

Livingston Bluegrass Festival

Flatpicking Contest Rules

Contests are open to anyone except those who are performing as a billed or paid entertainer at the Livingston Bluegrass Festival.

The contest is open to the first 20 contestants that register. Order of appearance will be determined by drawing a number one-half hour before the contest begins.

Contestants may have one rhythm instrument for accompaniment.

Contestants and accompanists must have a valid/purchased ticket for the day of the contest. There is no fee to enter the contest.

Contestants must play instruments acoustically into a microphone. An instrument's electrical capability cannot be used. You may retune your instrument between instrumental numbers using a portable electronic tuner. BE AWARE that time spent retuning your instrument on stage will be included as part of the recommended maximum total playing time of 5 minutes per round. If there are nine (9) or fewer registered, contestants will play three (3) tunes in the first round with a recommended maximum total time limit of eight (8) minutes.

Contestants will not be allowed to take two instruments on stage.

A medley of tunes is not acceptable.

In an effort to judge the contest objectively and equally, the following criteria will be considered by the judges and assigned point value in each area:

40 points - Arrangements & Composition. Judges will be listening for the quality of the arrangement, in terms of its difficulty, originality and overall musicality. The same holds true if the contestant is playing his or her own composition.

40 points — Execution - Judges will be listening for how cleanly and fluidly the music is performed. The tempo should be steady and constant. Any tempo changes should be appropriate to the tune. Tuning Counts. Is the instrument in tune with itself and relatively close to concert pitch of A=440?

10 points – Show Value - Contestants should also keep in mind how their music might be received by both the general audience and the judges. Exhibit a variety of styles between the two pieces played.

10 points — Overall Impression - Judges want to hear a depth of musical understanding and a mastery of the instrument.

Score cards will NOT be given out.

PLEASE NOTE: The judging room only hears the competing instrument and receives no mix or sound coming from accompaniment or rhythm instrument.

Contestants will be prepared to play four instrumental numbers in traditional fiddle tune or bluegrass style. Two numbers will be played in the first round and the other two in the final round should the contestant be selected as a finalist. All contestants must play with

a FLAT PICK. NO FINGER PICKING WILL BE ALLOWED. NO COMBINATION OF FLAT PICKING AND FINGER PICKING WILL BE ALLOWED. Standard / Traditional acoustic 6-string or standard / traditional acoustic 12-string guitars may be played in this competition. The alteration or tuning of the low E (6th) string will be permitted. The low E (6th) string can be changed to any note desired, not limiting the tuning of the 6th string to "Drop D" or a low D note but to any desired pitch. No other string tuning or variance from the standard E (1), B (2), G (3), D (4), A (5) will be permitted.

Some slight, overall variance from concert pitch A=440 will be tolerated. (See #2 in the general rules.) Up to one capo may be used but is not required. If a capo is used, it must be applied across all strings on the same fret of the instrument to ensure all other rules regarding tuning are followed.