

Swing Dance America (SDA) Rules

General Rules

Statement of Swing

Swing is an American Rhythm Dance based on a foundation of 6-beat and 8-beat patterns that incorporate a wide variety of rhythms built on 2-beat single, delayed, double, triple, and blank rhythm units. The 6-beat patterns include, but are not limited to, passes, underarm turns, push-breaks, open-to-closed, and closed-to-open position patterns. The 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 extension rhythm breaks may be incorporated to extend a pattern, to phrase the music, and/or to accent breaks.

The objective is to provide a competitive performance venue for the various unique styles of swing that have developed across the nation to include the Carolina Shag, Dallas Push, East Coast Swing, Hand Dancing, Hollywood Swing, Houston Whip, Imperial Swing, Jive, Jitterbug, Lindy Hop, Rock-n-Roll, and West Coast Swing, to name a few.

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.

General Rules and Information

1. Contestants must purchase a full “Weekend Pass” to compete in any division and pay the appropriate contest fees.
2. Contestants must sign a waiver and are responsible for reading these rules.
3. Contestants are responsible for checking the contest postings to assure their name is spelled correctly and they are placed in the correct contest/division.
4. “Hustle” includes Three Count, New York, Latin, and Four Count.
5. All divisions will have a leader (male or female) and a follower (female or male).
6. Contestants must wear the bib number that will be assigned to them at the time of sign in, or by the contest registration desk. There will be a \$10 replacement charge.
Exception: Followers do not need to wear their bib number during Strictly Swing or Strictly Hustle contests. Couples in routine divisions do not need to wear their bib number.
7. Contestants may compete in all dance divisions they qualify for including Jack & Jill, Strictly Swing, Pro-Am Swing, Pro Am Hustle, Rising Star, Classic, Showcase and Master Routines. (Dancers must be 50+ by the end of the event to dance in the Masters Division).
8. If you compete in a Routine Division, you may compete in a different Routine Division or Strictly Swing with a different partner. You may compete with the same Hustle partner in a Strictly Hustle, and a Hustle Routine Division.

Exception: You may compete with the same partner in two different dance style Routine Divisions, only if there are Two Routines and Two DIFFERENT dances. For example a West Coast Swing Routine and a Hustle Routine with the same partner.

9. Eligibility: Competitors should choose levels appropriate to their skill and dance styles. We reserve the right to move competitors to more appropriate levels or to reject entries inappropriate for any of our divisions.
10. For specific details on “Hustle” competitions please click on the Hustle Dance Tour button above.
11. Clothing:
 - a. Look Nice; Look Presentable.
 - b. Jeans (including ripped & torn jeans) are allowed.
12. Behavior: Competitors should conduct themselves maturely and display sportsmanship. Contestants displaying poor behavior may be disqualified from competitions with no refund, or ejected from the event.
13. Contest Attendance. If you are not in the ballroom when your name and number are called for your contest division, and have not arrived by the end of all contestants being announced, you will not be allowed to dance in those contests. Be aware of scheduled contest times and be prepared to dance with your bib .

Judges

There will be a minimum of (5) judges for all final competitions and a minimum of (6) judges for all prelims (3 judges per role). In addition, SDA will have a Chief Judge and alternate judges available. A referee judge will be used for all routine divisions. All judges' scores are final.

Judging Criteria

The WSDC Relative Placement System will be used to judge all final competitions and the WSDC Callback System for all prelims. All Competitors will be judged using the following criteria:

Timing – “How Your Body Connects to the Music”. Swing is a dance beginning on the downbeat. Timing extends to more fine distinctions than a single beat. It includes fractionally ahead or behind the beat, as well as matching the syncopated “swing” of the music.

Technique – “How Well You Do What You Do.” How well the Competitors execute the movements comprising their dance constitutes technique. We are looking for good footwork, balance, control, frame, and how well turns & spins are executed, and control of arms and hands.

1. **Teamwork** – How Well You Work Together.” 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. It is the ability to work together as a team. One partner ignoring or out dancing the other, or jeopardizing the safety of the other (or other Competitors), indicates poor teamwork.

Content/Choreography – “What You Do.” 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 of movements. Choreography must be tasteful and respectful to the audience.

Showmanship/Presentation – “How Well You Sell What You Do.” 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.

Swing Content

In all divisions, the amount of Swing content that is required or allowed will be evaluated by each judge. A judge will mark his score sheet as follows.

1. **Swing Warning** - If a judge feels there may not be enough Swing content in a routine, they may mark their sheet with an SW and their score will not reflect a lower score.
2. **Swing Violation** – If a judge feels there is not enough Swing content in a routine, they may mark their sheet with an SV and their score will reflect a lower score. Each judge will determine how much to lower the contestants’ score.

WSDC Jack and Jill contests.

Review your division for requirements or restrictions. Contest Categories and Qualifications. For the most current rules go to [www:worldsdc.com/rules/](http://www.worldsdc.com/rules/)

1. Competitors are allowed to compete as both Leaders and Followers in skill level Jack & Jills at Swing Dance America.
2. No lifts or aerials are allowed during the Jack & Jills.

Newcomer (skill level). Competitors may select either Newcomer or Novice divisions, but must dance in Novice once they receive one (1) point in either Newcomer OR Novice in their selected role (primary or secondary).

Novice (skill level). A dancer who has earned less than 15 Novice WSDC points.

Intermediate (skill level). A dancer who has earned 15 or more Novice WSDC points and less than 30 Intermediate points.

Advance (skill level). A dancer who has earned 30 or more Intermediate WSDC points.

All Star (skill level). A dancer who has 45 Advance WSDC points in the last 3 years.

Champion (skill level). For couples who have at least one partner who regularly competes in Invitation/Champion WCS divisions or the Master division of USWDC. Must be at least 18 years of age.

Juniors (age level). Competitors must be 10-17 years of age and have a parent or guardian's signed consent.

Masters (age level). Competitors must be at least 50 years of age by the end of the event.

The Chief Judge will determine format for all Jack & Jill Divisions based on the number of competitors.

Strictly Swing & Strictly Hustle (Just Dance) Contests

Competitors may dance in One Skill Level and one Age Level with a different partner.

1. ProAm Strictly Swing or ProAm Strictly Hustle means the Professional (Leader or Follower) dances a non-choreographed dance with an Amateur (Leader or Follower).
2. The Amateur must dance at the same level in Pro Am Strictly or Pro AM Strictly Hustle that the Amateur dances in WSDC Jack & Jills.
 - a. Example: If the Amateur competes in the Advanced level in a swing Jack & Jill, that Amateur must also compete in the Advanced Pro Am Strictly Swing contest. If the Amateur competes in the Advanced Hustle Jack & Jill Division, that Amateur must also compete in the Pro Am Advanced Strictly Hustle.
3. Swing content. Competitors must demonstrate a minimum of 80% swing content in Strictly Swing Divisions and 80% Hustle in Strictly Hustle Divisions.
4. No choreographed routines.
5. No lifts or aerals allowed in all divisions.
6. Costumes are not allowed, but matching clothing is encouraged.
7. Champion (skill level). For couples who have at least one partner who regularly competes in Invitation/Champion WCS divisions or the Master division of USWDC. Must be at least 18 years of age.
8. The Chief Judge will determine format, and the number of heats for all Strictly Divisions; based on the number of competitors.

Routines – Music

PLEASE BRING AN ELECTRONIC COPY OF YOUR MUSIC (mp3 format) READY AND AVAILABLE TO DELIVER TO THE APPROPRIATE CONTEST DJ PRIOR TO FLOOR TRIALS.

BRING AT LEAST TWO (2) CD'S WITH YOUR MUSIC TO THE EVENT – JUST IN CASE ONE HAS A SKIP, OR ONE GET BROKEN, ETC.

Rising Star Division:

For the most current rules, please go to the official Rising Star Tour website. Here is the link:
<https://risingstartour.com/>

Classic Division:

1. Contestants must be 18 years or older by the end of the event.
2. Competitors will be one Leader and one Follower.
3. Guidelines for expected swing content are 75% in Classic.
4. An individual is not permitted to dance twice within the same division.

Specific Rules:

1. Performance time is a minimum of 2 minutes and maximum of 3 minutes. The clock begins and judging starts at the first dance movement of the performance, with or without music.
2. Competitors select their own music.
3. Costumes are allowed and encouraged.
4. Separate entrances are permitted but the couple must physically join together within 32 beats of music.
5. Couples must maintain physical contact except for spins, turns, short break-aways, and recoveries. If combined, separation cannot be more than 8 beats of music. For example, if a competitor does a free spin or a turn, is not connected to their partner, and goes straight into a side by side break-away, the entire separation cannot be more than 8 beats of music.
6. Both partners must keep at least one foot on the floor during weight-support moves. If the foot comes off the floor, it will be flagged for review to determine if it was a violation (part of the choreography) or an error.
7. A maximum of seven (7) partner weight-support moves are permitted.

Showcase Division:

1. Contestants must be 18 years or older by the end of the Event to participate.
2. Guideline for swing content in Showcase is 60%. It is at the Judges' discretion to determine that the swing content requirement has been met.
3. A competitive couple must consist of one leader and one follower. They must remain in their designed roles throughout the entire routine with an allowable exception of an 8 count maximum of role switching.
4. The minimum of 3 couple entries in each division is required for a division to occur.
5. An individual is not permitted to dance twice within the same division.

Specific Rules:

1. Performance time is a minimum of 2 minutes and maximum of 3 minutes.
2. The clock begins and judging starts at the first dance movement of the performance, with or without music.
3. Competitors select their own music.
4. Costumes are allowed and encouraged.
5. Separate entrances are permitted.
6. Break-aways and side-by-side patterns are permitted.

7. A minimum of three (3) lifts total are required, with at least one of those lifts must be where the followers hips is at or above the leads shoulders while the lead is standing (not sitting, squatting, or flexed forward) and the lift must have the appearance of being sustained for 1-3 seconds.
8. There is no lift maximum.

Pro/Am Routine Spotlight Division

This division is offered for all styles of Swing including West Coast, East Coast, Lindy Hop, Hand, Shag and Hustle.

1. Students enter with their instructor and perform a choreographed routine to music they choose.
2. Routines are spotlighted.
3. Both the instructor and the student performance are judged.
4. Dance order will be chosen at random and posted prior to the division start time.
5. Music provided by the competitors must be a single track on a clearly labeled CD at least 2 minutes and no longer than 3 minutes.
6. Costumes are encouraged.
7. Lifts and drops are allowed but not required.
8. Time starts with the first performance movement with or without music.
9. Routines must include at least 75% recognizable swing, or hustle.

Masters Division

1. Both partners must be at least 50 years young by the end of the event.
2. Routines must be at least 75% recognizable swing
3. Lifts and drops are not allowed.
4. This is a spotlight division.
5. Dance order will be chosen at random and will be posted prior to division start time.
6. Music provided by competitors. Must be a single track on a clearly labeled CD at least 2 minutes and no longer than 3 minutes.
7. Time starts with the first performance movement with or without music.
8. Costumes are recommended.

Team Division

1. Each team must have a minimum of two (2) couples.
2. There is a limit of 10 team entries.
3. Each team must dance a minimum of 2 ½ minutes and no longer than 4 minutes.
4. Time begins at the start of the first performance movement with or without music.
5. Costumes are required.

Hustle Routine Division

This division includes all recognizable forms of Hustle; including Three Count, Latin, New York, and Four Count. Choreographed Hustle Routine dance in any style is allowed.

1. Routines Are Spotlighted.
2. Dance order is chosen at random, and posted prior to the division start time.
Music provided by each couple, and must be a single track on mp3 digital.
3. Music must be at least 2 minutes, and no longer than 3.5 minutes.
4. Costumes are allowed and encouraged.
5. Choreographed entries will be counted toward time limits.
6. Lifts and drops are allowed, but not required.

Hustle Team Challenge Division

This is a Team Division that requires Eight (8) members per team.

1. Four (4) male leaders, and Four (4) female followers.
2. Four Leaders: 2 Hustle Professionals (Pros), and 2 Amateurs (Ams).
3. Four Followers: 2 Hustle Professionals (Pros), and 2 Amateurs (Ams)
4. One couple from each team will dance in competition with couples of the same construct from the other teams, in a “lead/follow” or Strictly Hustle (Just Hustle) contest for 19 about 2 minutes per couple. The dance order of the couples from all Teams is as follows:
 - a. Amateur – Amateur
 - b. Pro/Am (Female Pro)
 - c. Pro/Am (Male Pro)
 - d. Pro/Pro
5. Each of the above couples will dance and compete. The judges will rank each couple after each round. The Team with the lowest cumulative score after all pairing above have danced in competition with couples of the same construct from the other team, wins the tournament.

Swing Dance America (SDA) - COMPETITION RULES for Tournament-Style All-American

General:

1. Open to All Levels (including Champions)
2. Gender Neutral
3. Choose 1 Role – Lead or Follow (Competitors cannot compete in both roles)
4. No Lifts – any couple doing a lift will be disqualified
5. Scoring will be based on solid swing content and technique.
6. Musicality and showmanship will be used as tie breakers at each judge’s discretion

Prelims:

1. The number of heats will be dependent on the number of entries.
2. Dancers will be paired randomly for the prelim round(s) (and semifinal rounds if needed) and scored as a couple 3.

3. Couples will be scored using the WSDC Callback system.
4. Each heat will have a minimum of 3 songs, with each song approximately 2 minutes long.
5. The top 16 couples will advance to the Finals'

Note: In the event a dancer needs to dance in multiple Prelims and/or Semifinal heat(s) and advance to the finals with multiple partners, that dancer will only dance as a member of one couple in Finals. In this circumstance, the dancer(s) in the next qualifying placement(s) in that role will advance to the Finals.

- Example: Leader "A" competes twice and places in the top 16 couples with two partners (Followers "X" and "Y"). Leader "A" advances, as do both Followers "X" and "Y". The Leader that placed 17th in Prelims will be advanced to Finals.

Finals:

1. Each dancer that advances to the Finals is awarded a point value based on their placement with their partner in the Prelims.
 - a. The highest ranked couple based on the raw scores is given 1 point (each); The second ranked couple are each given 2 points; this continues through all 16 placements
2. Each Leader and Follower are then randomly drawn into new partnerships for the Finals.
3. The raw score for each partner in the new partnerships are then combined .
 - a. 1st place leader draws 12th place Follower = 13 points for this couple
 - b. 4th place leader draws 1st place Follower = 5 points for this couple
 - c. 14th place Leader draws 9th place Follower = 23 points for this couple
 - d. This continues to generate a combined score for all 16 couples advancing to the Finals
4. The Tournament Bracket for the Head-to-Head Finals is then built as follows:
 - a. The couple with the lowest combined score is Seeded 1st
 - b. The couple with the next lowest combined score is Seeded 2nd
 - c. This continues through all 16 placements
5. A "Two-Tiered Bracket" is then built, with the following matchups:
 - a. 1st seeded couple against 16th seeded couple
 - b. 4th seeded couple against 13th seeded couple
 - c. 8th seeded couple against 9th seeded couple
 - d. 5th seeded couple against 12th seeded couple
 - e. 6th seeded couple against 11th seeded couple
 - f. 7th seeded couple against 10th seeded couple
 - g. 3rd seeded couple against 14th seeded couple
 - h. 2nd seeded couple against 15th seeded couple
6. The Tournament Finals then has the seeded couples dance against each other for approximately 1 minute.
7. After dancing, the couples turn their backs to the judges and the judges vote which couple advances to the next round .
8. The Tournament format consists of multiple rounds for the Finals:
 - a. 16 couples – comprising 8 "Head-to-Head" dance-offs

- b. 8 couples – comprising 4 “Head-to-Head” dance-offs
- c. 4 couples – comprising 2 “Head-to-Head” dance-offs
- d. Placement Rounds:
 - i. 3rd Place – the couples who do not win in the previous round compete for 3rd Place
 - ii. 1st & 2nd Place – the 2 remaining couples dance against each other to determine the winner