

The 'Irish points' system *Explained!*

Each Irish dancing organisation has their own spin on how they tabulate results, but the thought process is the same. Dancers are basically ranked from first to last place. Where there are multiple judges determining the result of one competition, such as at the championship level, it is a bit more complex to understand. *IDM* unravels the mystery behind the maths in championship scorings.

You are dancing at a competition where there is more than one judge and you are completely confused when you see your marks (ie scores). Adjudicator one gave you a score of 85, the second adjudicator gave you a score of 79.5 and the third judge marked you at 75. You think to yourself; 'Judge 1 loved me!'. Hang on there – you might be wrong. Studying the results further, you see there were

points assigned to each of these marks. Now you are really confused, because you were actually assigned more points from the judge who gave you a 79.5 than the judge who gave you 85. Something is wrong – there must be a tabulation error. You run to your teacher with the scores, and soon learn the results are correct. Here's why:

It can be confusing to understand

the 'Irish points' system. Basically it is a system which converts each individual judge's rankings to an actual mathematical score. In a multi-judge competition, the converted score (for each judge) is added together to determine the ultimate overall winner. So, think of your initial score from the adjudicator as their 'raw score'. It's their way of keeping track of



The judges determine their own rankings but the point system identifies the overall placements based upon all the judges marks!

dancers and ranking them from first to last. The adjudicator assigns a raw score to each dancer they've seen in the competition. Once the raw scores are brought back to tabulation, the tabulators sort them from top to bottom for each adjudicator. Therefore you can't compare raw scores across adjudicators, as they all use their own starting point. So, in the example above, adjudicator one, who assigned a raw score of 85, had this dancer in 10th place, whereas adjudicator two's score of 79.5 put the dancer in 5th place with that particular judge, and adjudicator three's raw score of 75 put the dancer in 11th place. So, the dancer received a fifth place, a 10th place and 11th place. Each of those places then received a number of Irish points, also called the 'grid score'.

In the case of An Coimisiun, fifth place receives 56 points, 10th place 43 points, and 11th place 40 points. When added together $56+43+40 = 139$ points in total. This overall total is then compared to each dancer in the competition. They are sorted from first to last based upon this overall total. So, the dancer above found out that she placed eighth overall. Not too bad! It was a tight competition and that one fifth place ranking really helped her.

Do you understand now? Not really? Okay... let's try again...

Raw Scores:

When an adjudicator judges a dancer's performance they mark them out of a possible 100 points for each dance. This becomes the dancer's raw score from that particular adjudicator for that dance. In championships where an adjudicator is judging more than one round of dances, they will award a raw score for each dance and at the end these marks will be added together to give the adjudicator's overall raw score for that dancer. This in turn gives a ranking of dancers (first, second, third, etc) for the adjudicator and can be converted to a grid score from the 100 points system.



Every ID organization uses official adjudicators to judge and rank the dancers from first to last place

Grid Scores:

Each dancer is allocated a certain number of points from the grid based on their ranking:

Ranking	Points	Ranking	Points	Ranking	Points	Ranking	Points
1	100	16	35	31	20	46	5
2	75	17	34	32	19	47	4
3	65	18	33	33	18	48	3
4	60	19	32	34	17	49	2
5	56	20	31	35	16	50	1
6	53	21	30	36	15		
7	50	22	29	37	14		
8	47	23	28	38	13		
9	45	24	27	39	12		
10	43	25	26	40	11		
11	40	26	25	41	10		
12	39	27	24	42	9		
13	38	28	23	43	8		
14	37	29	22	44	7		
15	36	30	21	45	6		

Any dancer who is below 50th place will receive zero points from the grid system.

When each dancer's raw scores from each adjudicator have been converted into points using the grid scores, then all their points are added together and their totals will determine who the winner is.

Many question the need for grid marks when dancers have raw scores to begin with. Surely the dancer with the greatest total of raw score marks would win? This may not be the case. Every adjudicator

marks relative to their own determinants on what they award as their top score. One adjudicator may give 95 marks for first place while another may give 84 for the same position. Although there is an 11-point difference both marks denote the winner. Therefore to balance out these discrepancies both marks will be converted to 100 points on the grid system and so on. So now, next time you purchase your breakdown of marks at a feis you will be able to see the system at work for yourself!