



Junior Hoedownner

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Fiddle Contest Advice from Amy Booher

Amy Booher offers the following advice for "young" or "old." She writes: Here are a few tips I generally offer to kids who would like to participate in a fiddle contest:"

1. Know the required number of tunes that you will need to have prepared, and have them all memorized well in advance of the contest day (this is 4 tunes for PeeWee - hoedown, waltz, tune of choice, + one hoedown in case of a tie, and 7 tunes for all other divisions - two full rounds plus the extra hoedown for a tie-breaker). Please note that a lot of folks don't consider that extra tune in case of a tie, but if you've ever had to play a tiebreaker, believe me - there is no time to wonder if you're prepared or not! Also, it is very important to have a second round ready, even if you don't think you'll need it. Lots of kids get stuck worrying about the second round once they've made it, instead of celebrating that they are in the top 5!

2. Memorize, memorize, memorize! Know your songs very well, then play them some more! Play your tunes slowly, concentrating on playing in tune, and with the correct timing. Pay close attention to the bowing of the tunes, since the

bow has so much influence on all aspects of fiddling. I like to practice with a recording of someone playing the guitar (a "guitar track") since it makes me relax into the rhythm of the tunes (especially hoedowns). A metronome is also great for this. And of course, if you can play with a live guitar player, that's the best option. Memorize the exact way you will play the parts of each song, and make sure to time your whole round to ensure that you won't go over four minutes!

3. If possible, "practice" performing in front of as many people as you can. This will help you prepare for your nerves at the contest. A great place to start is for extended family, at your school, or in church. The Old Time Fiddlers have monthly jams that you can attend, and gather experience playing in front of people. Remember, the more you play in front of a crowd, the easier it gets! I still get nervous, but I have played in front of so many people that I know even when I'm nervous that I will make it through. A couple of tips that help me with nerves are: 1) Slightly face your guitar player when you are on stage - this is more natural than facing directly out to the crowd; 2) Look at your fiddle while you are

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playing, instead of letting your eyes wander - no matter where you are, your fiddle is always going to look the same, like an old trusted friend;

3) Before I start my first song, I play a note into the microphone just to see what it's going to sound like. You can do this while the announcer is reading your tune sheet, and the judges won't hear it. These things always helps me to feel more relaxed on stage!

4. On the day of the contest, get as much rest as possible.

Eat a good breakfast, and bring snacks and water to the contest. Arrive with plenty of time, and find your back-up as soon as possible. Remember that it's really hard for the back-up players to make time to practice with everyone multiple times, so respect their time and be prepared to go through your round with them as soon as it's convenient for them. Most of all, enjoy your time at the competition - visit with your pals, and support your friends by watching each other play. Have a great time!

Golden Fiddle Waltz

This month's tune is *Golden Fiddle Waltz*. Once again, the tune is shown in "fake book" format. For an idea of what it sounds like with lots of double stops, look up the tune as played by John Landinois on YouTube.

Golden Fiddle Waltz Key C

The musical notation for "Golden Fiddle Waltz" is presented in a single system of ten staves. The first staff includes a treble clef, a 3/4 time signature, and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The melody is written in a "fake book" style, characterized by frequent double stops (two notes beamed together). The piece concludes with a double bar line on the tenth staff.