

2026 CHAMPIONSHIP STEPS OBSERVATIONS

The technical detail for each step within each dance is contained within RSOBHD Highland Dancing Eighth Edition text book.

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.

GENERAL

- The turnout should start from both hips.
- The turnout of the supporting leg and foot is as important as the working leg and foot.
- Maintain strong elevation, without exaggeration, and good control throughout the dance.
- When pointing in 2nd position it should be executed on the tip of the toe and not dropping down to underneath pads of toes.

HIGHLAND FLING

General

- The whole dance should be danced on the spot except in the 6th Step alternative methods.

Shedding

- Shedding – This movement is danced in single beat rhythm. The strong count being count 1 (page 57)

Back-steps

- Back-steps should show the round the leg movement from 3rd aerial position to 3rd rear aerial position and the working foot should slide up and down the supporting leg.

Introduction

- There should be no extension of the left leg from the disassemble to point the right foot in 2nd position.
- Both the supporting and working foot land on count 1 of Bar 1.

2nd Step – First Back-Stepping (All age groups)

- The last count in Bar 8 may finish in 3rd aerial position or 3rd rear aerial position.

6th Step 4th Alternative – Cross-over with Low Cut

- Point RF with pause on count 6
- Low Cut is on counts “and a 7” and extends to low height

SWORD DANCE

- Rhythm of all pas de basques (open and closed) are imperfect half beat rhythm
- Height of the back beat is the same for all pas de basque
- No exaggeration of the back beat in the pas de basque
- The supporting foot should be on the ball and not flat
- High Cuts should be danced on the spot and land on the ball of the supporting foot
- High Cuts are extended to 2nd aerial position
- High Cuts are placed in 3rd rear aerial position

2026 CHAMPIONSHIP STEPS OBSERVATIONS

1st Step – Addressing the Swords (All age groups)

- Show correct use of spots during this step
- There is no pivot on the 3rd pas de basque turning

4th Step – Pointing (All age groups)

- Correct foot positions & body turns should be danced
- Correct part of working foot should be used throughout

5th Step – Diagonal Points (16 years & over)

- Ensure the weight of the body is equally distributed during the spring points in 4th intermediate position.

6th Step – Reverse Points (12 & under 16 years)

- There is no body turn on count 1 Bar 2.
- Complete open pas de basque with no body turn prior to ½ turn in Bar 3

8th Step – Crossing and Pointing Quick-Step (All age groups)

- Correct foot positions & body turns should be used.
- Spring point turns – 1/8th turn to the left should be shown on count 1

SEANN TRIUBHAS

- Grace of movement is a characteristic of this dance and should not be executed overly sharp.

1st Step – Brushing (All age groups)

- The last shuffle in bar 8 should finish with the inward brush RF on the count of ‘8’

2nd Step – Side Travel (All age groups)

- When stepping care should be taken to ensure weight of the body is taken on the stepping foot not retained on the trailing foot

6th Step – Leap and High Cut (16 years & over)

- The shuffles in Bar 2 should be executed as 3 shuffles and an inward brush to assemble.
- The shuffles in Bar 8 should be 2 shuffles and an inward brush then place RF on the half point toward 4th intermediate position closing LF in 5th rear position.

9th Step – Entrechat and Shedding (12 & under 16 years)

- When executing the count ‘& 4’ may be executed with a straight knee closing to a flexed knee OR placing on half point with flexed knee closing maintaining flexed knee.
- The shuffles in Bar 2 should be executed as 3 shuffles and an inward brush to assemble.
- The shuffles in Bar 8 should be executed as 3 shuffles and an inward brush.

11th Step – Side Heel-and-Toe (All age groups)

- Bar 1 Count 1 must be danced on the spot; the RF is extended to 2nd aerial position during the elevation for the hop
- Both shakes should be danced at normal level

2026 CHAMPIONSHIP STEPS OBSERVATIONS

Pivot Turns

- If dancing with a step back – the step is small and on the ball of the foot
- The turn should start after the foot is placed on the half point in 3rd crossed position
- The turn occupies two counts. There is no pause on count ‘8’

13th Step – Shedding with Back-Step (16 years & over)

- The full value of all counts should be shown.

14th Step –Toe-and-Heel, and Rock (All age groups)

- Step is danced in single beat rhythm

18th Step – Back-Stepping (12 & under 16 years)

- The full value of all counts should be shown.

STRATHSPEY & REEL OF TULLOCH

- Count 1 of the Basic Strathspey should be placed on the **Ball**
- Count 2 of the Basic Strathspey is extended to 4th intermediate aerial position with the same body alignment as count 1.
- Strathspey should be danced with the correct figuration.
- Dancers must use the correct body turns and not dance straight up the set when executing the strathspey figuration.
- During Propelled Pivot Turn, it should be noted that when the arms link the thumb should not encircle their partners arm.



ROYAL SCOTTISH OFFICIAL BOARD OF HIGHLAND DANCING

2026 CHAMPIONSHIP STEPS OBSERVATIONS

CHANGE LOG

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