

DANCE COMPETITION GENERAL RULES

Section 1. Couples/Line Dance Divisions.

- A. The couples contest will have four (4) divisions of competition. Divisions IV, III, and II will be a Classic format. The Classic format should demonstrate the basic character of the specified dance. Division I will be the Showcase format. The Showcase format should establish the basic character of the dance. Division I music is pre-released no later than six (6) months prior to the competition. This will allow for pre-planned choreography and embellishment of “signature” aspects of the song. Couples may enter the division of their choice within the following guidelines:
1. Couples whose partners have different divisional levels may dance no lower than one division below the highest “rated” partner.
 2. Any individual dancer who is the first place overall winner at IGRA competing against at least two (2) other couples (for a total of three (3) couples) must dance at the next higher level in future IGRA competition. Dancers are not required to progress to the next divisional level if they win overall with two (2) or fewer couples competing; however, they may progress to the next level if they choose. If a dancer chooses to advance to the next divisional level, they may not go back to the previous division except under the conditions of Section 1, Part A, Item 1 above.
- B. Couples Divisions.
1. **DIVISION IV – FIRST TIME.**
 - a. Cannot have taught Country/Western couple dancing.
 - b. Cannot be or have been a professional dancer (see section 2).
 - c. Cannot have been a judge in an IGRA qualifying couples dance competition more than three times.
 - d. Prior IGRA competitors cannot compete in this division.
 2. **DIVISION III – BEGINNER.**
 - a. May not have taught anything above basic Country/Western couple and/or line dancing. Basic is defined as beginning footwork or patterns.
 - b. Cannot be or have been a professional dancer (see section 2).
 - c. Cannot have been a judge in an IGRA qualifying couples dance competition more than three times.
 3. **DIVISION II – INTERMEDIATE.**
 - a. Cannot be or have been a professional dancer (see section 2).
 4. **DIVISION I – ADVANCED.**
 - a. Division I will be a Showcase format.

- C. Individual Line Dance Divisions.
1. BEGINNER DIVISION.
 - a. Cannot have taught Country/Western line dancing.
 - b. Cannot be or have been a professional dancer (see section 2).
 - c. Cannot be or have been a judge in an IGRA qualifying line dance competition more than three times.
 2. INTERMEDIATE DIVISION.
 - a. May have taught Country/Western line dancing.
 - b. Cannot be or have been a professional dancer (see section 2).
 - c. May have been a judge in an IGRA qualifying line dance competition more than three times.
 3. ADVANCED DIVISION.
 - a. May have taught Country/Western line dancing.
 - b. May have been a professional dancer. (see section 2)
 - c. May have been a judge in an IGRA qualifying line dance competition more than three times.
- D. Dance Teams.

This category is to be considered “Open” for teams, consisting of at least three (3) members, desiring to perform routines. Teams will be judged based on originality, choreography, execution and entertainment value.

Section 2. A professional dancer shall be defined as an individual earning 50% or more of their income from dance.

Section 3. Awards.

- A. Computation of scores in each dance category and for overall score will be determined by the total score of all judges.
- B. Ribbons will be presented to the first three (3) places in each division of competition. In the event of a tie, equal ribbons shall be presented (e.g. if there is a tie for first (1st) place, two (2) first places shall be awarded; second (2nd) place shall be dropped, and third (3) place shall be awarded). Likewise, for second (2nd) place, dropping third (3rd) place; if there is a tie for third (3rd) place, two (2) third places shall be presented. Buckles will be presented to each member of the couple for overall best score in each couples division. Trophies will be presented for overall best score in Individual Line Dance Divisions. One trophy will be presented to best scoring Dance Team, and individual awards will be presented to each winning team member (i.e. certificates, ribbons, etc.).
- C. The announcement of awards shall be as soon as possible after the last dance of the competition.
- D. Final awards shall be delivered to the winners no later than 60 days after the contest.

Section 4. A panel of five (5) judges consisting of either dance instructors, professional dancers, or dancers with competition experience shall be used. All judges agree to judge in an impartial manner. Any conflict of interest shall be reported to and resolved by the contest coordinator.

Section 5. Couples/Line Dance Contest Format.

- A. There shall be a contestants meeting held prior to the beginning of the dance competition for the purposes of reviewing contest format and rules, drawing of running order, approval of dance floor, and announcement of music selections. Music selections shall be played at the contestants' meeting. A majority ruling of dance contestants shall validate use of the existing surface and the compliance to the rules of the selected music. In the event a music selection is found to violate the rules, a suitable replacement will be located. The Dance Contest Coordinator shall have the final decision to continue the dance competition after all possible efforts on the part of the Hosting Association and facility have been made to correct any/all objectionable portions of the surface and/or replace objectionable music. Warm up time shall be scheduled on the competition floor no later than the day of the contest.
- B. The dance floor shall be made of wood with a size no less than 30' X 30'. If a dance floor of an appropriate size cannot be found, the Hosting Organization may apply for a variance. All contestants will be informed of the variance upon application for the contest.
- C. No more than three (3) couples at a time competing on the dance floor.
- D. Couples must dance a two-step, waltz, and free-style to qualify for placement overall. Line dancers must dance all three line dances to qualify for placement overall. Competitors may enter fewer events; however, by doing so, they will not be considered for placement in the overall competition.
- E. Two Step.

Music for Division I will be selected by the IGRA Dance Committee and will be released no later than six (6) months prior to the competition. Music for Divisions II, III, and IV will be selected by the Dance Chair from a list of possible songs prepared in advance by the Dance Committee. The music for Divisions II, III, and IV will be released the day of the contest no later than the contestant meeting.

- 1. The style must be two-step. Variations in the dance are allowed as long as the character of the dance remains intact.
- 2. No lifts, drops, aerials, or acrobatic moves are allowed.
- 3. The same selection of music shall be played for all heats of the same division.
- 4. Judges' choice of music shall be of the appropriate music style and adhere to the following beats per minutes (BPM) guidelines: 180–206 BPM.
- 5. Music will be played for a maximum of 2 minutes, 30 seconds. Music may be faded out anytime after 2 minutes.

F. Waltz.

Music for Division I will be selected by the IGRA Dance Committee and will be released no later than six (6) months prior to the competition. Music for Divisions II, III, and IV will be selected by the Dance Chair from a list of possible songs prepared in advance by the Dance Committee. The music for Divisions II, III, and IV will be released the day of the contest no later than the contestant meeting.

1. Variations in the dance are allowed as long as the character of the dance remains intact.
2. No lifts, drops, aerials, or acrobatic moves are allowed.
3. The same selection of music shall be played for all heats of the same division.
4. Judges' choice of music for Divisions II, III, and IV shall be of the appropriate music style and adhere to the following beats per minute (BPM) guidelines: 88–102 BPM.
5. Music will be played for a maximum of 2 minutes, 30 seconds. Music may be faded out anytime after 2 minutes.

G. Free Style.

Each couple will dance to a free-style selection of their choice (any Country/Western dance, anything goes). Examples, but not limited to, are two-step, waltz, swing, cha-cha, polka, schottische, one-step, triple-step and shuffle. Lifts, drops, aerials, and acrobatic moves are allowed in this routine.

1. Couples selection of chosen routines should be on a tape (cued) or compact disc (CD), if available.
2. Couples selection maximum length is four (4) minutes. Couples will receive zero (0) points if selection length exceeds time limit.

H. Individual Line Dancers.

Line dances shall be selected by the IGRA Dance Committee and will be released no later than six (6) months prior to the competition and said information shall be communicated to all Associations.

I. Dance Team Division

1. Each team shall have 4 to 10 minutes, entrance and exit inclusive, to execute their routine.
2. Neither alteration of house lights nor use of non-dance personnel is allowed.
3. While flirtatious moves are acceptable, overt sexual, vulgar or crude dance positions are inappropriate.
4. Props are allowed. They are defined as small handheld or worn objects that can be appropriately revealed, utilized, and retained (e.g., tear-away skirt, guns and holsters, hand-held flowers, spurs, parasols, canes, ropes, chairs, suitcases, etc.). In other words, start with an empty floor, leave with an empty floor.

- J. Country/Western Dress Style.
1. Contestants will compete in western style fashions.
 2. Footwear will be western style boots.
 3. A western-style hat is required to be worn by at least one (1) partner of each couple in the two-step and waltz.
 4. Loss of hat during competition shall result in no scoring until the hat is retrieved.
 - a. Other couples on the dance floor will not be penalized during the time the obstruction is on the floor.
 - b. If the obstruction severely affects the other couples, the judges may call a rerun of the heat.
- K. Dance Style.
1. Universally understood Country/Western dance floor etiquette should be adhered to at all times during the competition, respective to the particular dance category. Categories include the “smooth” dances of two-step and waltz, and the “rhythm” dances consisting of various types of swing. Progression in “smooth” dances should be counter-clockwise around the periphery of the specified “dance arena” strictly adhering to the rules of etiquette regarding the “fast-lane”, “slow-lane”, and “spotlight” areas of the competition floor. Progression in “rhythm” dances must be directed so as not to flagrantly interfere with the dance “space” of other couples, as determined by their starting positions within the “dance arena”. Each flagrant infraction of dance floor etiquette (one that causes a collision of couples or one that severely interferes with another couple’s performance) may be cause to be dropped one placement point on all judges’ ballots for the offending couple for that particular dance category in which the infraction occurs.
 2. Lifts, drops, aerials, and acrobatic moves are not allowed except in the free-style category. Any such move will be cause for scoring one placement drop on all judges’ ballots for the offending couple for that particular dance category.
 - a. A LIFT shall be described as any move where both feet of one partner are off the floor and the other partner supports the weight.
 - b. A DROP will be described as any move where the head and torso of one partner is entirely below the waist level of the other partner and the other partner supports weight.
 - c. An AERIAL will be described as any move where one partner independently brings both feet off the floor and one foot is above either partner’s shoulder level or both feet are above either partner’s waist level.
 - d. An ACROBATIC will be described as any move where one person independently passes his/her foot, leg, or body over and across the plane of one’s own partner’s head, or passes his/her body under or through the legs of the other partner.
 - e. Exaggerated moves that marginally approach the parameters of the above criteria may be subject to severe point loss at the judge’s discretion.

3. Allowable moves are defined as:
 - a. Leans, dips or leverage moves where one partner supports some, but not all of the partner and the partner is not “lifted” or “dropped”.
 - b. Develop leg lifts or kicks where one partner’s foot rises above the level his/her partner’s head.

- L. Re–Runs. Dance contestants will be allowed to begin their dance routine again in any category because of equipment failure, e.g., tape player failure, etc.
 1. It is the responsibility of the dance couple to ensure that their music tape or CD is not defective. No repeat performance will be allowed for a defective tape or CD.
 2. In the event of a re–run, the re–run will occur at the end of that division heat. If there is only one couple competing in that heat, then the re–run will take place at the end of the next division heat.

Section 6. Dance Categories. The following categories are intended to outline basic step patterns and do not include the many possible variations created by rhythm breaks and syncopations.

- A. A rhythm break or variation occurs when basic rhythm pattern is altered by extending or changing the basic rhythm count.
- B. A syncopation occurs when any step places the accent between beats of the music.
- C. Rhythm breaks and syncopations of appropriate duration will be allowed to accomplish turns and movements as long as basic styling, appropriate to the dance category, is maintained throughout all variations. All dances, including rhythm breaks and syncopations, should include identifiable lead and follow technique with continuity of movement, variety of dance positions and appropriate footwork in joined partnership (except for a specific move such as a free spin) throughout the entire routine.
- D. Two Step. Must be two–step. Any two–step pattern using six counts of music (slow–hold–slow–hold–quick–quick, counted as 1–3–5–6; or quick–quick–slow–hold–slow–hold, counted as 1–2–3–5).
- E. Any waltz pattern (1,2,3,4,5,6) may be used that has a generally forward progression and accents counts 1 and 4; any move that temporarily slows forward motion will be performed toward the center of the floor. Proper rise and fall technique should be shown throughout the dance.
- F. Free Style. Any Country/Western dance, anything goes. Music selection, because it is done by the contestants, becomes a judge able item. Couples using non–Country/Western music will be subject to a drop in placement at the judges’ discretion. Performance music that is Country/Western in arrangement or theme and is performed by a Country/ Western artist or band is appropriate. Orchestrated music that is also Country/Western in theme is appropriate. Top “40” pop music sung by a Country/Western artist or band is generally accepted if it has passed from the pop charts the Country/Western charts. Weekly national known Country/Western music charts may be used as appropriate guides to music selection.

Section 7. Line Dance Contest Format.

- A. All dancers must dance all three dances.
- B. The IGRA Dance Committee will select dances, which will be released and posted to the IGRA website no later than six (6) months prior to the competition.
- C. The song will be placed for six (6) rotations.
- D. All dancers must dance with the line dance for two (2) rotations at the beginning with no variations. After that time, they may introduce variations, as long as the direction of the dance does not change.
- E. A 5,6,7,8 (or 4,5,6 if applicable) audible countdown shall be made to count the start of the line dance.

Section 8. The following judging criteria will be used for each dance shall be scored as follows:

- A. CONTENT.
 - 1. Variety of dance positions, dance movements, and/or combinations as appropriate to the specific dance.
 - 2. Difficulty of dance movements and/or combinations from one dance position or alignment to another.
 - 3. Uniqueness or originality of dance movements and/or combinations from one dance position or alignment to another, to include presentation of dance position.
 - 4. Continuity of dance movements and/or combinations to either interpret dance theme and music, or to demonstrate dance control. This refers to exceptional phrasing, which includes spontaneous adjustments of dance pattern for irregularly phrased musical selections.
- B. EXECUTION.
 - 1. Basic pattern, rhythm, timing, and initial phrasing between partners and to the selected music. For correctly phrased musical selections, phrasing may be shifted for momentary variation, but generally should be maintained throughout the specific dance.
 - 2. Proper performance of footwork, hand, head, arm, and body movements through dance variations; to include balance and centering through executed movements.
 - 3. Alignment, framework, and proper presentation of dance positions; to include smoothness of follow-through from movement into position; to demonstrate properly initiated lead and follow technique from position into movement.

C. STYLE.

1. Artistic interpretation and choreography projected through dance movement as it relates to the selected music and the specified dance category.
2. Attentiveness, enthusiasm, enjoyment of the dance, and general good partnership as perceived through appropriate presentation of lead and follow roles.
3. Flair and accent of dance movement, generating an atmosphere and instilling a mood appropriate to the specific dance category.
4. Coordinated appearance appropriate to Country/Western competition attire and the specific dance category; posture, grooming, and use of costume as it compliments the contestants and their projected dance style.

Section 9. Contestants must be ready to perform when scheduled and/or called or shall be scored no show with zero (0) placement for that category.

Section 10. Judging Criteria. Judging will be done on a "Relative Placement System". Each judge will issue a 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, etc. placement. Final placement will be determined by absolute majority of placements. For example, with a panel of five judges, the 1st place winner must have 3, 4 or 5 1st place votes. If no couple has an absolute majority of 1st place votes, the number of 1st-2nd place votes for each couple is counted. If no couple has the absolute majority of 1st-2nd place votes, the 1st-3rd place votes are counted and so on until a first place winner is selected. 2nd place is done the same way beginning with counting the number of 2nd place votes and 3rd place the same (See Exhibit D5).

Section 11. All video recording equipment and photographic cameras shall be registered upon entry to the dance facility and are subject to any/all restrictions placed upon the owners of such equipment by Dance Contest Coordinator. Contestants, in conjunction with the contest coordinator, shall designate area(s) for use of such equipment. All possible efforts shall be made by the contest coordinator to announce if a couple requests not to be photographed.