

Band Grades

We use the terms “Grade 4” and “Grade 5” frequently but what do they mean?

Pipe band competitions are either sanctioned or non-sanctioned. Sanctioned games are approved by a pipe band association, of which there are many. For example, the **Alliance of North American Pipe Band Associations** (ANAPBA) includes:

- [Alberta Society of Pipers and Drummers](#)
- [Atlantic Canada Pipe Band Association](#)
- [British Columbia Pipers Association](#)
- [Eastern United States Pipe Band Association](#)
- [Midwest Pipe Band Association](#)
- [Pipers and Pipe Band Society of Ontario](#)
- [Prairie Pipe Band Association of Manitoba](#)
- [Saskatchewan Pipe Band Association](#)
- [Southern United States Pipe Band Association](#)
- [Western United States Pipe Band Association](#)

The Omaha Pipes and Drums is a member of the **Midwest Pipe Band Association** (you can click on the link above). Other pipe band associations around the world include:

- [Australian Pipe Band Association](#)
- [Bagpipe Association of Germany](#)
- [B.C. Pipers' Association](#)
- [Irish Pipe Band Association](#)
- [Nederlandse Organisatie van Doedelzakbands](#)
- [Pipe Band Association of Scandinavia](#)
- [Pipe Bands Association of South Africa](#)
- [RSPBA North of Scotland Branch](#)
- [Royal Scottish Pipe Band Association](#)
- [Saskatchewan Pipe Band Association](#)
- [RSPBA - Lothian & Borders](#)

Each Association has grading guidelines for pipe bands. “Grade”, is how a pipe band is classified. The ANAPBA (North American) grades bands from Grade 1 to Grade 5 (Grade 1 is the uppermost grade). The Royals Scottish Pipe Band Association (RSPBA) grades bands from Juvenile, 4B, 4A, 3B, 3A, 2, and 1. For a comparison, a Grade 5 ANAPBA band would compete in 4B in a RSPBA event.

The Omaha Pipes and Drums currently compete as a Grade 4 band. Under MWPBA and ANAPBA regulations, bands may only compete in their assigned Grade. So how did we get to be a Grade 4? We “challenged” up to the next grade. We petitioned the MWPBA for re-designation under their guidelines.

At sanctioned games, the different grade bands compete with different music. For example, this is the 2007 schedule of “sanctioned” games for the Mid-West Pipe Band Association:

The MWPBA 2007 COMPETITION SEASON			Contact-Phone	GR.1	GR.2	GR.3	GR.4	GR.5	Other Information
April 14	Mini-Bands	S	Drew Hoinacki 630-257-6570	Med MSR	Med MSR	Med MSR	Med QMM	QMM	president@mwpba.org
May 19	Springfield IL State Fairgrounds	C	Veda Beall 217-624-3306	-	Med	MSR	Med	QMM	davelabel@mchsi.com
May 26	Alma day 1 Alma College	C	Mike Riley 517-579-3174	Med	MSR	Med	QMM	QMM	michaelriley@chartermi.net
May 27	Alma day 2 Alma College	C	Mike Riley 517-579-3174	MSR	Med	MSR	Med	QMM	michaelriley@chartermi.net
June 2	Milwaukee Bavarian Inn	C	Gary Bottoni 414-774-8124	-	MSR	Med	QMM	QMM	
June 16	Chicago Oak Brook Polo Club	C	Drew Hoinacki 630-257-6570	-	Med	MSR	Med	QMM	president@mwpba.org
Aug 25	Quad Cities Miss - Fairgrounds- Davenport	S	Jennie Baas 309-764-8996	-	-	Med	QMM	QMM	jenniebaas@aol.com
Sept 1	Wisconsin Waukesha Expo Center	C	Russ Read 262-820-9524	-	Med	MSR	Med	QMM	rread1@wi.rr.com
Oct 6	St. Louis Forest Park	S	Dave Massey 314-603-7084	-	-	MSR	Med	QMM	Dave1massey@cs.com

To explain the abbreviations:

Quick March Medley (QMM)

- Any number of quick marches of any common or compound time signatures played in succession within a time limit of 2:45-4:30 minutes.

Medley (Med)

- Minimum of four (4) different tune categories
- Grades 4 and 3 play within the time limit 3-5 minutes.
- Grade 2 plays within the time limit 4-6 minutes.
- Grade 1 plays within the time limit 5-7 minutes.
- Grade 1 must submit two at the Piping Tent, by 10:30am and draw at the line which is to be played.

March Strathspey & Reel (MSR)

- Minimum: 4-parted 2/4 March, 4-parted Strathspey, 4-parted Reel.
- Grades 1 and 2 must submit two at the Piping Tent, by 10:30am and draw at the line which is to be played.

That's it in a nutshell.