

# I.A.G.L.C.W.D.C. COUNTRY WESTERN COUPLES DANCE COMPETITION RULES & SCORING FORMAT

*As adopted by the Dance Competitions Committee in September 2007  
at the Semiannual Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA.*

## **PREAMBLE**

The International Association of Gay/Lesbian Country Western Dance Clubs (IAGLCWDC) recognizes the importance of country western music and dance to the life of the gay/lesbian community. We are committed to supporting these activities and have taken great pride in providing the community with events that have earned respect and national recognition. We acknowledge the constraints that we experience as a volunteer organization. We are, nonetheless, committed to continuing a proud tradition of high quality activities that reflect positively on our association and the community. There shall be one IAGLCWDC sanctioned championship competition per year to be held at the annual convention of that year consisting of all three events (couples dance, line dance, and teams). Any IAGLCWDC club may run their own competition using IAGLCWDC rules and regulations and sanctioned judges. This competition may consist of all three events or may consist of only one or two of the events. These are to be held as regular competitions following IAGLCWDC rules and are not to be run as preliminaries to the championship competitions at the annual conventions.

## **ELIGIBILITY**

IAGLCWDC dance competitions are open to all. Same sex as well as opposite sex couples are welcomed to compete in this competition. Each contestant is subject to the minimum age laws of the governing state. Refer to specific event registration forms for exact age requirements for each event. Competition entry forms must be submitted to the Competition Director no less than 30 days prior to this event. Late entries may be accepted at the discretion of the Competition Director. Entry fees shall be determined by the host organization and will be specified on competition entry forms.

The rules as specified in I.A.G.L.C.W.D.C. COUNTRY WESTERN COUPLES DANCE COMPETITION RULES & SCORING FORMAT shall be the only rules that govern these competitions. Failure to comply with these rules may affect final placement.

## **DIVISIONS**

Determination of an appropriate division rating assignment is predicated on the honesty and integrity of the individual competitor. We recognize that IAGLCWDC possesses limited ability to verify an individual's actual experience in venues and competitions except for events that are sanctioned by IAGLCWDC. Subsequently, each dancer is expected to enter the division that most closely fits his or her actual skill level.

## OPEN DIVISIONS

- V. Novice: First time both partners are competing in any couples competition. This division is intended for the newer dancers.
- IV. Beginner: Have not placed first in the beginner overall division (where three or more couples competed overall). May dance in this division for only three championship competitions.
- III. Intermediate: Have not previously placed first in the intermediate overall division (where three or more couples competed overall).
- II. Advanced: Have not previously placed first in the advanced overall division (where three or more couples competed overall).
- I. Championship: Highest level of competition. Must have competed and placed first in advanced overall division (where three or more couples competed overall).

- Any couple may choose to enter any of the divisions of competition subject to divisional guidelines stated herein. An individual may compete in the open divisions with only one partner and in only one division.
- If one partner has competed in a higher division, the couple may compete one level below the division of the more experienced partner with the exception of the novice division.
- A couple may be moved to a higher division, at the judges' discretion, if deemed necessary.
- The Competition Director has the option to approach couples in an uncontested division to give them the option to move to a higher division. This affords the couple the opportunity to dance in a contested division. Taking this option will permanently advance the couple to the higher division.
- All couples (except Novice and Championship) may dance any or all dances in this competition. Novice and Championship couples may only dance the compulsory dances listed below. To qualify for Open Division Overall, competitors must have danced the following compulsory dances:

- V. Novice: 2-Step and Waltz
- IV. Beginner: 2-Step and Waltz
- III. Intermediate: 2-Step, Waltz, choice of Swing Dance
- II. Advanced: 2-Step, Waltz, choice of Swing Dance and choice of Rhythm Dance
- I. Championship: 2-Step, Waltz, and Solo Performance

## **PRO-AM DIVISIONS**

- PA-III. Beginner: Have not placed first in the beginner overall division (where three or more couples competed overall). May dance in this division for only three championship competitions.
- PA-II. Intermediate: Have not previously placed first in the intermediate overall division (where three or more couples competed overall).
- PA-I. Advanced: Have not previously placed first in the advanced overall division (where three or more couples competed overall).

- Any amateur may choose to enter any of the divisions of competition subject to divisional guidelines stated herein. An amateur may compete in the pro-am divisions with more than one teacher but in only one division.
- Any amateur competing in both Pro-Am and Open Divisions may dance one division up in the Pro-Am Division, limited to one amateur of the couple.
- Instructors that teach any form of couples dance may not compete as an amateur.
- A couple may be moved to a higher division, at the judges' discretion, if deemed necessary.
- The Competition Director has the option to approach couples in an uncontested division to give them the option to move to a higher division. This affords the couple the opportunity to dance in a contested division. Taking this option will permanently advance the couple to the higher division.
- All amateurs may dance any or all dances in this competition. However, to qualify for Division Overall, amateurs must have danced the following compulsory dances:

PA-III. Beginner: 2-Step and Waltz

PA-II. Intermediate: 2-Step, Waltz, choice of Swing Dance

PA-I. Advanced: 2-Step, Waltz, choice of Swing Dance and choice of Rhythm Dance

## **DANCE CATEGORIES**

### **SMOOTH DANCES:**

#### **Two-Step (180-198 BPM)**

Any six or eight-count combination of basic Two Step patterns (quick, quick, slow, slow, or quick, quick, slow, quick, quick, slow or the west coast versions of slow, slow, quick, quick, or slow, quick, quick, slow, quick, quick) may be used that has a generally forward progression using basic smooth motion. Double-timing the six (6) count basic pattern throughout the entire song is not allowed.

#### **Waltz (84-100 BPM)**

Any basic waltz pattern may be used that has a generally forward progression and accents counts 1 and 4 using basic rise and fall motion.

### **RHYTHM DANCES:**

#### **Polka (108-122 BPM)**

Any basic continuous three (3) step or polka pattern may be used that has a generally forward progression using upward lilted motion. Standing step patterns are not allowed.

#### **Cha Cha (100-120 BPM)**

Any basic cha cha pattern, (1, 2, 3, 4& 5, 6, 7, 8&) may be used that "breaks" or accents counts two and six of the music using basic lation motion. The dance may have some form of periodic forward or backward progression. However, substantial parts of the dance should be stationary. "Chase" or "circle" patterns that are performed non-connected are considered "school figures" for this dance.

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Night Club (56-68 BPM)

Any 4 count or 8 count combination of basic night club patterns (1, 2& 3, 4& or 1, 2& 3, 4& 5, 6& 7, 8&) that has a generally stationary "2-rail" pattern using basic horizontal "swing and sway" motion.

SWING DANCES:

East Coast Swing (145-160 BPM)

Any combination of six (6) or eight (8) count basic swing pattern may be used that has a generally stationary, circular step pattern using basic downward lilted semi-latin/swing motion. Each style must have mutually performed rock steps on counts (5, 6 or 7, 8). Six (6) count swing may include single (1, 3, 5, 6), double (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 where weightless counts are taken on either 1 and 3 or 2 and 4), and/or triple rhythms (1& 2, 3& 4, 5, 6), with four (4) count and/or eight (8) count variations or syncopations.

West Coast Swing (105-120 BPM)

Any six (6) or eight (8) count combination of basic swing patterns (1, 2, 3& 4, 5& 6 or 1, 2, 3& 4, 5, 6, 7& 8) may be used that have a generally stationary, predominantly slotted step pattern using basic smooth semi-latin motion. "Coaster" or "anchor" steps may be used.

Solo Performance (3 minutes maximum)

May be a single dance or a combination of the previously listed dances. May include mixing of music, and personal interpretation. Dance and music must be country/western in nature (show tunes, jazz, and theater arts are not accepted). Open work is permitted, but not to exceed 16 consecutive beats.

COMPETITION FORMAT

- Number of Judges: There shall be an odd number of judges with a minimum of five (5) judges per event at the annual championship competitions and a minimum of three (3) judges per event at all other IAGLCWDC sanctioned competitions. Special exceptions may be made by the Director of Dance in case the Competition Director cannot get the required minimum of judges.
- Heats will be evenly divided depending on floor size to allow a maximum of eight (8) couples at a time. A heat can be conducted with as few as one (1) couple if only one (1) couple is entered.
- Selected music will be played for one and a half (1 ½) minutes.
- Each couple is responsible for being in the staging area and reporting promptly to the coordinator ten (10) minutes prior to their scheduled time for competition. Couples missing their announced or scheduled time will not be guaranteed an alternate time.
- Couples must use their own discretion in regards to costume changes. Extra time is not guaranteed for these changes.
- There shall be awards given to the top three (3) couples in each dance of the open divisions.
- There shall be an award given to the overall winner in each division.
- All competitors shall be recognized at the awards ceremony, however only the awards given shall be announced.
- Single dance and overall placement sheets will be made available to the competitors only, after the Awards presentation. There shall be no critique sheets provided to competitors.
- The type and composition of Awards is at the discretion of the Competition Director and the hosting organization. THERE WILL BE NO CASH AWARDS.
- There shall be a time and place provided for a post-competition critiquing session between the competitors and the judges.

## ATTIRE

The following attire must be adhered to or competitors will not be allowed to compete.

- Footwear will be western style boots.
- Competitors will compete in western style fashion.
- Leads must wear a hat in all dances with the exception of solo performance. Hats are optional for follows. Loss of hat may negatively affect final placement.
- Props are not allowed. A prop is defined as anything used that is non-clothing, or clothing worn with the intent to use as a prop (i.e. handkerchiefs used during the dance, skirts torn away or reversed, spurs, sheriff's badges, etc.)

## JUDGING CRITERIA

### FLOOR ETIQUETTE

- Progressive dances, such as 2-Step, Waltz, and Polka should move counter-clockwise around the periphery of the dance "arena," adhering to rules of etiquette regarding the "fast lane - slow lane" and "spotlight" areas of the floor.
- Any traveling movement in generally stationary dances, such as east coast swing and west coast swing must be directed so as not to interfere with the dance "space" of other couples, as determined by their starting positions within the dance arena.
- Any movement which interferes with the dance space of others may negatively affect final placement.
- While flirtatious moves are acceptable, overt sexual, vulgar or crude dance presentations are inappropriate. If a move is deemed inappropriate, the violation may negatively affect the final placement.

### ATHLETIC MOVEMENTS

- Athletic movements, such as lifts, drops, aerials, and acrobatic movements are not allowed, except in the Solo Performance. Leans or tricks where the follow supports most of his/her own weight, and as long as his/her head does not go below the waist of the lead, are acceptable except in the Open Novice Division and the Pro-Am Beginner Division.
- An improper athletic movement may negatively affect final placement.

### ENTRANCE

- Couples may begin from the basic position of the dance they are representing, or they may elect to use a choreographed entrance. Choreography or a universally accepted country western "school figure" may contain shine movement (or apart dancing), pantomime and mime, rhythm breaks or syncopations or non-leadable movements that do not go beyond the following guidelines:
  - For 2-step or polka -- 12 counts of music.
  - For waltz -- 12 counts of music (4 measures).
  - For any swing or cha cha -- 16 counts of music (4 measures).
- Couples dancing in the Open Novice Division and the Pro-Am Beginner Division may not have a choreographed entrance and must start in a closed dance position.

### RHYTHM BREAKS & SYNCOPATIONS

Dance counts in the categories listed are intended to outline basic patterns. They do not include the many possible variations created by rhythm breaks and syncopations. A rhythm break or variation occurs when the basic rhythm pattern is altered by extending or changing the basic rhythm count. A syncopation occurs when any step places the accent between beats of music. Rhythm breaks and syncopations within a single dance pattern will be allowed to accomplish turns and movements, so long as the basic styling is maintained throughout all variations. All dances should include identifiable lead and follow technique with continuity of movement, variety of dance positions and appropriate footwork.

### COMPETITION MUSIC

- A list of possible music is provided by the IAGLCWDC Dance Competitions Committee, and must be included with the competition entry forms. Actual music used will be selected by the judges at the Judges Meeting. Selected music will be provided at the Competitors Meeting to be held just prior to the Competition. The music tempo range for each dance category is to be indicated in beats per minute (BPM).
- Music selection, when done by competitors as required for Solo Performance, is an item for judge assessment. Music must be country western in nature (showtunes, jazz, and theater arts are not accepted). Non-country western music may negatively affect final placement.

### SCORING FORMAT

- The "Skating System" will be used by the judges in the IAGLCWDC Couples Dance Competition.
- In the preliminary rounds, each judge will call back the couples they want to see in the final rounds. Number of call backs will be determined by the Competition Director in coordination with the hosting club's convention committee or director.
- In the final rounds, each judge must place all entries in each dance for each division. A judge must not tie couples for any place in the finals of any dance.
- The winner of a particular dance is the entry who is placed first by an absolute majority of judges. Second place is the entry who is placed second by an absolute majority of judges. The remaining places are allocated in a similar manner.
- The overall winner of each division is the entry where the total sum of the placements in the required dances produces the lowest aggregate score.

## **JUDGES QUALIFICATIONS**

- The IAGLCWDC will maintain and update a list of qualified judges. In order to be added to this list, an application form must be submitted by the potential judge or by the Competition Director on behalf of a potential judge. The application will be reviewed by the IAGLCWDC Dance Competition Committee. The potential Judge and the Competition Director will be notified of acceptance or declination and reasons of declination within 60 days. All judges for an IAGLCWDC sanctioned event must be on this IAGLCWDC approved Judges list. Allow at least 60 days for processing and notification.
- The Competition Director may select competent judges from the IAGLCWDC list with the following stipulations:
  - No judge may judge any event in which they are not currently approved.
  - No judge may provide private coaching to any competitors during the Event, until the Dance Competitions are concluded.
  - No judge may compete in any single event where he/she is judging. (i.e. A judge may compete in Individual Line, and judge Couples.)



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