

2008 US Open Swing Dance Championships General Rules

A. SWING CONTENT

Because the US OPEN is a SWING Dance Championship, the Judges will expect to see Swing content in all competitions except Cabaret and Team divisions. Specific guidelines about Swing content required in each division are discussed under the rules for that division. The statement that Judges will use to identify the presence of Swing content is as follows:

“Swing is an American Rhythm Dance that is identified primarily by 6-beat and 8-beat patterns that incorporate a wide variety of rhythms. 6-beat patterns include, but are not limited to, passes, underarm turns, push-breaks, open-to-closed and closed-to-open position patterns. 8-beat patterns include, but are not limited to, whips, swing-outs, Lindy circles, and Shag pivots.

Although they are not part of the foundation of the dance as stated above, 2-beat and 4-beat rhythm breaks may be incorporated to phrase the music, to extend a pattern, and/or to accent breaks.”

This statement will be used only to identify the presence of Swing content in a performance. It is not intended to be a full definition of Swing, or to be used to evaluate the quality of the performance. Each Judge will evaluate the presence of Swing content, which will be one of the criteria that determine a final score.

B. ELIGIBILITY TO COMPETE

1. **COUPLE** — A couple consists of one male leader and one female follower.
2. **DIVISION RESTRICTIONS** — (all age requirements apply)
 - a. A Competitor may enter only one of the following divisions: Sophisticated Swing or Masters Divisions.
 - b. A Competitor may enter both Classic and Showcase Divisions (with different partners).
 - c. Any Competitor entered into the Classic or Showcase Divisions is ineligible to enter the Sophisticated Swing or Masters Divisions.
 - d. Any Competitor may compete in the Cabaret, and/or the Formation Teams, and/or one of the “Strictly” Divisions.
3. **PARTNER RESTRICTIONS** — Competitors are not allowed to enter multiple divisions with the same partner.

C. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMPETITORS

1. **COMPETITORS’ MEETING** — Unless prior arrangements are made with the Event Organizers, Competitors are required to attend the Competitors’ Meeting on Friday, November 28, 2008 at 2:00 PM in the Marquis Ballroom.
2. **DANCE ORDER** — Drawing for dance order will take place Friday, November 28, 2008 between 11:30 AM and 1:30 PM, just prior to the Competitors’ Meeting. This includes all Jack & Jill entries and Strictly Swing entries. If applicable, competitors submit their music at this time as well. ALL dance order draws will take place prior to the end of the Competitors’ Meeting.
3. **DEADLINES** — Failure to comply with deadlines and attendance at mandatory meetings may result in disqualification from competing in the event without a refund of entry fee. These decisions will be made solely at the discretion of the Organizer.

D. JUDGING CRITERIA

The Relative Placement System will be used to judge all the competitions at the US OPEN SWING DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS. In all divisions, the amount of Swing content will be evaluated. All Competitors will be judged using the following criteria: Timing, Teamwork, Technique, Choreography, Presentation.

E. ERRORS, VIOLATIONS, AND PENALTIES

If the rules outlined in this document are broken, the judges and/or referee will assign penalties depending on the severity of the breach. There are two breach levels:

1. **AN ERROR** — An error is a minor and apparently unintentional breaking of the rules. It is a mistake. For example, a dancer unintentionally loses contact with his or her partner, when the rules state that they must keep contact. Each error will be penalized at the discretion of the Judge who observed the error, and will be factored into the judge's final score.

A VIOLATION — A violation is a serious, and apparently intentional, breach of rules. A violation shows disrespect towards a partner, the Judges, other dancers, the Organizer, the audience, or the rules. The penalty for a violation could result in disqualification, which means being placed "out-of-the-money." In NASDE Divisions, NASDE points will not be awarded if a violation results in disqualification.

Examples of intentional violations could be: using a foreign substance on the dance floor (baby powder, dance wax, vaseline, etc...), 2 lifts in a Showcase routine, a pre-choreographed routine in Strictly Swing, the lack of enough Swing content, an inappropriate costume in a Junior Division, a performance that runs overtime, a lift in a Classic routine, or a move that causes injury. Recognize, that each of these examples do not necessarily always qualify as a violation. For example, a Showcase couple fails in the execution of one of their lifts, resulting in a 2 lift routine. This should be recognized as an error, not a violation.

H. BEGINNING AND ENDING A ROUTINE

1. **ENTRANCES AND EXITS** — Choreographed entrances-to and exits-from the dance floor are permitted, but not required, in choreographed routines. Timing and judging will begin from the first movement of the performance, with or without music or sound. If a choreographed exit is used, it will be included in judging and timing requirements.
2. **RESTARTS** — A restart will be allowed only if the music system falters or an unforeseen catastrophe occurs. Events such as a broken dress strap, untied shoelace, etc... does not warrant a restart.

I. AGE REQUIREMENTS

The Competitor must meet the age requirement specified in these rules on or before Sunday, November 30, 2008. Competitors must be at least 18-years old to compete in the Adult Divisions, with the exception of Cabaret and Advanced/All Star Jack & Jill. An Advanced/All Star Jack & Jill Competitor qualifies through the World Swing Dance Council point system therefore it is possible for a junior under 18 to have the necessary points to enter. Age requirements for Juniors are discussed under that division's rules. Proof of age may be required.

J. PERFORMANCE ATTIRE

Performance attire is required for Showcase, Classic, Sophisticated Swing, Masters, Cabaret, Young Adult, Young America and Formation Teams Divisions. No Halloween type costumes allowed. Please "**Dress to Impress – Perform to Win**". There will be a **\$250 prize** awarded to a couple for the **best overall costume in a routine dance category**. Performance attire is not allowed in the Strictly Divisions, but dressy dance clothing is accepted — and, encouraged. Dance Clothing that is all Black is undesirable. Jeans are not appropriate. Sloppiness is not appropriate. Age appropriate clothing for Youth divisions is expected. No matter what your age or Division it is desirable to find suitable, flattering, and age appropriate costuming.

K. PROPS

- Props are not allowed. The use of unapproved Props will result in a penalty and drop in placement.
- Hats, jackets, and other reasonable dance clothing items are considered costume, and may be worn in all divisions. However, clothing may NOT be discarded, nor switched from one partner to another, nor used as a prop in any way. Doing so will result in a penalty and drop in placement.
- If in doubt, please contact Organizer.
- The Challenge Division does allow some reasonable & appropriate props.

L. MUSIC

1. **SUBMITTING YOUR MUSIC** — A one-track CD copy of your music must be submitted on Friday, November 28, 2008 between 11:30 and 1:30 PM, just prior to the Competitors' Meeting unless prior approval is obtained from the Event Organizers. **NO TAPES WILL BE ACCEPTED.** If a Competitor is performing in two competitions, music must be provided on two separate CD's. Each Competitor will be responsible for retaining practice copies.
A room and table (TBA) in the Marriott Hotel, will be set up between 11:30 and 1:30 PM, with staff available to accept and label your music with computerized labels prepared in advance. All competition music must be turned in during this time frame. Drawing for dance order will take place during this process as well.
2. **TIME LIMIT** — Performances must be a minimum of 2-minutes and a maximum of 3-minutes in every division except Teams and Cabaret. In Teams, performances must be between 3-minutes and 4-minutes. In Cabaret, performances must be between 2-minutes and 4-minutes. Choreographed Floor Entrances and Exits are included in the time limit. A five-second buffer will be allowed to accommodate differences in music equipment. Not adhering to time limit requirements may be treated as a violation.
3. **CLAIMING YOUR MUSIC** — Your music can be reclaimed at the DJ booth after your competition. Music not claimed will be discarded at the conclusion of the event

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