

**TWENTY-NINTH ANNUAL FOUR CORNER STATES  
BLUEGRASS FESTIVAL AND FIDDLE CHAMPIONSHIP  
WICKENBURG, ARIZONA  
CERTIFIED JUDGING RULES**

***GENERAL FESTIVAL RULES:***

1. Entry deadline will be on a first-come, first-served basis and will be limited to twelve contestants per category, EXCEPT band categories, which will be limited to eight entries. Mail your entry form early to assure yourself a place. If a pre-registered entry with all fees paid is not received by the Wednesday prior to the Festival, it will be assumed that the contestant is not registered and must then register at time of arrival. Any entries arriving after the Wednesday deadline before the Festival will be returned by mail as soon as possible following the conclusion of the Festival. No entry refunds after October 15th. Entry form must be completed and all fees paid by the end of the category preceding your performance. Times of all events are approximate. If you have not pre-registered, it is suggested that you be at the Festival early. Registration table may close, at Coordinator's discretion, to those not entered by mail if festival is running late.
2. Contestants will draw, at registration table, for order of appearance for each event in which they are entered. Contestants are responsible for being on stage at appointed time. Failure to appear could result in forfeiture of entry fee.
3. All commercial recording rights are reserved in all categories and shall become the property of the Wickenburg Chamber of Commerce, the non-profit and legal entity for the Four Corner States Festival. Signing of registration by contestant acknowledges such recording rights and acceptance of all rules and regulations of the Wickenburg Bluegrass Festival.
4. If contestant is entered in more than one category, different tunes must be played for each category.
5. ACOUSTIC INSTRUMENTS ONLY IN ALL COMPETITIVE CATEGORIES. NO CONTACT MIKES, AMPLIFIERS, OR SHEET MUSIC WILL BE ALLOWED DURING THE CONTEST.
6. Contestants may play in any solo category without an accompanist or with no more than two. Accompanist must NOT take breaks; doing so will disqualify that particular tune. Only pre-registered accompanists will have free entry on the day playing.
7. Scores will be entered on a form provided to the judges. Scoring method will be at the discretion of the judges and decided, and agreed upon, up by the judges before the event. The finalists will be announced after the completion of the category. In case of a tie, playoffs will be at the discretion of the judges. Tunes played in the elimination must not have been played prior in the category by the contestant. All decisions of the judges will be final in each category.
8. Talking to judges will not be allowed except to clarify rules prior to the category. Any questions or complaints will be registered with Festival Coordinator. Any protest may be submitted in writing to the Coordinator and signed by no fewer than three contestants within two hours of the occurrence.
9. Songs, material, and dress must be of an appropriate nature suitable for family entertainment. Any contestant appearing under the influence of alcohol or drugs will not be allowed on stage. Any contestant acting in an unsportsmanlike manner will be disqualified at the discretion of the Coordinator and will forfeit entry fee and any money won. **Host Bands or members of Host Bands, employed by the Wickenburg Chamber for the previous 3 years, and may not enter any contests. Winners in any Championship category (Banjo, Mandolin, Flat Pick Guitar and Open fiddle) from the previous year must take one year leave of absence before entering again.**
10. Contestants must be ready and back stage by the beginning of the contest. Contestants must remain in stage area during their category in case of a tie. If a playoff is required and a contestant is not present, the award will go to the other competitor. Once the previous contest starts, the next contest is closed. If not enough contestants are entered in a contest, the Chamber has the option of canceling the contest, (before or on the same day) and refunding the money to the participants.

## SPECIFIC CATEGORY RULES OF COMPETITIVE EVENTS

### **FIDDLE RULES:**

1. Contestants must play (1) a hoedown; (2) a waltz; (3) a tune of their choice other than a hoedown or waltz. **Four-minute playing time will be strictly enforced.** Two points will be deducted from TOTAL score for each 20-second interval or portion thereof after a 10-second grace period. **NO** trick or fancy fiddling or cross tuning allowed during this category.
2. Any danceable folk tunes played in old-time fashion are acceptable as tune of choice.
3. Judging will be scored for Old Time Fiddling ability, rhythm or timing, and tone quality. All scores will be accumulative. Points will be deducted for any violations of the above rules.
4. If a string breaks, the fiddler will have the option of continuing or stopping at that point. If tune is completed, it will be judged as played. If the fiddler stops to replace a string, he will be allowed to begin with that tune and complete his program.
5. All decisions of the judges will be final in all categories.

### **COMPETITIONS:**

1. **JUNIOR FIDDLE COMPETITION** - age limit - 7 through 17 years
2. **ADULT FIDDLE COMPETITION** - 18 through 59 years
3. **SENIOR FIDDLE COMPETITION** - 60 years or older
4. **FOUR CORNER STATES OPEN FIDDLE CHAMPIONSHIP** open to all ages.
5. **SPECIALTY VOCAL COMPETITION** - Limited to one vocalist (no duets, etc.); contestants will play 1-3 tunes within a three-minute time limit.
6. **ADULT SPECIALTY INSTRUMENTS COMPETITION** - contestants will play a three-minute limit and must play in old-time country style. Specialty instruments are autoharp, dulcimer, accordion, fingerpick guitar, harmonica, dobro, or any other folk instrument.
7. **SPECIALTY DUET VOCAL-Three-minute time limit.** No age requirements
8. **FOUR CORNER STATES MANDOLIN CHAMPIONSHIP** - Contestants will play 2-3 tunes in traditional or contemporary bluegrass style with a **4-minute time limit.** Up to two rhythms instruments may be used for accompaniment, but not another mandolin.
9. **FOUR CORNER STATES FLAT PICK GUITAR CHAMPIONSHIP** - Contestants will play 2-4 tunes in traditional or contemporary bluegrass style with a **4-minute time limit.** Up to two rhythm instruments may be used for accompaniment, one of which may be a rhythm guitar.
10. **FIVE-STRING BLUEGRASS BANJO CHAMPIONSHIP** - Contestants will play 2-4 tunes in traditional or contemporary bluegrass style with a **4-minute time limit.** Up to two rhythm instruments may be used for accompaniment, but not another banjo.
- \*11. **BLUEGRASS BAND COMPETITION** - Bands must have at least 3 members and no more than 6. Tunes must be in traditional-style bluegrass. Two or Three tunes will be played as determined by the festival coordinator.
12. **OLD TIME COUNTRY BAND COMPETITION** - Bands must have at least 3 members and no more than 6. Two to four tunes will be played as determined by festival coordinator. Tunes must be old time country--**NO BLUEGRASS.** Old Time Country Bands are defined as having a "Carter Family" style of playing. Accordion, harmonica, dulcimer, plectrum, or frailing banjo styles, and other FOLK instruments are permissible. **NO** Scruggs or Monroe bluegrass band styles. Consult judges before competition if there are any questions. **NO** Commentary or talking while on stage.
13. **FAMILY BAND COMPETITION** - Bands must have at least 3 members and no more than 6. Only one non-family member permitted. Band members must provide proof of family association if requested by judges. Two to four tunes will be played as time permits.

\* **AT THE DISCRETION OF THE BLUEGRASS COMMITTEE, A NUMBER OF ENTRIES MAY BE EXPANDED BASED ON EARLY ENTRIES**

**NOTE: NO CONTESTANT MAY PARTICIPATE IN MORE THAN ONE GROUP IN ANY GIVEN BAND COMPETITION CATEGORY! TIME LIMITS WILL BE STRICTLY ENFORCED WITH POINTS DEDUCTED FOR OVERTIME.**

***MISCELLANEOUS:***

1. Please check **SPECIFIC CATEGORY RULES OF COMPETITIVE EVENTS** as listed on the enclosed schedule for your particular event. They are included as part of the general and fiddle rules.
2. **THERE WILL BE NO FREE CAMPING.** Contestants must buy tickets for any day not playing. Tickets and the camping fee are explained on the entry form and are to be included with the form when registering. Wristbands will be issued upon arrival at the Festival and must be worn at all times. **PRE-REGISTRATION OF ACCOMPANIST IS REQUIRED OR ENTRY WILL NOT BE WAIVED.**
3. Parking and camping in arena area is reserved for festival workers and members of Southwest Bluegrass Association only. Contestant parking in arena area will be limited by availability and only during the competition entered. If a contestant is not pre-registered and wishes to enter the Festival as a contestant, full admission fees must be paid at the gate.

***SPECTATOR ADMISSION:***

Spectator admission fees are included in the enclosed flyer. Advanced 3-day passes are available through the Chamber of Commerce. Each contestant/band member/accompanist will be entitled to one free admission for any day he/she is competing. Additional admissions for contestants on days not playing and guests or family members MUST accompany entry fee. Accompanists in any category must be **PRE-REGISTERED BY THE PERFORMER** for free admission on the day playing.

***FESTIVAL SPONSOR:***

This Festival is sponsored by the WICKENBURG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE to perpetuate traditional and old time country music. Judges have been carefully chosen with emphasis on honesty, fairness, integrity, and their expertise, knowledge, and qualifications to judge Bluegrass and Old Time Music. Prizes are offered to encourage and stimulate contestants to perform at their very best. This is a festive and family-oriented occasion designed to entertain people of all ages. It is our sincere desire to produce the best Bluegrass Festival for the money you have ever attended.