

Matching a Reed to the Chanter

Matching the right reed to the chanter is essential in creating a unified “band sound.” Take the same chanter reed and stick it in another chanter and it may not sound the same. Similarly, take a chanter and stick in various chanter reeds and the sound will change. This is why we all use the same brand of chanter (and usually reed) when competing. Chanter reeds vary from brand to brand and perform differently under different conditions. Some reeds do well in dry conditions – while that same reed goes limp in humidity. For the most part, we will supply you with a chanter reed for band performances. But you will also want to have a supply of reeds for personal/solo use. There are many excellent pipe chanters and reeds on the market. Hendersons bagpipe supply suggests the following pipe chanter/reed combinations. This is not the last word in pipe chanters and reeds but it is a good place for beginners and less experienced players to start.

Reeds	Strength Available	Works well in
Shepherd	Hard	Shepherd, Gibson, Naill
Warnock	Easy, Medium, Hard	Warnock, Gibson, Shepherd, Dunbar
Apps	Easy, Medium	Naill, MacCallum
Abedour	Easy (beginner), Medium	Gibson, Shepherd, Dunbar
McCann	Easy, Medium	Gibson, Shepherd
McAllister	Hard	Naill, Gibson, Hardie
EZEE PC	Easy, Medium, Hard	Naill, St. Kilda
Ross	Medium, Hard	Naill, St. Kilda, Kintail, Shepherd, Gibson

If you find you cannot get any of the above combinations to work then you may want to examine the way in which you break in or store your reeds. You should not have to blow through hundreds of reeds in order to find a good one for your chanter.