



ROYAL SCOTTISH OFFICIAL BOARD OF HIGHLAND DANCING

2026 SCOTTISH NATIONAL DANCE PREMIERSHIP STEPS OBSERVATIONS

The technical detail for each step within each dance is contained within The Sailors' Hornpipe and Scottish National Dances for RSOBHD Competitions and Scottish National Dance Premierhips text books.

These observations are intended to be guidance to support good technique.

The overall quality of performance will be inclusive of the technique in its entirety and not focusing on any one observation in isolation.

SAILORS HORNPIPE

- Beats and rhythms should always be clearly shown and heard.
- Breaks – all breaks can finish flat or on the balls of both feet in 1st, 3rd or 5th position.
- Please cross reference the “**Sailors’ Hornpipe - History of actions, movements & outfit**”.
- Please refer to the detail of the steps within the Sailors Hornpipe textbook (revised February 2019).

Introduction

- All heel taps finish off the ground including the last one on bar 2.

Introduction Alternative with Break A (12 & under 16 years, 16 years & over)

- Hop LF then step RF towards 2nd position
- The foot does not touch the leg at the rear
- Thigh may or may not be slapped. Thigh would be slapped on count 8.
- 12 & under 16 years – must be danced without shakes
- 16 years & over – may be danced with or without shakes

1st Step – Circle

- The working foot **brushes** the floor to 4th intermediate aerial position.
- There should be forward travel on counts 1, 3 and 4.

2nd Step – Shuffle Over The Buckle

- Prior to all steps in 5th rear position the working foot passes through 3rd rear aerial position but is not in contact with the leg

11th Step – Low Cutting (12 & under 16 years, 16 years & over)

- Commence with LF in 2nd aerial position low
- During the movement the RF travels sideways with minimum of elevation count ‘8 and’
- 12 & under 16 years – Bars 7 and 8 danced with Break
- 16 years & over – Any method may be danced.
- If dancing Break C, the last extension before the break should be omitted.
- Shake breaks cannot be danced.

12th Step – Rocking (7 & under 12 years, 12 & under 16 years)

- Commence with disassemble onto LF
- Both shakes with RF in forward 2nd aerial position
- Rocks in the Sailors Hornpipe are different to those in the Eighth Edition Textbook
 - Place RF in forward 5th position
 - Outside then inside edge of the foot in sympathy with each other
- Heels well off the ground
- Bars 5 and 6 – omitting commencing shuffle travel backwards to regain line.



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12th Step Alternative – Rocking (16 years & over)

- On last count of the previous step, execute sharp extension of the LF to forward 2nd aerial position
- Place LF in forward 5th position for **3 rocks**,
- Finish the third rock before hop LF shake RF counts '1, 2, 3 &4'

16th Step – High Cutting

- Bar 1 commences with a spring or disassemble.
- Bar 9 commences with a spring.
- Bar 16 – assemble RF in 3rd or 5th position. Leap finishes with either RF or LF in front.

- Bars 1 to 6 and Bars 9 to 15 – may be danced with or without extensions and varied with spring, hop, single or double round the leg movements
- Bars 1 to 6 – a body sway will be allowed on High Cuts without extensions.
- Bars 9 to 15 - during the hop movements, hands should be held in front of the body

SCOTTISH NATIONAL DANCES

One of the key objectives within the Scottish National dances is to soften the delivery whilst ensuring the control and technical quality is still being portrayed.

The skirt/dress is held between the middle finger and thumb of each hand with the arms slightly in front of the body line, gently curved below the waistline, in the direction of 4th intermediate foot position. The skirt should not be held from the bottom edge.

During the curtsy, the rear foot may be placed on the toe, half point or ball, while the front foot remains flat.

BLUE BONNETS

Bourrées

- All bourrées may be preceded OR finished, with OR without an extension to 2nd aerial position low, unless otherwise stated within the step.
- All methods chosen should be consistent throughout the **step**.

Introduction

- Either method is acceptable

1st Step – Skip Change (7 & under 12 years)

- Bar 1 – commences 1/8th body turn with a disassemble
- Bar 3 – assemble without extension
- Bar 4 – dancer finishes facing RDF

1st Step 2nd Alternative – Skip Change (12 years & under 16 years, 16 years & over)

- Bar 1 – commences 1/8th body turn with a disassemble
- Bar 3 – assemble with or without extension to 2nd aerial position low
- Bar 4 – dancer finishes facing the front (count '8')



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2nd Step – Backward Skip (7 & under 12 years)

- Bar 1 – commence 1/8th body turn with a disassemble OR release.
- Bar 2 – finishes facing RDF in 3rd rear position
- Bars 3 and 4 – use a shoulder lead while executing the rondé action

3rd Step – Assemble and Backward Skip (7 & under 12 years)

- Bar 1 – commence 1/8th body turn; Count '2' place half point OR small step towards 2nd position
- Bars 3 and 4 – make 7/8th turn to finish facing the front

4th Step – Diagonal Glide (12 & under 16 years, 16 years & over)

- Bar 1 – Prepare by softly releasing LF to 3rd rear aerial position very low or 4th intermediate rear aerial position low, then soft spring to displace RF taking RF to 3rd aerial position very low
- Bar 2 – the glide towards 4th intermediate position is on the flat of the right foot
- Bars 1 and 2 are similar to a full contrebemps, assemblé over and sissoné ordinaire passé en arrière in ballet.

5th Step – High cut in Front (12 & under 16 years, 16 years & over)

- Bar 1 – release RF to 4th intermediate aerial position then hop during the elevation taking the RF to 3rd aerial position count '1'
- Bar 3 – take small step towards 4th position (count '& 5')
- Arms – Bars 3 and 4 either 1st OR 3rd position

6th Step – Assemble/Disassemble (All age groups)

- Bars 1 and 2 – with exception of assemble this step consistently travels towards 4th intermediate position
- Bars 3 and 4 – all 4th intermediate rear aerial positions in this step are raised to low level
- Bar 16
 - 7 & under 12 years, 12 & under 16 years – finish facing front pointing in 4th position
 - 16 years & over – pointing RF in 4th position facing LDF



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EARL OF ERROL

Break

- Begin with a disassemble or, if from a spring, may extend to forward 2nd aerial position low or released to 3rd aerial position low
- All heights must be at low aerial
- Dancer must be on the balls of the feet for the spread with the knees slightly relaxed.

Single and Double Trebles

- Inward brush from 4th intermediate aerial position to 3rd aerial position very low (count 'and')
- Hop, brush **STEP**

Introduction

- Either method is acceptable
- Males may use Highland Fling introduction

1st Step – Circle and Point (All age groups)

- Begins with a disassemble
- Break in Bar 7 is danced with or without a change of feet; ALL others must change
- Foot is just behind 3rd rear aerial position (not on the leg) on count '1' and is then circled through 2nd aerial position and 4th intermediate aerial position; point in 4th position.

2nd Step – Double Treble (7 & under 12 years)

- Begin with a hop or disassemble
- MUST BE DANCED ON THE SPOT

3rd Step – Hop and Travel (All age groups)

- Begins with a hop
- Travel towards 2nd position.
- Minimal travel on turn

5th Step Alternative – Double Treble (Turning) (12 & under 16 years, 16 years & over)

- Begin with a hop or disassemble
- Turn forming an oval shape

6th Step – Single Treble (All age groups)

- Begin with a hop or disassemble
- May extend prior to the assemble to 4th intermediate aerial position OR 2nd aerial position low
- NO leaps
- Break begins with a disassemble



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SCOTTISH LILT

Basic Introduction (All age groups)

- The RF must be pointed in 4th position on count '5', then pause, count '6'
- Male arms – must be held in 1st position for the duration of the introduction

1st Step Alternative – Circle

- Bars 1 to 3 and Bars 5 and 7 – step towards 4th position and carry leg to 4th intermediate aerial position.
- The last spring point on bar 8 finishes in 4th position

2nd Step – Balance (12 & under 16 years)

- Prepare by extending the RF to 4th intermediate aerial position
- The bourrée derrière in bar 3 finishes with an extension to 2nd aerial position (count '5') in preparation for the shake action

2nd Step Alternative – Balance (16 years & over)

- Bar 3 - bourrée derrière finishes in 4th intermediate position on count 3 of bar 3. The right leg is then carried to 2nd aerial position to execute the shake action (count '4')

3rd Step – Assemble (7 & under 12 years)

- The first assemble is danced with no extension
- The arm is not circled in front of the face.

4th Step Alternative – Pas de Basque (7 & under 12 years)

- The extension during the syncopated hop on counts '3 & 4' of bars 1 and 2, is to 4th intermediate aerial position as per the 4th step
- The extension on counts '5, 6' of bar 2 are to 4th aerial position

5th Step 1st Alternative – Forward Travel (12 & under 16 years, 16 years & over)

- A slight upper body turn is used to give a left shoulder lead on counts '1 & 2' of bar 1
- The LF **must** be placed on the **half point** on count '& 3' of bar 1
- The backward travel is executed during the bourrée derrière, whilst the lateral coupes are executed on the spot
- Male arms: Must use 2nd position on bars 1 to 4 and 3rd position on bars 5 to 8.

8th Step – Round-the-Leg (All methods; All age groups)

- The round-the-leg movement in bar 1 is executed in perfect half beat rhythm (counts '2 & 3')



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CHANGE LOG

<u>DATE</u>	<u>CHANGE</u>
02.09.25	Approved document for release in the secure section of the RSOBHD website.