



Student Feis Journal

(Beginners through Prizewinners)

Name of Competitor

To All Teelin Competitors,

Thank you for representing the *Teelin School of Irish Dance* in feiseanna! You've shown me that you love to dance – let the judges see that when you compete! Remember, a feis is not just a dance competition; it is a celebration of Irish music and dance. You've worked hard to learn your steps. Now celebrate and show them off! The other teachers and I are proud of you for the efforts you (and your family) have made to attend a feis. Whether or not you win a medal or trophy, remember to have fun!

The pages of this journal contain a few helpful reminders and a record keeping system to track your progress. Please bring this to each feis class you attend and share your journal entries with your teacher(s).

Go gcuire Dia an t-ádh ort!
("Best of luck to you!")

Maureen Berry, TCRG

Tips for Dancers on the Day of the Feis

- Make sure that you've packed the essentials: your dance shoes, socks, costume, hair accessories (hair spray, wig, bobby pins), safety pins, black duct tape (in case the stage is slippery for hardshoe dances), water bottle, nutritious snacks, directions to the feis, a pencil/pen/highlighter to mark the stage schedule when you get there, and your entry information (competition numbers, syllabus).
- Arrive early!!! Visit the registration table to pick up your number, and 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. If you will be dancing hard shoe, remember to bring duct tape for your shoes just in case the stage is a bit slick. Otherwise, do a quick practice in a quiet corner or a designated practice area. 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**, and at that time 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.
- If you're dancing figures, make sure that you've read the syllabus correctly – sometimes the music lengths vary. Also, be sure to wear the correct competition number if it's not the same as your solo dance number (some feiseanna do this, some don't).
- When the competition two sections before yours is running, check in with the stage manager. As the competition 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 dancing in the treble jig or hornpipe competitions at the **novice level**, the stage manager will ask you if your music is slow or fast. (The Ozzie's and the Cornpipe's are danced to **fast** music. Estepes, C&M, Back Front and Three Toe are danced to **slow** music, allowing time for the more complicated footwork.)
- 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 the whole dance at the back of the stage, and may take points off.

- Remember to 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 forget to bow at the end of your dance or 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 to the judge 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!!!**

Tips for Parents on the Day of the Feis

- 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**.
- 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 and you would like her to see your daughter/son dance, call 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 (i.e. "This is your reel competition, dance your reel steps 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. 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!

