

2005 US Open Swing Dance Championships
General Rules

US OPEN SWING DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS
MISSION STATEMENT

*“TO PROVIDE THE ULTIMATE ACHIEVEMENT FOR SWING DANCE COMPETITORS
AND THE BEST IN SWING DANCE ENTERTAINMENT IN AN ENVIRONMENT
THAT IS INSPIRING, EXHILARATING, RESPECTFUL OF OTHERS, AND FUN.”*

A. ORGANIZER

The US OPEN SWING DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS, INC. is the Organizer of this event. Final decisions on all matters pertaining to these competitions rest solely with the Organizer.

B. RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE ORGANIZER

1. **USE OF MISSION STATEMENT** — The Organizer will align decisions and policies with the Mission Statement.
2. **STAFF** — The Organizer will select a panel of Judges, an Information Manager, a Chief Judge, and a Contestants' Representative. The names of the people in these positions will be available prior to the event. In case of an emergency such as illness or transportation difficulties, the Organizer reserves the right to substitute a qualified person, and will announce that substitution as soon as it occurs.
3. **CONTESTANTS' REPRESENTATIVE** — The Organizer will appoint a Contestants' Representative as the official representative of the Competitors. The Contestants' Representative, in consultation with the Chief Judge and Competition Coordinator, will clarify all competition-related questions during the event.
4. **SCHEDULE** — The Organizer will determine the date and time for each competition and the location for the Competitors' Meeting, and will announce this information prior to the event. The Organizer reserves the right to cancel a division if the number of entries is under the posted minimum, and to rearrange the schedule if necessary. Cancellation of a division would result in the refund of any applicable competitor entry fees.

Any schedule or location changes will be noted on the US Open Swing Dance Championships' website (www.usopenswingdc.com) if they occur prior to the event. If the changes occur during the event, they will be announced or posted in the foyer and the exact location will be announced at the Competitors' Meeting.

5. **AWARDS** — The Organizer will determine and award all prizes and money. Monetary awards will be given in the form of a check at the Awards Ceremony.
6. **POSTING OF SCORES** — The results of the competitions will be posted for Finalists to review after the Awards Ceremony. Adherence is required to the standard for receiving feedback that is stated in Section D-5, and the behavior standard that is stated in Section D-1.
7. **PRELIMINARIES, SEMI-FINALS, FINALS, AND HEATS** — At any time prior to the Competition, the Organizer reserves the right to determine whether or not a division will consist of a Preliminary, Semi-Final and a Final, and whether or not rounds are danced in heats or as spotlight. This decision will be communicated as soon as possible, on the website or through announcements at the event.

C. ELIGIBILITY TO COMPETE

1. **COUPLE** — A couple consists of one male leader and one female follower.
2. **REQUIREMENTS** — The US OPEN SWING DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS encourages all Competitors, who believe they are qualified, to submit their application. All who plan to compete must adhere to the following requirements in (a) thru (e):
 - a. Hold a full weekend package ticket to the 2005 US OPEN SWING DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS. Section, Row and Seat number of each competitor must be identified on the Competition Application. Staff members who are competing will be sitting in the Staff Section.

- b. Pay the required entry fees when the application is submitted.
 - c. Sign the waiver. No Competitor will be allowed to compete without a signed Waiver, and every member of a Team or Cabaret Act must sign the Competition Waiver. Competitors under 18-years of age must have a parent or guardian sign their Waiver and any other required forms
 - d. Register by the official entry deadline. To be officially registered, all of the following items must be returned to the US Open by Saturday, October 1, 2005:
 - The complete Entry Form
 - The signed Waiver for each competitor
 - A Bio (see guidelines)
 - A Picture (see guidelines)
 - The "How to Pronounce my Name" Form
 - Payment for Entry into the competition
 - Payment or seat assignments for tickets into the event for all who are competing.
 - e. Meet all the specific requirements outlined in these rules.
3. **DIVISION RESTRICTIONS** — (all age requirements apply)
- a. A Competitor may enter only one of the following divisions: Sophisticated Swing, Masters, or Lindy Showcase.
 - 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, Masters, and Lindy Showcase Divisions.
 - d. Any Competitor may compete in the Cabaret, and/or the Formation Teams, and/or one of the "Strictly" Divisions.
4. **PARTNER RESTRICTIONS** — With the exception of Cabaret Division, competitors are not allowed to dance in multiple divisions with the same partner.

D. RESPONSIBILITIES OF COMPETITORS

1. **BEHAVIOR** — All Competitors must demonstrate courteous and professional behavior at all times at the US OPEN SWING DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS, both on and off the competition floor. Failure to adhere to these standards could cause disciplinary action by the Organizer, or penalties from the Judges.
2. **RULES** — All Competitors are responsible for reading and understanding the rules prior to the 2005 US OPEN SWING DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS. Competitors are responsible for adhering to these rules whether or not they have been read.
3. **COMPETITORS' MEETING** — Unless prior arrangements are made with the Event Organizers, Competitors are required to attend the Competitors' Meeting on Friday, November 25, 2005 at 3:00 PM in the Marquis Ballroom.
4. **DANCE ORDER** — Drawing for dance order will take place Friday, November 25, 2005 between 12:45 PM and 2:45 PM, just prior to the Competitors' Meeting. This process takes place as competitors submit their music. ALL dance order draws will take place prior to the end of the Competitors' Meeting.
5. **PERFORMANCE FEEDBACK** — Competitors may discuss their performance with the Judges using only the appropriate times and channels, which are: 1) during the Competitors' Meeting, 2) by appointment with the Contestants' Representative.
A Finalist may make an appointment with the Contestants' Representative for a detailed discussion. That appointment must occur at a time that is convenient for both the Competitors and the Contestants' Representative, and may occur either during the US OPEN SWING DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS or anytime after the event. The standards for behavior from Section D-1 must be followed.
6. **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.

7. **REFUND OF COMPETITION ENTRY FEE** — After the cut-off date, October 1st, 2005, competition fees will not be refunded for any reason.

E. 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, and open-to-closed/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, nor 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.

F. 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:

1. **TIMING** — Swing is danced beginning on the downbeat. Timing extends to much finer distinctions than a single beat. It includes fractionally ahead or behind the beat, as well as matching the syncopated “swing” of the music.
2. **TEAMWORK** — Swing is a connected, partner dance. The demonstration of this connection and the appearance of lead/follow or action/reaction between the partners is an expected part of any competition. One partner ignoring or out-dancing the other, or jeopardizing the safety of the other (or other Competitors), indicates poor teamwork.
3. **TECHNIQUE** — How well the Competitors execute the movements comprising their dance constitutes technique. This includes control of balance and weight, foot placement, bodylines, and spins.
4. **CHOREOGRAPHY** — The selection and order of movements and transitions executed during a dance comprises choreography. Good choreography demonstrates an intimate connection with the music and its phrasing, as well as variety and contrast.
5. **PRESENTATION** — To create an atmosphere of excitement by inviting and generating interest in a performance is the desired effect of good presentation. While providing a good show is one aspect of presentation, a good show is not a substitute for good dancing.

In Cabaret, the criteria of timing, teamwork, technique, choreography, and presentation will also apply as appropriate for the dance being performed.

Judges decisions are final.

G. ERRORS, VIOLATIONS, AND PENALTIES

If the rules outlined in this document are broken, the judges 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 is disqualification, which means being placed "out-of-the-money." In NASDE Divisions, NASDE points will not be awarded if a violation is determined.

Examples of intentional violations could be: 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 27, 2005. Competitors must be at least 18-years old to compete in the Adult Divisions, with the exception of Cabaret. Age requirements for Juniors are discussed under that division's rules. Proof of age may be required

J. COSTUMES

It is the position of the US OPEN SWING DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS that colorful, decorative, dramatic attire enhance the entertainment value of the performances. Therefore, costumes are required for Showcase, Classic, Cabaret, Sophisticated Swing, Masters, Young Adult, Young America and Formation Teams Divisions. Although they are not required, competitors are encouraged to wear appropriate attire in the Lindy Showcase Division. Costumes are not allowed in the Strictly Divisions, but dramatic, tasteful dance clothing is accepted — and, encouraged.

A costume is defined as, "*Attire that is specifically designed or selected for a couple's competition and would not generally be worn on the social dance floor.*"

K. PROPS

The Organizer must approve the use of all props in advance.

L. MUSIC

1. **SUBMITTING YOUR MUSIC** — A one-track CD copy of your music must be submitted on Friday, November 25, 2005 between 12:45 PM and 2:45 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.

Outside of the Marquis Ballroom, in the Marriott Hotel, a table will be set up between 12:45 PM and 2:45 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.

2. **CLAIMING YOUR MUSIC** — Your music can be reclaimed at the Registration Desk after your competition. Music not claimed will be discarded at the conclusion of the event. Please do not contact the DeeJay.
3. **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 and Cabaret, performances must be between 3-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.

M. CANCELLATIONS

Entry fees will be refunded to any competitor who withdraws from a competition before the Saturday, October 1st, 2005 deadline. Because of the event's program production schedule, no refunds will be made for any cancellations after that date. Any partnership changes will require a new application process and will be considered a new competition entry.

N. QUESTIONS REGARDING THESE RULES

Please call the US OPEN SWING DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS (800/537-8937) or e-mail Wayne Bott, US Open Competition Coordinator at USOpen@WayneandSharlot.com with any questions about these rules.

US Open Swing Dance Championships
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