

UCWDC® Rules,  
Contest Procedures  
and Scoring Format  
**2026 - 2028**



**LINE DANCE**

UNITED COUNTRY WESTERN DANCE COUNCIL®  
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# United Country Western Dance Council

## Rules, Contest Procedures and Scoring Format

### **I. GENERAL INFORMATION**

#### **A. United Country Western Dance Council®**

1. Since 1989, UCWDC® has provided the most unique competitive dance experience in the world.
2. UCWDC oversees the largest competition circuit for country dance in the world, including partner and line dance styles. Our goal is to provide our members with the structure, tools, education, and support they need to thrive in our circuit.
3. The UCWDC creates, revises, and administers the use of this uniform set of dance rules, contest procedures, scoring formats, and rating systems governing all UCWDC-sanctioned events.
4. The UCWDC recruits, develops, certifies, and evaluates Country Dance judges to create a pool from which UCWDC Dance Event Directors may draw.

#### **B. UCWDC's Mission and Vision**

1. The UCWDC oversees the largest competition circuit for country dance in the world, including partner and line dance styles. Our mission is to provide our members with the structure, tools, education, and support they need to thrive in our circuit.
2. Our Vision: The UCWDC is inspired by the vision of a thriving global country dance community featuring a world-class competition circuit and a Championship event on every continent.

#### **C. UCWDC Business Office**

The UCWDC Business Office is the official center for submitting to the UCWDC, information requests by letter, telephone, e-mail, or fax. Requests will be forwarded to the appropriate UCWDC Directors as needed.

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### **II. DANCE RULES**

#### **A. General Definitions**

1. **Amateur** refers to a dance competitor who does not meet any of the Professional Status Specifics outlined in the Division Entry Requirements section of this Rules document.
2. **Basic Rule** refers to the rule that, before adding embellishments or variations, competitors must dance one full, visible basic pattern of the dance per standard phrase of music – or, in the case of Line Dances, a full basic “vanilla” wall of the dance steps specified by the choreographer. More details are provided later in this rules document.

3. **Crossover** refers to either of two opportunities:
  - a. A dance competitor from another dance sport competes in the UCWDC dance sport
  - b. A dance competitor from one UCWDC Dance Type competes in another UCWDC Dance Type
4. **Dance Season** is a year that begins on January 16<sup>th</sup> and continues up to January 15<sup>th</sup> of the following year.
5. **Dance Category** refers to the specific dance or motion, such as Rise and Fall, Pulse, Smooth, Cuban, Street, Stage for Line. Two-Step, Waltz, Cha-Cha, West Coast Swing, East Coast Swing, Polka, etc. for Couples and ProAm/ProPro.
6. **Dance Types** refer to the types of dance contests offered by UCWDC, including ProAm, ProPro, Couples, Line, and Teams.
7. **Division** refers to the following segments in which UCWDC competitors may compete within a Dance Type: Age, Skill Level, and Mixed-Role. For example, Line Dance Female Diamond Novice is a division. Division specifics are listed in this Rules document.
8. **Eligibility Period** is the two (2) previous Dance Seasons combined with the current Dance Season. For example, on 3 October 2022, the eligibility period would be from 15 January 2020 to 3 October 2022. On 5 February 2022, the eligibility period would be from 15 January 2020 to 5 February 2022.
9. **Format** refers to the general forms of UCWDC dance competition, including **Classic** (in which music is selected by a DJ and competitors do not know the songs they will dance to in advance) and **Showcase** (in which competition music is either chosen by the competitors or is pre-released to competitors by UCWDC).
10. **Judges' Marks** refer to the placements UCWDC judges may award competitors. These include:
  - M** = Honorable mention
  - B** = bronze
  - S** = silver
  - S+** = silver plus (ProAm only)
  - G** = gold
  - G+** = gold plus (ProAm only)
  - GH** = gold with honors
  - GH+** = gold with honors plus (ProAm only)
  - GG** = gold graduate
11. **Mixed-Role** refers to UCWDC competition divisions in which traditional dance-gender roles (i.e. males lead and females follow) are *not* required.
12. **Overall Championship** (also shortened to “Overall”), refers to UCWDC contests in which individuals compete to be best across all dances. In Line, for an overall, a competitor must enter all Dance Categories offered in that division. For example, in Line Dance Crystal Intermediate, a competitor must dance Rise and Fall, Pulse, Smooth, Cuban and Stage. In Couples and ProAm/ProPro, competitors must dance five of eight dances. Overall competitors must dance at least Two-Step; Waltz; one (1) Swing dance (East Coast or West Coast); and two (2) of the four (4) Alternate dances, which are Triple Two, Polka, NightClub, and Cha Cha.
13. **ProAm** is a type of partner-dance contest in which a Professional dances with an Amateur.
14. **Professional** refers to a dancer who meets any of the Professional Status Specifics outlined in the Division Entry Rules section of this Rules document.
15. **ProPro** is a type of partner-dance contest in which two Professionals dance together and one professional is instructing the other.
16. **Solo Medley (SuperStars, RisingStars, and Crown)**: A musically mixed, multi-dance category of 4-5 minutes for SuperStars and Rising Stars, and 2 ½ - 5 minutes for Crown, with no BPM limitations. It features medley of dances choreographed to music of the competitor's choice. Specifics are detailed later in these rules.
17. **Vanilla** refers to a complete rendition of the entire Line Dance step description without variation.

## B. UCWDC Associate Membership

1. Current, dues-paid Associate Membership is mandatory for:
  - a. All competitors before they register for any UCWDC Division at any UCWDC event **or 30 days before the event (whichever is later)**. Birthdate must be included. This allows the UCWDC to track their competitive credentials for each Dance Season and Eligibility Period. Tracking is used to determine eligibility for The Country Dance World Championships, Points Champions, and to graduate competitors from one skill level to the next at the end of The Country Dance World Championships.
  - b. Each and every UCWDC Contest Coordinator, Judge, Scrutineer, and Scoring Director who works at a UCWDC-sanctioned event.
2. New and renewed memberships become current the day the payment is received. Membership expires on the last day of the Dance Season, January 15<sup>th</sup>. Membership is available online at [www.ucwdc.org/become-a-member](http://www.ucwdc.org/become-a-member).
3. A printable copy of the Rules, Contest Procedures and Scoring Format is available at [www.ucwdc.org/rules](http://www.ucwdc.org/rules).

## C. Gender Requirements

1. The division(s) the competitors register for is the gender they are and must be throughout a Dance Season.
2. A Line Dance competitor may compete in gender-specific divisions and/or Choreography non-gender-specific divisions

## D. Age Divisions and Requirements

1. A competitor's age for the entire Dance Season for UCWDC competition is the age they will be on the last day of that Dance Season.
2. Juniors competitors are those who are less than 18 years of age, with these stipulations:
  - a. Junior Primary – competitors are less than 10 years of age.
    - i. Starter Primary 0-4
    - ii. Starter Primary 5-6
    - iii. Starter Primary 7-10
  - b. Starter Junior 11-17
  - c. Junior Youth – competitors are at least 10 and less than 14 years of age.
  - d. Junior Teen – competitors are at least 14 and less than 18 years of age.
  - e. RisingStars – are at least 14 and less than 21 years of age.
3. Adult competitors are those who are at least 18 years old, with these stipulations:
  - a. Open-age division competitors must be Adults.
  - b. SuperStars division competitors must be Adults.
  - c. Age-Restricted division competitors may dance in any Age division for which they are eligible, with these stipulations:
    - i. Crystal division competitors must be at least 30 years of age or older
    - ii. Diamond division competitors must be at least 40 years of age or older
    - iii. SuperStars Plus division competitors must be at least 30 years of age or older
    - iv. Crown division competitors must be at least 40 years of age or older
    - v. Crown Plus division competitors must be at least 55 years of age or older
    - vi. Silver division competitors must be at least 50 years of age or older
    - vii. Gold division competitors must be at least 60 years of age or older
    - viii. Platinum division competitors must be at least 70 years of age or older

## E. Skill Level Divisions

Skill Level Divisions are offered as follows:

1. ProAm Line Dance Divisions:
  - a. Newcomer
  - b. Novice
  - c. Intermediate / Advanced
2. Line Dance Divisions:
  - a. Honky Tonk
  - b. Starter
  - c. Classic Newcomer
  - d. Classic Novice
  - e. Classic Intermediate
  - f. Classic Advanced
  - g. Showcase
3. Ascension Divisions (competitors must earn ascension from the next lower division level):
  - a. SuperStars and SuperStars Plus
  - b. RisingStars
  - c. Crown and Crown Plus
4. Line Dance Choreography (Any Age)
  - a. Choreography Motion-Specific Newcomer/Novice
  - b. Choreography Not Motion Specific Newcomer/Novice
  - c. Choreography Motion-Specific Intermediate/Advanced
  - d. **Choreography Not Motion-Specific Intermediate/Advanced**
  - e. Choreography ABC

## F. Division Entry Requirements

1. Competitors in Newcomer should not have multiple placements on a recognized dance circuit, and for those who do we recommend starting no lower than Novice. When crossing over from one Dance Type to another or returning after the Eligibility Period, a competitor may move down one skill level. Competitors in Newcomer must not have multiple top-5 placements on any recognized dance sport circuit (e.g. Ballroom, World Swing Dance Council (WSDC), UCWDC, etc.).
2. Competitors with multiple top-5 placements on any recognized dance circuit must enter no lower than the Novice division.
3. Competitors with competition or performance experience in any genre of dance—including partner and solo dance genres—must enter at Newcomer or higher. Competitors may enter any division for which they are qualified, except for the following:
  - a. Line competitors may dance for Overall Championship in only one skill level. While dancing Overall Championship in that skill level, they may also dance in the skill level above.
4. When crossing over from one Dance Type to another, or when returning after the Eligibility Period, a competitor may move down one skill level.
5. Once a competitor has performed for in a UCWDC division of their choice, they may not compete later in a lower skill level in that Dance Type, except for the following:
  - a. Showcase competitors may dance either Intermediate or Advanced levels of Line Dance Classic. Thus, Showcase competitors may not enter the Novice level of dance or lower.
  - b. If the competitor does not compete during the entire current Eligibility Period.
  - c. If a Juniors competitor advances into an older age division, he or she may dance one skill level lower, except Junior Primary Advanced and Junior Youth Advanced competitors may dance Novice as they advance in age.

- d. Crown competitors may enter Open Advanced and Showcase Open to vie for SuperStars or Crystal Advanced and Crystal Showcase to vie for SuperStars Plus. When dancing these divisions, they may not judge that Dance Type.
- e. SuperStars and SuperStars Plus may never move down.
- f. Dispensation may be granted to move to a lower skill level, pending a review of scores and marks across dances, and multiple events (if applicable). The Dispensation Request form can be found at [www.UCWDC.org/rules](http://www.UCWDC.org/rules)
- 6. If a competitor earns a qualifying win in a Showcase division, they must then enter their respective Classic division at the Advanced level beginning the next Dance Season.
- 7. SuperStars, RisingStars, and Crown division candidates who have become eligible for Ascension only achieve their status after they have danced a full program at that level of competition.
- 8. A Competitor may only enter Crown or Crown Plus; or SuperStars or SuperStars Plus; at any single event.
- 9. Professional Status Specifics:
  - a. If a competitor teaches any dance form, they may not enter Newcomer level.
  - b. Competitors are not eligible to enter any competitive skill level that they teach and/or compete with, except if they teach Advanced Level, in which case they may enter Line Dance Open Advanced only.
  - c. If a competitor regularly assists a dance instructor, they may not enter Newcomer level or lower.

## G. Division Rules

For an explanation of the movements listed below, see Glossary of Movements at [www.UCWDC.org/rules](http://www.UCWDC.org/rules).

The UCWDC does not condone obscene, indecent, or profane language or movement.

- 1. Classic Format
  - a. The Title, Step Description (including motion, rhythm, counts, and walls), name/s of the Choreographer/s, and Video for each Classic Line Dance will be released annually on a schedule listed at [www.UCWDC.org](http://www.UCWDC.org) two (2) months prior to the usage date for each dance, except for ProAm Line Dance where instructors may choose their own dances.
    - i. If there is a discrepancy between the posted video and Step description for any dance, please default to the video.
  - b. Because Choreographers create steps to a specific song, that song must be played for competition.
  - c. Line Dance competitors must space or stagger on the floor relative to each other and begin the dance after the verbal or non-verbal “count-in” in the direction designated by the Choreographer
  - d. Line Dance competitors must follow the Basic Rule which requires that:
    - i. Competitors begin with one (1) wall of “vanilla”, which is a complete rendition of the entire step description without variation. In an ABC dance, each section of the dance. i.e., A, B, or C must begin with a full vanilla before any variation may be performed.
    - ii. Competitors must perform vanilla for two measures of the basic (without variation from the step description) on measures 1 and 2. They may then vary up to two (2) measures to allow for musical interpretation followed by two (2) measures of vanilla. Variations must follow the flow of the dance.
  - e. Classic Movement Limitations (unless the move is specifically called for in a Line Dance step description):
    - i. Moves that include acrobatics, sitting on the floor, lying on the floor and bridging on the floor are not allowed except in SuperStars, RisingStars, and Crown Solo Medleys
    - ii. **Leaps, jetés, splits, and sits to recover from splits** are not allowed, except for SuperStars, RisingStars, Crown, **and Advanced**.
    - iii. Dance movements that rotate on balance in adagio are permitted to turn only up to 360 degrees, except SuperStars, RisingStars, Crown, **and Advanced** which may rotate more than 360 degrees.

- iv. During intro music prior to count-in, competitors may move their bodies to express the mood and character of the music. Both feet must remain in place (weight shifts allowed but feet must remain on the floor). A starter step is permitted up to one measure before the dance begins.
- v. Use of hands, arms, facial expressions, body styling, skirt work, and hat-work are allowed without limit throughout the dance.
- vi. Starter, Newcomer and Choreography competitors must dance only complete renditions of the entire step description without variation throughout the song
- vii. SuperStars, RisingStars, and Crown Dances 'A' and 'B' follow the Classic Line Dance format including the Basic Rule.
- f. ProAm Line Dance:
  - i. Instructors may choose their own dances.
  - ii. Because Choreographers create steps to a specific song, that song must be played for competition.
  - iii. In ProAm Line, the Pro must dance vanilla throughout, and the Amateur(s) must follow the Basic rule.

2. Showcase Format

- a. In Showcase, competitors dance to music which is pre-selected for each dance on a rotating schedule. The songs, artist names, and details for usage dates are posted under "Competition Music" at [www.UCWDC.org/competition-music](http://www.UCWDC.org/competition-music).
  - i. Downloads of the music, as edited for competition, are available with an electronically signed disclaimer to UCWDC associate members.
- b. Choreographic interpretation of the music is being judged. Competitors should select movement that they feel best interprets the musical nuances, tempo, character and mood of the musical selection and the dance's characterizing rhythm, motion, and style.
- c. Movement allowances and limitations for Line Dance Showcase and Solo Medleys within SuperStars, RisingStars, and Crown:
  - i. A competitor may begin the dance facing any direction of his or her choosing and may begin the dance at any time.
  - ii. Sitting and lying on the floor except to recover from splits are not allowed except in Solo Medleys due to safety issues.
  - iii. In Line Dance Showcase, a competitor must dance repetitive patterns according to the phrasing of the music.
  - iv. Aerials are not allowed in Crown Solo Medley
  - v. There are no movement limitations in SuperStars and RisingStars Solo Medley.

## H. Floor Craft

1. For all dances, competitors shall always be courteous on the floor, as well as vigilant so as not to interfere with other competitors.
2. For Line Dance categories, once the competitors evenly space or stagger themselves on the floor relative to each other, everyone's "dance space" is revealed. Competitors should perform to reasonable maintain their relative position on the floor and go with the Flow of Dance according to the basic dance description throughout the dance. Even when performing variations, Flow of Dance must be maintained. Even when performing variations, Flow of Dance must be maintained. Dancers in the back line or the front line may not move to the other line.

## I. Costuming and Props: The UCWDC does not condone obscene, indecent or profane costumes or props.

1. Competitors in all Divisions except Newcomer must wear:
  - a. Traditional looking cowboy hats for males in Line Dances to country music.

- b. Traditional looking cowboy boots with a pull strap, stitching, and at least one inch (1.0" or 2.54cm) heel from top of heel to floor. There is no tolerance on heel height. The boots must have a shaft of at least 7" (seven in/17.78 cm) from top of heel to top of shaft. Acceptable heel styles include Cowboy, Riding, Walking, Roper Straight, Roper Pitched, Fowler Straight, and Fowler Pitched. Fashion heels are not acceptable.
  - i. Newcomer competitors are encouraged but not required to wear boots except at the Country Dance World Championships, where boots are required for all levels.
  - ii. Junior competitors may not wear boots or other footwear with more than a 1.5 inch/3.75 centimeter heel.
- c. Country costumes are not required in Line Dances that are danced to non-country music. The Step Descriptions will indicate whether the dance is country or non-country.
- d. If footwear other than boots are worn, no part of the underside of the bare foot may touch the floor when standing still (to include the bottom of the foot: toes, ball, heel, sole, etc.).
- e. Newcomer competitors are encouraged but not required to wear boots and traditional looking cowboy hats (for Males) in all Country Dances, except at The Country Dance World Championships, where boots and traditional looking cowboy hats (for Males) are required for all levels.
- f. Starter competitors are not allowed to wear costumes that have sequins, rhinestones, beads or metal embellishments, or metallic threads or dots woven into or pressed into the costume. This does not include jewelry, which can include bracelets, necklaces, broaches, hatbands, hair-combs, rings, earrings, collar-tips, button snaps, belt buckles (but not the belt itself), boot bracelets, or stirrups. Discretion and tasteful decorum appropriate to the style of Country and the style of the dance performed is favored.
- g. Honky Tonk competitors may wear club attire.
- h. Dance pants (under-shorts) for any dancer whose buttocks may be revealed during a dance performance.

2. Sponsored logos on costumes are allowed if they are no larger than 5 inches by 5 inches (12.7 centimeters by 12.7 centimeters) in dimension per article of clothing. Logos should be tasteful and not detract from the costume.
3. The entire visual look of the performance is judged, including costuming as well as steps. Therefore, how a competitor presents oneself for performance is part of the final placement on every judge's ballot, in every dance, according to the style and story of the dance.
4. Competitors in SuperStars, SuperStars Plus, RisingStars, Crown and Crown Plus who choose to discard parts of costumes (i.e. skirts or vests) during their performance cannot leave discarded articles on the dance floor where they may impede other competitors. All discarded articles must be removed by the competitor at the end of the performance.
5. A prop is any item that is not normally worn as clothing. Props are allowed in RisingStars, SuperStars, SuperStars Plus, Crown, and Crown Plus. Props must be portable, not living, and delivered to and removed from the performance arena only by the competitors. Performers and props must not touch audience members or event staff. A total time of one (1) minute for prop setup, entrance, prop removal, and exit is allowed. No music may be included during setup/entrance (before the beginning of the selected music). A reprise is allowed afterwards.

## J. Choreography Competition

1. In these divisions, the dance itself is judged, not the dancer(s) or their community.
2. Each Choreography entry is an original dance performed by competitors with the choreographer physically present. Since the competitor selects the music, it is essential that the dance's rhythm, motion, and character match that music.

3. Like music, under international law, all original choreography is automatically copyrighted when it has been performed and may not be copied, reproduced, or imitated without permission by the owner under penalty of law.
4. There are no BPM limitations for choreography divisions.
5. Movement Limitations for choreography competition:
  - a. When performing choreography, competitors must dance only vanilla – that is, complete renditions of the entire step description without variation throughout the song.
6. There are five (5) competitive categories for choreographies:
  - a. Not Motion Specific Newcomer/Novice
  - b. Not Motion Specific Intermediate/Advanced
  - c. Motion Specific Newcomer/Novice
  - d. Motion Specific Intermediate/Advanced
  - e. ABC
7. The dance should have some element that will make it popular and appear to be easy to teach to social dancers within the level in which it is entered, i.e., Newcomer/Novice or Intermediate/Advanced. The dance should also have “appeal” that will give it longevity, impact, or influence on the dance community.
8. With their competitor registration, Choreographers are required to provide a printed step description of the dance detailing the following:
  - a. Dance Title and Choreographer
  - b. The number of walls and number of counts
  - c. The level of the dance (Newcomer/Novice or Intermediate/Advanced)
  - d. Song Title and Artist
  - e. The basic pattern and rhythm
  - f. An ABC dance entry should specify the number of counts per phrase (A, B, C, etc.) and the phrase order from beginning to the end
  - g. If a competitor wishes their Choreography entry to be considered for use as a UCWDC dance, a digital video must be included with the Step description

## K. Competition Music

1. These Line Dance competition music length minimums may extend to the end of the phrase:
  - a. Line Dance Primary Starter – 1 ½ minutes
  - b. Line Dance— 2 minutes
  - c. Line Dance ProAm – 1 ½ minutes
  - d. Line Dance Choreography (except ABC) – 1 ½ minutes
  - e. Line Dance Choreography ABC – 2 minutes
  - f. Solo Medley (SuperStars & RisingStars) – 4 to 5 minutes.
  - g. Solo Medley (Crown) – 2 ½ to 5 minutes
  - h. Line Dance Honky Tonk – 1 ½ minutes
2. Showcase Music
  - a. The songs and artist names are posted under “Music” on our web page at [www.UCWDC.org/competition-music](http://www.UCWDC.org/competition-music), at least two (2) months before they are first used at UCWDC competitions.
3. For Event Music Selections, Line Dance will use the song specified on the Step Description.
4. Competitor-selected music limitations:
  - a. Competitor-selected music must be as described below for all parts of the dance performance except:
    - i. All Choreography Divisions
    - ii. SuperStars, SuperStars Plus, RisingStars, Crown and Crown Plus Solo Medleys, all of which must have a combined total of 50% country music as described below for their internal requirements.
  - b. Our sport is inspired by country music and country artists so AI music is not acceptable.

- c. For the purposes of selecting competition music, music and artists that are identified by the following categories or descriptions are considered acceptable for Country Dance competition music within the UCWDC:
  - i. Country
  - ii. Contemporary Country
  - iii. Country Pop & Country Rock
  - iv. Americana/Alternative Country
  - v. Classic Country/Hillbilly
  - vi. Neo-traditionalist
  - vii. Western Swing
  - viii. Honky Tonk/Hardcore Country
  - ix. Bluegrass
  - x. Bakersfield
  - xi. Nashville/Countrypolitan
  - xii. Progressive Country & Outlaw Country
  - xiii. Urban Country
- d. Two competition dances, Cha-Cha and West Coast Swing, have roots outside the country music genre. Therefore, Tejano music is acceptable for Cha-Cha and Blues music is acceptable for West Coast Swing. These music types are allowed only for these dances.
- e. Country music artists and songs appropriate for UCWDC competition may be identified by their presence on these platforms or by membership in these organizations:
  - i. Country Billboard or similar Country Music charts
  - ii. AM/FM/Satellite radio airplay on Country Music stations
  - iii. iTunes, Spotify, internet-based music services in the Country genre
  - iv. Record labels within the Country genre
  - v. Country Music Halls of Fame, including national, state and regional
  - vi. Nashville songwriters performing their own material
  - vii. Nominations for Country Music categories at Grammys and other music industry awards
  - viii. Included on soundtracks for Country-themed movies
  - ix. Music performed at the Grand Old Opry
- f. Competitor-selected music is allowed for ProAm and ProPro Spotlight competitions. If a competitor enters two divisions that include a self-selected music dance category, they must have different competitor-selected music for each division.
  - i. A copy of the self-selected music must be accompanied by a properly filled out Competitor-Selected Music Itinerary (see [www.UCWDC.org/rules](http://www.UCWDC.org/rules)).
  - ii. It is the competitor's responsibility to submit music and itinerary prior to the competition at every Regional Event where it is to be used and by December 1<sup>st</sup> for The Country Dance World Championships.
  - iii. The music will be audited to ensure it meets all requirements.
- g. Beyond the duration of the self-selected music, competitors are allowed one minute in total for prop setup, entrance, prop removal and exit. No music may be included during setup/entrance (before the beginning of the selected music). A reprise is allowed afterwards.
- h. UCWDC does not condone obscene, indecent, or profane content within competitor-selected music dance categories. While the UCWDC is a family-oriented organization, we cannot censor artistic license. Therefore, when competitor-selected music divisions are occurring before 9:00 pm, patrons should be informed that there may be adult themes portrayed during these competitions.
- i. Line Dance ProAm entries must be a single song of up to 1 ½ minutes in length.

## L. Graduation Requirements

1. Graduation Criteria applies to all Dance Types except Choreography and Team divisions

2. Competitors graduate on the first day of the next Dance Season, except for the following:
  - a. In a Dance Season, when a competitor competes for the first time in the UCWDC, or returns to competing in a lower level in the UCWDC after more than the Eligibility Period, or competes for the first time in a new Dance Type (i.e., ProAm, Couples, Line Dance);
    - i. *and*, accumulates more than 50% of GG in their dance(s) in any single division in their skill level (need not be the same division at each event), in their first two (2) competitions (if one of those includes an overall) *or* their first competition and their first overall;
    - ii. *then*, they must immediately graduate to the next higher level.
3. Eligible wins occur if there are three (3) or more competitors competing for overall, except if 51% or more of all the judges' marks are grades of S or less.
  - a. In the case of less than three (3) competitors competing for overall, a win counts toward graduation if 51% or more of all the judges' marks are GH and GG. At least 25% of all grades must be GG.
4. Graduation Earned at UCWDC Regional Events:
  - a. A competitor may dance only one level up or down across different dance types.
  - b. There may be no more than one level difference for a single competitor across all dance types. Therefore, if a graduation results in a difference greater than one level, the competitor must graduate in the other types as well, unless they obtain Dispensation. For information about crossover between Dance Types and the Dispensation Request Form, please see [www.UCWDC.org/rules](http://www.UCWDC.org/rules).
  - c. If a competitor qualifies for an Overall title in a division at a particular skill level, they may dance one or more dances in the next higher skill level at the same event.
  - d. From that event forward, if the competitor dances Overall in the next higher skill level, they have self-graduated into the higher skill level and may no longer dance in the lower skill level.
  - e. Note that competitors may not dance at a higher skill level at The Country Dance World Championships.
  - f. Number of eligible wins:
    - i. Line Dance and ProAm, competitors must graduate to the next higher level in these cases:
      - .1 From the Newcomer level if they have eligible wins at two (2) or more UCWDC events during the current Eligibility Period.
      - .2 From the Novice level if they have eligible wins at two (2) or more UCWDC events during the current Eligibility Period.
      - .3 From the Intermediate level if they have eligible wins at three (3) or more UCWDC events during the current Eligibility Period.
    - ii. Ascension into SuperStars, RisingStars, and Crown divisions occurs when a competitor has a combined lifetime total of four (4) first place overall eligible wins (at 4 or more separate events) in Classic Advanced and Showcase divisions at UCWDC events. One (1) eligible win must come from each of Classic Advanced and Showcase. An Eligible win may be three (3) or more competing for overall where 50% or more of all grades are gold or above. If less than three (3) are competing for overall, an eligible win is 50% or more H's and GG's, with at least 25% GG's. At least two (2) of the four (4) wins that have less than three (3) competitors must have more than 50% GG's and the Judges on the panels at those events must be more than 50% Journeyman or above Line or Dual Certified.
      - .1 For SuperStars, the wins must come from the Open Advanced and Showcase Open divisions.
      - .2 For SuperStars Plus, the wins must come from the Open or Crystal Advanced and Showcase Open or Crystal divisions. If wins have come from Crystal, competitor must enter SuperStars Plus (not SuperStars).
      - .3 For RisingStars, the wins must come from the Classic Youth Advanced (once the competitor turns 14), Teen Advanced, Showcase Youth (once the competitor turns 14) and Showcase Teen divisions.
    - iii. At age 18, RisingStars competitors may choose to:

- .1 Leave Rising Stars and enter Classic Open Advanced; or,
- .2 Stay in RisingStars and ascend to SuperStars during the season in which they turn 20 years of age. They may ascend only if they have competed for Overall in RisingStars. Once made, the decision to ascend is final. For Crown, the wins must come from Classic Crystal Advanced (once the competitor turns 40), Diamond Advanced, Silver Advanced, and Showcase Diamond divisions. For Crown Plus, the wins must have come from Classic Crystal Advanced, Diamond Advanced, Silver Advanced, or Gold Advanced, and Showcase Crystal, Diamond, or Silver divisions.

5. Graduation Earned from a Continental Championship:

- a. At a Continental Championship, the same graduation requirements apply as at any UCWDC Regional Event.

6. Graduation Earned at The Country Dance World Championships (“Worlds”):

- a. Except for graduation to Ascension Divisions (SuperStars, RisingStars, and Crown divisions), every competitor who wins a first place Overall title at The Country Dance World Championships with grades of G or better must graduate to the next higher level of competition, unless there are fewer than three (3) competing for Overall in their division.
  - i. In that case, competitor will graduate only if 51% or more of all the judges' marks are grades GH and GG. At least 25% of all grades must be GG.
- b. SuperStars, RisingStars, and Crown divisions:
  - i. Ascension is accomplished by first-place Overall eligible wins in both the respective Classic Advanced and Showcase divisions. These wins do not need to be gained at the same Country Dance World Championships.
  - ii. Eligible wins in either, but not both, of these divisions count as two (2) Regional Event wins towards ascension to the relevant division.
  - iii. Candidates may combine their qualifying wins in either Classic or Showcase at UCWDC events with their qualifying wins at the Country Dance World Championships in the other style.
- c. In addition, all competitors who dance for an Overall Championship at The Country Dance World Championships graduate to the next higher division on a scale which depends on the total number of competitors in the division. They graduate if they have one (1) eligible win at a regional Event and they won:
  - i. Second place Overall at The Country Dance World Championships where there were ten (10) to fourteen (14) Overall competitors.
  - ii. Second or third place Overall at The Country Dance World Championships where there were fifteen (15) to nineteen (19) Overall competitors.
  - iii. Second (2<sup>nd</sup>), third (3<sup>rd</sup>), or fourth place Overall at The Country Dance World Championships where there were twenty (20) to twenty-four (24) Overall competitors.
  - iv. Second, third, fourth, or fifth place Overall at The Country Dance World Championships where there were twenty-five (25) or more Overall competitors.

## M. Dance Categories, Characteristics, and Basic Timings

1. Line Dance Categories

- a. Line Dance Categories at The Country Dance World Championships are: Rise & Fall, Pulse, Smooth, Cuban, Funky/Street, and Novelty/Stage.
  - i. They will be danced in the order listed above at all UCWDC events, except for SuperStars, RisingStar, and Crown, which will dance preselected Dance 'A' and Dance 'B', and their Solo Medley, in this order.
  - ii. The BPM range for each dance category shall be plus or minus ( $\pm 5$ ) BPM from the suggested song for each choreographed dance.
- b. **Rise & Fall:** A dance that uses Rise and Fall, and Swing and Sway motions. Common dances that use these motions include Viennese Waltz, Waltz, Foxtrot, and Quickstep.

- c. **Pulse:** A dance using Pulse motion. Common dances that use Pulse include Polka, East Coast Swing, Samba, and Jive.
- d. **Smooth:** A dance using flat (no rise/fall, swing/sway, or pulse) motion. Common dances that use Flat motion include NightClub, Triple Two, West Coast Swing, Hustle, and Tango.
- e. **Cuban:** A dance using Cuban motion, with any break step occurring on the 2 or 6. Common dances that use Cuban motion include Cha-Cha, Mambo, and Rumba.
- f. **Funky/Street:** A dance with footwork and bodywork that is consistent with Hip-Hop or Street dance styles. It may be smooth, rhythmic, or lyrical and uses core and 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> foot positions with body and limb isolations. Basic timings and pattern structure are style-specific. Common dances that use Funky/Street motion include Hip-Hop, Poppin', Break Dance, and Krumping.
- g. **Novelty/Stage:** A dance with footwork and bodywork that is consistent with Broadway or Show Performances (or fad dances). Basic timings and pattern structure are style-specific and use full characterization of the music. Common dances that are Novelty/Stage include Broadway, lyrical, freestyle, disco, jazz, modern, ballet, Charleston, or Hustle. No BPM limitations are placed on this style.
- h. **Solo Medley (SuperStars, SuperStars Plus, RisingStars, Crown, and Crown Plus):** A musically mixed, multi-dance category of 4-7 minutes for SuperStars, SuperStars Plus and Rising Stars, and 2 ½ - 5 minutes for Crown and Crown Plus, with no BPM limitations. It features medley of dances choreographed to music of the competitor's choice which must include a combined total of at least 30 seconds each of four (4) of the six (6) Line Dance categories for SuperStars, SuperStars Plus, and RisingStars, and three (3) of the Line Dance categories of at least 45 seconds each for Crown and Crown Plus.
  - i. At least 50% of the total time of any motion must be recognized patterns of the dance being performed.
  - ii. The competitor must specify which music is being used for the internal requirements and at least 50% of the internal requirements time must be counted.

2. These dance categories provide the minimum and maximum musical tempos in beats per minute (BPM) for Line Dances. These basic timings fulfill the Basic Rule for each dance. For complete definitions of each dance, refer to [www.UCWDC.org/rules](http://www.UCWDC.org/rules) for the Curriculum and Standards.

3. Timing notations in the dance categories: Black indicates a weight change; Grey (or Red) denotes no weight change.

- a. The Country Dance World Championships Dances:
  - i. **Waltz:** 84-90 BPM.  
Waltz tempos in self-selected music division must be 120 BPM or less.  
Basic Waltz timing is 1 2 3 4 5 6.  
Waltz is a progressive dance that uses patterns that move diagonally and are performed with rise and fall accentuated with swing and sway emphasizing hover.
  - ii. **East Coast Swing:** 126-144 BPM.  
Single, Double and Triple time swing are all permitted and interchangeable.  
Basic Triple East Coast Swing timings are: 1&2 3&4 5 6 and 1&2 3 4 5&6 7 8.  
Basic Single East Coast Swing timings are: 1 **2** 3 **4** 5 6 (S S QQ) and 1 **2** 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 (S QQ S QQ).  
Basic Double East Coast Swing timings are: **1** 2 **3** 4 5 6 (S S QQ) and **1** 2 3 4 **5** 6 7 8 (S QQ S QQ).  
East Coast Swing is a stationary dance that uses rotary patterns and is performed with semi-Cuban, emphasizing downward compression.
  - iii. **West Coast Swing:** 92-100 BPM.  
Basic West Coast Swing timings are 1 2 3&4 5&6 and 1 2 3&4 5 6 7&8.  
West Coast Swing is an un-phrased, smooth, stationary dance with slotted patterns and rhythm accents, emphasizing back-beat.

- iv. **Polka:** 106-120 BPM.  
Basic Polka timing is 1&2 3&4 5&6 7&8.  
Polka is a progressive dance with 2-rail (streamlined) patterns performed with Lilt motion, emphasizing downward action on the numbered counts.
- v. **NightClub:** 54-60 BPM.  
Basic NightClub timing is 1 2&3 4&5 6&7 8& (S QQS QQS QQS QQ).  
NightClub is a stationary dance with linear and geometric patterns performed with draping sway and counter sway, shaping actions, emphasizing developed slows.
- vi. **Cha-Cha:** 102-116 BPM.  
Basic Cha-Cha timing is 1 2 3 4&5 6 7 8&.  
Cha-Cha is a stationary dance with intersecting patterns performed with Cuban motion, emphasizing the first beat of each measure.
- vii. **Triple Two:** 76-84 BPM  
Basic Triple Two timings are 1 2 3&4 5&6 and 1 2 3&4 5 6 7&8.  
Triple Two is a smooth, progressive dance with looped and laced patterns performed with curved sway and shaping actions, emphasizing connected feathers.

b. **Non-Country Dance Worlds Championships Alternate Dances:**

- i. **Jive:** 168-184 BPM.  
Basic Jive timings 12 3a4 5a6 (SS QaQ QaQ) or 12 3a4 5a6 78 (SS QaQ QaQ SS).  
Jive is characterized by a compact pulse danced above the center line, using feet and ankles to create bounce.
- ii. **Samba:** 96-104 BPM.  
Basic Samba Timing is 1a2 3a4 5a6 7a8 (QaS QaS QaS QaS) or 12& (SQQ) depending on pattern.  
Samba is a pulsed progressive dance with abdominal contraction and “high hip” extension caused through ankle articulation and movements that zig zag and rotate (both moving and in place).
- iii. **International Rumba:** 100-108 BPM.  
Basic International Rumba is 1 234 5 678 (S QQ S S QQ S).  
It is a stationary dance with intersecting patterns performed using Latin motion.
- iv. **Quickstep:** 200-208 BPM.  
Basic Quickstep timing is 12 34 56 (S QQ S).  
It is a progressive rise and fall dance using swing and sway and both diagonal and rotating patterns, and 6 and 8 count patterns for phrasing.
- v. **Viennese Waltz:** 174-180 BPM.  
Basic Viennese Waltz timing is 123 456 (QQQ QQQ).  
Viennese Waltz is a progressive rotating dance using elements of rise and fall and swing and sway.
- vi. **Tango:** 120-140 BPM.  
Basic Tango timing is 12 34 56 (SSQQ) or 12 3 4 56 (SQQS).  
Tango is a progressive dance with staccato action using diagonal and rotating patterns both moving and in place. It uses 6 and 8 count patterns for phrasing.
- vii. **Paso Doble:** 120-124 BPM.  
Basic Paso Doble timing is 12345678 (QQQQQQQQ).  
It is a progressive and stationary dance with circling, marching, and caping pattern that uses elevation and appel (stomp) actions.

## N. Competitor Conduct and Ethics

1. All decisions of the contest judges, the Contest Coordinator, and Event Director are final. Competitors are expected to act and comply with the standards and rules outlined in UCWDC Associate Membership Code of Conduct, found at [www.ucwdc.org/governance](http://www.ucwdc.org/governance). On any competition registration form, competitors are

required to provide their full name, mailing address, birthdate, phone number (cell preferred), e-mail address, and UCWDC Associate Membership number.

2. All Associate Members and participants acting on behalf of the UCWDC are expected to comply with all applicable laws. The UCWDC reserves the right to exclude any competitor from an event for acting in violation of an applicable law, or contrary to the UCWDC Associate Membership Code of Conduct as determined by sole discretion of the UCWDC.  
Any complaint or challenge to the composition of a judging panel or results from a judging panel must be done post-event and will go to the Judge Review Board. See the UCWDC Judge Certification Code of Conduct at [www.ucwdc.org/judge-certification](http://www.ucwdc.org/judge-certification) for information.

## O. Competitor Data and Privacy

1. Before entering a UCWDC-sanctioned event, competitors may be required to sign an event waiver form that limits the event's liability with regards to injury or other damage, allows data collection and tracking, assigns the distribution rights of audio and video recordings of the attendee(s) to the event, and addresses privacy.
2. Competitors under the legal age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian who has written parental permission to act as "guardian", and who is responsible for the minor's safety and conduct at all times.
3. Information provided on the competition registration form will be used for tracking of performance results to determine divisional graduation status, divisional age eligibility, County Dance World Championships eligibility, and the UCWDC Points Championships.
4. All UCWDC-sanctioned event attendees are expected to act in a friendly, cordial, respectful, and professional manner throughout every event.

## P. Competitor Check-in and Staging Procedure

1. For all heated divisions, competitors should report to the Floor Coordinator thirty (30) minutes before a division's first contest heat to check-in and warm up, unless the size of the contest warrants an earlier reporting time (see each event's schedule).
  - a. When reporting, each competitor must make themselves known to the Floor Coordinator by competitor number, confirming that they are dressed, ready, and able to perform in the proper division.
  - b. During the contest, competitors must remain in the staging area, except for during costume changes.
2. Competitor numbers must be touching the spine and must be worn in all divisions except self-selected music categories. However, Choreography competitors must wear numbers.
3. Although UCWDC contests post the heats of competition for all divisions, the exact heat order is not guaranteed.
  - a. A competitor who fails to report to the Floor Coordinator on time or fails to answer the calls of the Floor Coordinator for a specific heat will be disqualified from that dance category.

## Q. Judge Meeting

1. Relevant contest information is discussed at the official UCWDC Judge Meeting held prior to each competition session at every UCWDC even.

## R. Competitor Meeting

1. Contest logistics and schedules are discussed at the official UCWDC Competitors Meeting held at some UCWDC events. If there is no Competitors Meeting, please see the Contest Coordinator for answers.

### **III. AWARDS & CHAMPIONSHIPS**

#### **A. Overall Championships**

1. Overall Championship competitors must enter all Dance Categories offered in that division. For example, in Line Dance Crystal Intermediate, a competitor must dance Rise and Fall, Pulse, Smooth, Cuban and Stage.
2. An Overall Champion title is awarded only to the first-place Overall winner in each specific division. Overall Eligibility:
  - a. There is no Overall Championship offered for ProAm Line Dance.
  - b. Honky Tonk Line Dance Overall Championship entries must compete in both (2) of the offered dances.
  - c. Starter Line Dance Overall Championship entries must compete in both (2) of the offered dances.
  - d. Newcomer Line Dance Overall Championship entries must compete in all three (3) of the offered dances.
    - i. A Funky/Street dance may be offered for Open and Junior divisions. If so, a Novelty/Stage dance will be offered for the Age divisions.
  - e. Novice Line Dance Overall Championship entries must compete in all four (4) of the offered dances.
    - i. A Funky/Street dance may be offered for Open and Junior divisions. If so, a Novelty/Stage dance will be offered for the Age divisions.
  - f. Intermediate, Advanced, and Showcase Line Dance Overall Championship entries must compete in all of the offered dances. These include:
    - i. Rise & Fall, Pulse, Smooth, Cuban, and Funky/Street for Classic Intermediate Open and Juniors; Classic Advanced Youth.
    - ii. Rise & Fall, Pulse, Smooth, Cuban, and Novelty/Stage for the Age Divisions.
    - iii. Rise & Fall, Pulse, Smooth, Cuban, Funky/Street, and Novelty/Stage for Classic Open Advanced, Classic Teen Advanced Showcase Open, Showcase Youth Divisions, and Showcase Teen Divisions.
  - g. SuperStars, SuperStars Plus, RisingStars, Crown and Crown Plus must compete in Dance A, Dance B, and a Solo Medley.

### **IV. COUNTRY DANCE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS (“Worlds”)**

Each Year the UCWDC presents the Country Dance World Championships, which offers world-class Couples, ProAm, ProPro, Line Dance, ShowTime, and Team competitions.

#### **A. Eligibility**

1. Associate Membership: Each individual competitor may not begin to accrue qualifications for Worlds until their Associate Membership dues are current and paid for the Dance Season.
2. To be eligible to compete at The Country Dance World Championships:
  - a. Competitors who are permanent residents of North America (except Mexico) and Europe must qualify by competing at three (3) or more UCWDC Events during the preceding Dance Season, with the exception of all Juniors and competitors from Manitoba and western Canada, who must compete at two (2) or more events, and Starter competitors, who must compete at one (1) or more events.
  - b. Competitors who are permanent residents of Asia must qualify by competing in at least two (2) UCWDC Events during the preceding Dance Season.
  - c. Competitors who are permanent residents of Mexico and Africa must qualify by competing in at least one (1) UCWDC Event during the preceding Dance Season.
  - d. Competitors who are permanent residents of continents other than North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa may enter without pre-qualification but must be active, dues paid Associate Members before dancing at The Country Dance World Championships.

- e. SuperStars, SuperStars Plus, Line Dance Showcase Open, Line Dance Crystal Showcase, Line Dance Classic Open Advanced, and Line Dance Classic Crystal Advanced must qualify by dancing three (3) full programs in Classic, Showcase, or a combination of the two, except in Asia and Africa where they must dance one (1) full program in each division where they will compete at Worlds.
- 3. The Country Dance World Championships qualification in Line Dance does not count for any other Dance Type.
- 4. The Country Dance World Championships competitors must have competed for the Overall Championship or the single dance Championship (ProAm Line Dance) at least once in the division in which they intend to compete, with the exception of SuperStars, SuperStars Plus, Line Dance Showcase Open, Line Dance Crystal Showcase, Line Dance Classic Open Advanced, and Line Dance Classic Crystal Advanced competitors in Europe and North America, who must have competed for the Overall Championship three (3) times (in Classic or Showcase or a combination of the two (2)) over the course of three (3) or more UCWDC events.
- 5. **Choreographers entering a dance must qualify by competing in at least one (1) UCWDC Event during the preceding Dance Season.**
- 6. For each Dance Type entered, The Country Dance World Championships competitors must compete in the highest division where they danced for Overall during the preceding Dance Season.

## B. Acceptable Use of Championship Titles

- 1. Titles are bestowed upon winners by the UCWDC. Any title that is used by the recipient to misrepresent the credential or to mislead the public in its declaration may be voided and withdrawn.
- 2. At The Country Dance World Championships, an “Overall Champion” title is awarded only to the first-place Overall winner in each specific division.
  - a. When this title is used, the year and the full name of the division must precede that title; e.g.: “John Doe is the 1988 UCWDC Male Classic Silver Novice Overall Champion.”
  - b. Conversely, when used in a competitor’s dance resumé, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place through 5<sup>th</sup> Place Overall winners’ titles must be followed with the full name of the division, e.g.: “John Doe is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Overall Line Dance Male Classic Silver Novice” winner at the Country Dance World Championship.
- 3. **At The Country Dance World Championships, a “Points Champion” title is awarded only to the first-place Points winner in each specific division for the previous Dance Season (in January, 2026 the 2025 Points Champion is awarded).**
  - a. When this title is used, the year and the full name of the division must precede that title; e.g.: “John Doe is the 1988 UCWDC ProAm Male Classic Silver Novice Points Champion.”
- 4. At Regional UCWDC Sanctioned Events, an “Overall Champion” title is awarded only to the first-place Overall winner in each specific division.
  - a. When this title is used, the full name of the division must precede that title, e.g.: “John Doe is the Line Dance Male Classic Silver Novice Overall Champion.”
  - b. Conversely, when used, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place through 5<sup>th</sup> Place Overall winners’ titles must be followed with the full name of the division, e.g.: “John Doe is the 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Overall Line Dance Male Classic Silver Novice winner”.

## V. **CONTINENTAL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

Each year, the UCWDC may present a Continental Championship in one of its represented regions. All qualification requirements for the Continental Championship shall follow The Country Dance Worlds Championships format, unless noted otherwise.

## VI. **INVIGILATION**

Invigilation will be used when deemed necessary and useful. The specificity of any duties of an Invigilator will be described in [www.UCWDC.org/rules](http://www.UCWDC.org/rules).

## VII. **GLOSSARY FOR RULES**

The following list of definitions is specifically relevant to UCWDC competition rules. Movements are considered stationary when they are done in place and are not rotated on an axis or transported across the dance floor.

### **1. Acrobatic Concepts:**

- a. **Aerial:** any move where a person propels both feet off the floor and passes them above the level of the top of their head and no other contact, or only momentary contact, with the floor is maintained.
- b. **Acrobatic:** any move where a person passes any part of their torso above and across the level of the top of their head and contact with the floor is maintained.
- c. **Floor Split:** any move where a person slides his or her foot or feet apart with straight legs, until the base of the torso connects with the floor.

### **3. Adagio Concepts:**

- a. **Adagio:** any balanced or counter-balanced move where a competitor has only one foot in contact with the floor and the second foot is elevated, e.g., attitude, arabesque, dévelopé, rond dé jambe, tele rond dé, penché, passé, pirouette, pedestal, piqué, fouetté, et cetera.
- b. **Jeté:** any move where a contestant leaps from one foot to the other foot, transporting his or her torso through the air and across the floor.
- c. **Grand Jeté:** any move where a contestant leaps from one foot to the other foot, elevating his or her torso through the air and across the floor, while performing a split line elevated from and parallel to the floor.
- d. **Fouetté:** is any move where a contestant executes a rondé in conjunction with using the momentum of the movement to turn in a passé position. Consecutive fouetté movements may be performed by going from the turning passé position, then executing another rondé, turning in passé, executing another rondé, turning in passé, et cetera.
- e. **Leap:** Any propulsion whether using one foot or two that travels across the floor.
- f. **Tour Jeté:** any move where a contestant from one foot to the other, transporting his or her torso through the air and across the floor, while performing one-half turn and upon landing, executing an arabesque or penché position.

### **4. Floor Concepts:**

- a. **Kneel:** any move where a contestant contacts the floor with one or both knees.
- b. **Sit:** any move where a contestant contacts the floor with one or both buttocks.
- c. **Lie:** any move where a contestant contacts the floor with any part of his or her pelvic, hip, or buttock region of the body and also contacts the floor with any part of his or her upper body (hands, arms, rib cage, shoulders, or head).
- d. **Bridge:** any move where a contestant contacts the floor with his or her feet or knees and braces his or her weight off the floor by contacting the hands, arms, shoulders, or head, and with no part of his or her pelvic, hip, or buttock region contacting the floor, raises his or her torso higher than or level with his or her head.

## **END OF LINE DANCE BOOKLET**