

# Feis Tips & Info for First Timers



A feis is an excellent chance for a dancer to perform in front of an audience and get critiqued by dance teachers from other schools. It can also be a bit intimidating your first few times. Following are some notes on what to do and what to expect. Hopefully, they will help make your feis experience as rewarding as possible. The most important thing to remember is to relax and have fun!

## **Registering for a Feis**

Once you decide to compete at a feis, it is a good idea to register as soon as possible. Many feiseanna have participant cutoff numbers, and with the growing popularity of Irish dance, many feiseanna are filled well before the competition day. Many feiseanna have online registration ([www.efeis.com](http://www.efeis.com)) and you can check the national listing for feiseanna at the [NAFC website](#). Of course, it's always a good idea to consult your Irish dance teacher for additional information. (Age level, dance level, etc.)

**OIREACHTAS, NATIONALS and the WORLDS:** Students are registered for these competitions by their teacher. They do not need to register individually.

## **Feis Day**

- ❖ Arrive Early! Beginner competitions are usually scheduled first. If there is any delay in registration, you don't want to be worried about missing your competition.
- ❖ Pick up your registration packet, which will include your competitor number printed on a card. If possible, pick up this registration packet the day before. Most host feis volunteers are available the evening prior, usually around 5:00 p.m., in order for participants to pick up registration packets. Also, the vendors will be available for any items you may need: poodle socks, sock glue, accessories, etc.
- ❖ Verify that you are entered in the correct competitions. Competition numbers are listed on the back of your competitor number. If corrections need to be made, do so immediately. Usually, there is a separate table for corrections.
- ❖ Pick up program and/or stage schedule. In the program, there is always a list of stage numbers for all competitions. (Sometimes this list is available separately) Use a bright colored highlighter to highlight your dancer's competition and stage numbers. It's a good idea to have different colored highlighter for each of your competitors. Find the stage numbers for your competitions, and then locate the stages in the hall. Familiarize yourself with the layout of the facility.

- ❖ Get dressed in your costume. Make sure laces are double tied, headpiece is securely fastened and shawl is pinned so that it won't fall off your shoulder. (Pinning the underside of your shawl from the inside of your dress/shirt at the center back usually does the trick.) **Just as a reminder, be aware that dancers under the age of 12 are prohibited by national rules from wearing makeup or using fake tanning products.**
- ❖ Attach competitor number using either a piece of yarn/ribbon or safety pins. One or the other is usually provided at the registration table or in your packet. You can also buy a number holder (plastic sleeve) from a vendor. NOTE: It is a good idea to bring some extra safety pins as they can be used for lots of things like attaching your number, anchoring your shawl, even fixing a hem (in an emergency).

## **Competing**

Get to your stage earlier than you think you need to be there. Check in with the stage manager, who will confirm you are on the list of competitors or add your name if corrections had to be made to your registration. Once you have checked in, stay by the stage. The stage manager will line you up in the order you'll compete. Usually, dancers from the same school are separated in this lineup.

**IMPORTANT:** *Be at the stage early as check in occurs during the competition before yours. Each competition has varying numbers of entrants; it is **impossible to determine exactly how long each competition will take**. If you miss your competition, there is no chance to make it up. It's critical that you stay focused on your stage progress and listen to stage manager's announcements. It can be a bit chaotic and hard to hear with large crowds in the room. When your competition begins, the stage manager will direct you to line up across the back of the stage. If there are a large number of competitors, you will be divided up into smaller groups. There is usually a live musician playing for each stage.*

You dance two at a time. At the beginner's level, there is usually a person to help start each pair of dancers. When you have finished your two steps, it is customary to bow to the judge and the musician then return to the line. When all dancers are finished, the judge will indicate that you may leave the stage, and then all dancers leave together.

**IMPORTANT:** ***Never** approach a judge "adjudicator" with questions, problems or complaints. All communication should be directed to the stage manager, a feis staff person or a teacher from your school. A common dilemma that arises due to the ebb and flow of a feis is having two of your competitions running simultaneously on separate stages. If you notify a stage manager, volunteer staff or teacher and make them aware of your problem, some accommodation will be made so you can compete in both dances. Every effort is made by the feis organizers to avoid such an occurrence. Stay aware of any announcements regarding competition stage changes. This action is usually taken to alleviate "bottlenecks" that frequently occur on slower moving stages. (This usually doesn't happen during morning competitions with Beginners/Advance Beg)*

**IMPORTANT:** ALL FLASH PHOTOGRAPHY AND VIDEO TAPING OF COMPETITIONS IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED AND ENFORCED. PLEASE BE COURTEOUS TO OTHERS AND OBEY ALL REGULATIONS.

## **After You've Finished**

Results for each competition are posted at a central location. The results list up to four, five or more places. There can be more than one dancer in each place. If your number is listed on the results chart, you should go to the award table to claim your medal. It is recommended that you check results only when you've finished all your competitions to minimize the amount of time spent waiting in line.

You can also get your actual scores. It is highly recommended that you do this. They are available either at the time of the feis or may be emailed to you or your school's director. Sometimes they are available immediately; otherwise they are mailed to you a day or two after the feis. Typically, they list your score and the scores for the first three places. You may also get written comments from the judges, which can be useful to you as you work to become a better dancer.

### **Remember**

Competing in a feis is a learning experience. For many dancers, it takes a few competition experiences before they feel comfortable. It is also important to realize that each judge "adjudicator" has his or her own opinion, and that each competition is really a "snapshot" of your dancing at that particular moment on that particular day. Only by entering several feiseanna can you see if there are consistencies (good or bad) in your dancing by checking for similarities in the scores/comments you may receive at each feis. It is a very subjective process, so don't fret by trying to figure it out.

Finally, and most importantly, you should have fun! There is an air of excitement at a feis that is unlike any other performing experience. You have worked hard to prepare, and this is a great chance to share your skills and talents with other members of the Irish dance community. A feis is a unique opportunity to celebrate the music and dance of Ireland and to celebrate you.

## **Beannacht Dé duit!**

# **Feis Basic Supply List**

**There are always vendors at each competition that will have many of the basic items needed.**

- ☞ Hard & soft shoes (Extra laces if case one breaks)
- ☞ Dance dress (Green & Whites or School dress), bloomers Boys: black pants, shirts, ties, vests
- ☞ Leotard and/or undergarment to wear beneath dress
- ☞ Black shoe polish ("Quick-shine") \* Black Sharpie for touch ups
- ☞ Black duct tape (used to increase traction~reduce slippage on shoes)
- ☞ Poodle socks (girls) or black socks (boys)
- ☞ Sock glue
- ☞ Wig, hairpiece, hair bands, crown, accessories (earrings, etc.)
- ☞ Hair accessories: bobbie pins, hair bands or clips, hairspray, curlers (natural)
- ☞ Makeup (If appropriate)
- ☞ First aid: band-aids, pain reliever, ace bandages
- ☞ Safety pins
- ☞ Number holder (ribbon)
- ☞ Highlighters, pen
- ☞ Snacks, water
- ☞ Folding stools or chairs
- ☞ Blanket

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