

New Zealand Ballroom Dance Council

DANCESPORT ADJUDICATING PRINCIPLES

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NZBDC
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Accreditation Commission**

Adjudicating Principles

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Chapter 1.

Introduction

The cliché “It takes two to Tango” (or any other dance within the confines of DanceSport) identifies the activity as a “Team Sport”.

In this respect DanceSport differs from most other “Team Sports” in so much as a successful partnership, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER IT BE IN Standard, Latin American, New Vogue or Classical Sequence, is expected to produce, as a general principle, a single entity “performance”, whereas in Team Sports generally, success is dependent upon a combination of the individual (and generally singular) activities of the team members.

As well, within the realms of “Team Sports”, DanceSport is unique in so much as results are determined directly by the collective marks of the Adjudicators as opposed to “point scoring definitive actions” by individual team members.

The role of the DanceSport Adjudicator differs considerably from that of the “judgement” role of the sports Referee or Umpire whose concern is primarily with the “rules of play” whereas the marks of the DanceSport Adjudicator (and ultimately the collective marks of the panel) directly indicate an assessment of the particular competitive performances.

Being outside the parameters of an “exact” science, as with other styles of dance or indeed any “judged” physical activity, DanceSport because of the immeasurable or unquantifiable elements in performance, is by necessity adjudicated subjectively.

In DanceSport, subjective judging is assessment by personal thoughts and feelings (gained in the great majority of cases from competitive and/or coaching experience) and based upon knowledge and understanding of a range of technical and fundamental principles.

Whilst an experienced Adjudicator may possess the ability to quickly assess the necessary ingredients collectively and make an informed decision in a short space of time, it is indeed a daunting task for the newer or less experienced Adjudicator since there is no provision of a required set criteria or procedure for the weighting/prioritising of the various elements to be adhered to.

It is undoubtedly this “Judging system scenario” that is the root cause of many of the problems which beset DanceSport and which breeds suspicion when legitimate inconsistencies between Adjudicators markings are observed, and which in turn is often perceived as being a lack of neutrality in judging. This perception in the vast majority of such instances is unfounded and generally for a variety of reasons, factually incorrect.

To have a blueprint or methodology requiring criteria in adjudicating to be applied in a way that is perceived as being clearer and more easily understood by competitors and spectators alike, would undoubtedly be viewed as being “the ultimate”, however such a proposal

would seem to suggest that all Adjudicators, at any given event, would need to be likeminded for it to be effective or even workable.

Unfortunately given the immeasurable and unquantifiable performance elements involved together with human nature being what it is, and the format generally used in competitive events, the likelihood of such collective thinking more often than not is highly improbable due in no short measure to the fact that such non-absolute qualities of style, movement, rhythm and picture values (or “togetherness”) by way of example, are comprehended in the mind and eye of the viewer.

Over the years, a number of highly respected, knowledgeable and very experienced people on the international scene, have recorded in print *their* views (priorities or criteria if you like) on various aspects of adjudicating, so there exists a very valuable resource from which educational material has been drawn for inclusion in this manual.

It is the fervent hope of the NZBDC, that this publication will assist and encourage both new and established Adjudicators in the execution of their role in this most serious and responsible position *FOR THIS IS WHERE STANDARDS SHOULD BE SET.*

The aims of this Adjudicating Principles Manual

NZBDC’s Adjudicating Principles Manual is designed to provide: -

- A clear understanding of the role and responsibilities of Adjudicators.
- A clear awareness of the NZBDC Rules currently in force as they relate to both Adjudicators and the adjudicating process.
- Practical knowledge and advice on the requirements of the Skating System of Scrutineering, including the marking of Judging Cards.
- A document of advice explaining the complexities of adjudicating and which presents considerations for the prioritising of elements of assessment and comparative analysis of competitive performances.

The manual presents a standard approach to the education of DanceSport Adjudicators.

Basic Principles supporting a DanceSport Adjudicating system are: -

Transparency

Making available details of the performance criteria that is taken into account in arriving at a judging result.

Providing Competitors, Spectators, Coaches, and DanceSport Fans with access to information, which, even if they don't agree with it, will help to understand the reasoning for a particular result.

Neutrality

Accredited Adjudicators must not only *be* consistent and unbiased, they must also *be seen* to be consistent and unbiased. They must adjudicate **without prejudice, fear or favour on what is presented on that occasion, and not allow themselves to be influenced by previous performances seen elsewhere, or (in the case of Visual Judging) by concerns of disagreement with the positions given by other Adjudicators on the panel.**

Accountability

Preservation of integrity is absolutely essential. Accredited Adjudicators must be accountable for their decisions and (based upon recognisable standards) have the courage of their convictions in addition to being accountable for their upholding of the NZBDC Adjudicators Code of Conduct.

COURSE STRUCTURE AND PERSPECTIVE

The Adjudicating Principles Course is a Self Study Programme as covered by the contents of this manual and whilst it is primarily designed for the education of Trainee Adjudicators; existing accredited Adjudicators may well find the contents to be of value with Continuing Professional Development.

Subject matter covered by the course includes: -

- Conduct and ethical requirements for Adjudicators.
- Fundamental rules and restrictions relative to age, grade and syllabus requirements.
- Compliance requirements of the Skating System as they relate to the marking of Cards.
- An overview of the mechanics of the Skating System of Scrutineering.
- Typical example of Judging Cards and how they should be completed.
- Assessment of Competitors, including for consideration, suggested Elements of Performance.
- Informative notes to assist with the recognition of Correct Technique and Quality of Performance.

CHAPTER 2.

ETHICS AND CONDUCT OF ADJUDICATORS.

The information in this chapter will assist in preparing the reader to: -

- Appreciate the many issues surrounding the ethics and conduct of Adjudicators
- Understand the roles and licensing of Adjudicators, and
- Have a good working knowledge of DanceSport competition rules and their application

INTRODUCTION

It is difficult to think of another competitive environment where the position of an Adjudicator is as complex, or perhaps as controversial as that of DanceSport.

For Example

There is no “first past the post” in DanceSport. Style, technique, musicality, and other elements of performance are all factors for consideration when determining the allocation of winners and placegetters.

On the technical side, not only is there a need for a sound theoretical understanding of figures for each of the styles in which they will be judging, but Adjudicators must also be able to assess within a very limited timeframe, merits of how routines are structured and performed to music.

An Adjudicator must compare the performances of all the couples involved (that is, of both the male and female) in each dance from rounds to finals.

Spectators and those without appropriate expertise will tend to first take an overview of all on the floor, but then concentrate on individual performances, such as those of couples they know or those with the most crowd appeal.

It also happens in DanceSport that most Adjudicators, who are also coaches, often judge competitions in which their students compete. It can also happen that some Adjudicators have allegiances to Teaching Studios.

Roles and Responsibilities

Put simply, an Adjudicator's role is to ensure all competitors are judged (free from any bias or coercion) on the merits of their performance on any given occasion. Prior to directing an issue to the attention of the Chairman, Adjudicators should ensure that

- The facts of the matter are clear, and that
- They are not just matters of opinion and are not frivolous.

It is a life-long challenge to gain, and then maintain, expertise as an Adjudicator. You need to aspire to the following: -

Skills of an experienced Adjudicator

- In-depth knowledge and understanding of style specific technique as described in approved/accepted texts.
- Knowledge and understanding of NZBDC Syllabus requirements relative to each style
- Previous competitor and/or coaching experience **are a distinct advantage.**
- Attention to detail and a broad perspective of what constitutes a "good dancer"
- Ability to assess and mark competitors performance by age and relative degree of competence
- Speed. accuracy and neatness of card marking while still devoting maximum time available to observe competitors (the same principles apply when using electronic marking devices).

Personal attributes of an experienced Adjudicator.

- Keen awareness of responsibilities
- Well respected for fairness, honesty, impartiality and knowledge
- Consistency in marking
- Good memory
- Balanced view and open mind
- Strength of Character
- Well groomed and appropriately dressed
- Respected by competitors, parents, coaches, and other Adjudicators
- Personal conduct always above reproach
- Reliable and hard working
- Good role model

So, as an inexperienced Adjudicator, what are the most important attributes you need to develop from day one in order to pursue a successful career, and address some of the obstacles listed previously?

Commitment to continuing education, development and enhancement of our sport, and an ethical and moral code of behaviour that is above reproach.

Mentor

The aim is to provide new and Trainee Adjudicators with an experienced Adjudicator as a role model to help /guide them through their early experiences.

Once a Trainee Adjudicator has completed the Technical Assessment and that of the Adjudicating Principles Course, they should contact their professional association or NZBDC to seek a mutually acceptable Mentor to guide them through the final Practice Module of the accreditation process.

Although the Chairman of Adjudicators may provide Mentoring to Trainee Adjudicators, a dedicated Mentor is better placed to fulfil this role.

The role of the Mentor is to guide and supervise new applicants through the Practice Module of the accreditation process (that is, attendance and participation at a number of NZBDC registered events). It is preferable that the same person be the Mentor on each occasion. Mentors are preferably Class A Championship qualified. *A scrutineering qualification would also be an advantage, but not essential for this position.*

Ideally an appointed Mentor will not have had any previous affiliation with the assigned Trainee. It is of the utmost importance that the credibility of the accreditation process be maintained.

Mentor Responsibilities

- Provide a “Walk-through” with the Trainee of the practical component of certification, including paperwork required, procedures and assessment criteria
- Agree to a schedule of competitive events that the Trainee will attend, and advise the NZBDC accordingly
- Obtain prior approval of organisers of the nominated events, of the intention to carry out practice adjudication. *Note: practice adjudication must not be undertaken at National Championships.*
- The number of appropriate events to be judged by the Trainee on any one occasion (covering both Rounds and Finals) must be not less than 10.
- Provide Trainee with clearly identified cards for Heats and Finals
- Pre-arrange with the Organiser or Chairman of Adjudicators, provision of results from selected events
- Compare Trainee’s marking with official results
- Request reasoning for specific marking and discuss if necessary
- Complete a written assessment of the Trainee
- Provide advice and answer any questions regarding each event being assessed, including counselling on the Trainee’s performance that may not be satisfactory. Clearly identify such problems, explain the reasoning and advise remedial action.

- **Sign off Trainee's Adjudicating Accreditation for the Practice Module once all events have been completed**, attaching a copy of the written assessments. The applicant must forward the completed documentation to NZBDC for consideration of final certification.

Chairman of Adjudicators

Arguably one of the most critical roles in DanceSport is that of the Chairman of Adjudicators. Along with the Scrutineer their role is pivotal to the perception of fairness in the achievement of best competitive results.

As a general rule of practice, organisers of DanceSport events appoint a Chairman of Adjudicators in the knowledge that the quality and effectiveness of the person so appointed contributes in no small way to the overall management and success of the event. It is desirable that the Organising Manager of the event is not also the Chairman of Adjudicators. When determining action to be taken in regard to disputes, interpretations or questions that may be brought to his/her attention, the Chairman of Adjudicators is often obliged to consider, in addition to the NZBDC Rules of Dancesport, the rights of event promoters, the interests of spectators and those of the adjudicators and competitors.

Duties: Chairman of Adjudicators & Scrutineers.

The Chairman of Adjudicators is responsible for the correct interpretation of the marks and for making decisions on points of question/conflict that arise during the conduct of events. It is his/her duty to inspect the marks and to ensure the correct implementation of the disqualification rule. It is also his/her duty to inspect the marking sheets after each round and to agree with the organiser the number of couples to pass forward to the next round.

The Chairman of Adjudicators shall agree with the organiser the number of heats in each round of competition, and the number of couples in a final. The Chairman may limit the number of couples in any heat or in the final, if it is believed there shall be any danger to the health and safety of the couples from overcrowding.

The Chairman of Adjudicators may serve in a non-voting capacity but must be a qualified Adjudicator **and hold a Scrutineers qualification recognised by the NZBDC**. There is an exception to this requirement at Class B competitions, where it may not be possible to appoint someone with scrutineering qualifications **and** an electronic scrutineering system is being employed (refer NZBDC Rules of Competition).

On request, the Chairman of Adjudicators may be required to forward to the NZBDC, a short report of the championship at which he/she has officiated. This report must also state the number of competitors and approximate attendance figures.

The Head Scrutineer must hold a Scrutineer Qualification recognised by the NZBDC and is responsible for the correct recording of the marks. It is his/her duty to ensure the correct implementation of the disqualification rule. If there are any matters relating to the marking of Adjudicator cards that require attention, the Scrutineer is to ensure that the Chairman of Adjudicators (or in his/her absence, the Organiser) is made aware of such matters. The Chairman will then be required to deal with the issue as governed by NZBDC Competition rules. *An example would be the issue of “D” marking.* **It is the duty of the Chairman of Adjudicators, (or the Scrutineer on his/her behalf) to immediately refer to the Adjudicator concerned, any marking card that has a palpable error or omission, or that is not legible.**

A Scrutineer must not also act as Chairman of Adjudicators.

Only the Chairman of Adjudicators and Scrutineers shall have access to the marks until they are handed over to the organiser, and those marks shall be embargoed for such further time as governed by NZBDC Competition rules.

Chairman of Adjudicators will as a general rule of practice:

- Prior to the commencement of the event, call together all the Adjudicators in order to provide details of the Adjudicators responsibilities and duties, outline appropriate conduct, answer questions and provide a complaints/queries process to follow.

It is incumbent upon the Chairman of Adjudicators to: -

- Ensure that all NZBDC Competition rules are enforced without fear or favour, fairly and consistently throughout, including music and tempi, restrictions on syllabus, grade and dress and codes of conduct for competitors, coaches and adjudicators
- Ensure that the scrutineer is competent and efficient, and knows that they must immediately advise the Chairman of any “D” markings on adjudicator cards, whether for selections or finals, so that the Chairman can discuss the infringement with the couple(s) concerned.
- Oversee all events, so that they can be in a position to make a decision should any “D” marking or other contentious issues arise. If they have not witnessed an issue leading to a “D” marking, they should accept the Adjudicator’s marking and follow due process. (“D” marking is dealt with in detail in Chapter 3).
- Immediately remove an Adjudicator from the panel upon witnessing a breach of the Adjudicators Code of Conduct, or where it is believed a conflict of interest may occur.
- Remain impartial at all times.
- Provide direction and guidance to Adjudicators, particularly new ones or trainees. A post competition review may be offered to discuss Adjudicator performance, issues that arose and action to be taken, and suggested areas of improvement.
- If requested by NZBDC, prepare a written report on any issue arising and action taken, or required to be taken, and submit to the NZBDC.

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

All Adjudicators in any event conducted under NZBDC jurisdiction must hold a current, valid NZBDC Adjudicator Licence unless specifically exempted under NZBDC rules.

The issuing of an Adjudicator Licence to an applicant is not mandatory. NZBDC reserves the right at its absolute discretion to decline an application for an Adjudicator's Registration. NZBDC reserves the right to suspend, cancel or permanently withdraw the Adjudicating Registration of any person who has grossly breached the Code of Conduct for Adjudicators, or who is found to be not a fit and proper person to adjudicate DanceSport events.

A person suspended or expelled from Registration with NZBDC, or who refuses Registration with NZBDC, or who refuses to correctly complete the NZBDC Registration application/renewal form, or who refuses to pay the correct combined Registration fee shall not be separately granted Adjudicators Registration.

The purpose of the Registration fee is to ensure automatic Registration for all licensed Adjudicators, thereby ensuring that NZBDC has the appropriate authority to govern the affairs of the DanceSport fraternity, and to ensure that NZBDC remains representative of the majority of the DanceSport fraternity.

An Adjudicator's Registration is not in effect until the licensee's registration is recorded on the National Data Base for the current period.

Adjudicators are only permitted to judge in the styles and at the level covered by their current Registration and current level of accreditation, except for special circumstances, as may be approved by the NZBDC.

Registered Adjudicators may advertise or publicise the fact that they hold such NZBDC Registration.

It is a condition of holding an Adjudicators Registration that: -

- The Adjudicators Code of Conduct is adhered to at all times.
- A NZBDC Registered Adjudicator should not accept nomination to judge or participate in an Adjudicating Panel at a proscribed unregistered event.
- An Adjudicator shall not participate in or provide support or cooperation to any combination, organisation or individuals seeking to undermine NZBDC's role as the governing body for DanceSport in New Zealand.
- ***Questions relative to Adjudicator Registration or Registration procedures should be addressed to the Secretary, NZBDC.***

THE ADJUDICATORS' CODE OF CONDUCT

As outlined earlier in the Manual, there are many inherent conditions in DanceSport that render an Adjudicator's role both difficult and controversial. Unfortunately, in the past many of these factors could also cloak ineptitude or improper conduct. There has been a real perception that little was "seen to be done" to correct anomalies, and if action was taken the results were not generally visible to all.

NZBDC Codes of Conduct and Disciplinary Actions were created to make it clear to all, what is expected of Adjudicators and what the penalties are for their flagrant disregard. (Generally Appendix 9 of the NZBDC Rules of Dancesport revolve around providing Adjudicators with guidelines to avoid behaviour, which could be perceived by a "reasonable person", as being unethical, improper or biased).

The consequences of breaching these rules may lead to disciplinary action and/or expulsion.

A new Adjudicator must have a sound knowledge and understanding of these Rules and be personally committed to the type of conduct and ethical standards that will hold up to public scrutiny. An Adjudicator who constantly strives towards achieving the attributes of the "Ideal Adjudicator" will have no concerns with meeting their obligations under the Code.

Rules of course are always open to interpretation, however, it is expected that the spirit and the intent be always observed. In addition to items spelt out in the Rules, the following are examples of behaviour that this Code was designed to avoid.

During the course of any DanceSport event, a participating Adjudicator should not: -

- Arrive late
- Drink Alcohol
- Offer opinion on a competitors' attire, manner or performance
- Make remarks about an individuals' age, sex, religion, physical attributes, culture
- Dress inappropriately (Dress Code details follow)
- Engage in secretive conversations, swear or use unacceptable language
- Try to cover up mistakes, or fail to ask for help when required
- Leave the floor before completion of the event being adjudicated
- Be influenced by the expectations of peers, competitors, organisers or parents
- Criticise members of the dance fraternity.
- Demonstrate anger, frustration or irritability
- Mark contrary to any DanceSport Rules.

Failure to meet these requirements could lead to a report being submitted to the NZBDC.

Appendix 9

AJUDICATORS CODE OF CONDUCT

1. The following conduct shall constitute a breach of the adjudicator's code of conduct:
 - 1.1. Knowingly committing or conniving in any breach of NZBDC Rules
 - 1.2. Not retiring from the panel of an event on any occasion he/she has a member of his/her immediate and/or extended family including defacto and same gender relationships competing in that event
 - 1.3. Misrepresenting his/her adjudicator's qualification level or experience
 - 1.4. Making a false statement in relation to his/her adjudicator's registration
 - 1.5. Threatening to mark a couple in a particular way, so as to gain some advantage for himself/herself or for some third party, or so as to coerce the couple into doing or refraining from doing some act.
 - 1.6. Threatening a couple during the conducting of an event he is judging and in which the couple are competing, including threatening to mark a couple in a particular way.
 - 1.7. Coaching, teaching, or giving advice to a particular couple during an event that he is judging
 - 1.8. Seeking by any means to improperly influence or intimidate another adjudicator
 - 1.9. Where he is not on the judging panel for an event, discussing with an adjudicator who is on the judging panel for that event, the merits of the performance of a competitor in that event, before the completion of the final round
 - 1.10. Discussing the merits of a competitors performance with the competitor before the completion of the final round in an event which he/she is judging
 - 1.11. Seeking to influence the outcome of an event other than by the marking of all couples on their merits
 - 1.12. Marking or threatening to mark a couple other than on their merits
 - 1.13. Undertaking any conduct that is intended to gain a competitor an unfair advantage over other competitors
 - 1.14. Falsely claiming to officially represent NZFDT Inc., SATD (NZ) Inc. or NZBDC in any capacity
 - 1.15. Condoning discriminatory or improper behaviour by a fellow adjudicator
 - 1.16. Participating on a judging panel knowing that another member of the panel has had their registration suspended, withdrawn or is not registered with NZBDC
 - 1.17. Participating on a judging panel for a proscribed unregistered event
 - 1.18. Otherwise acting in such a way as to bring the image of NZFDT Inc, SATD (NZ) Inc, NZBDC and/or Dancesport generally into disrepute
2. If an adjudicator converses with spectators, competitors or coaches, he may not discuss the performance of any couple he is judging, until after the final round has been completed
3. Adjudicators are reminded that they occupy a position of trust in their capacity as an adjudicator. Accordingly, a higher standard of behaviour is required of adjudicators than all other persons, before during and after the conduct of events they are judging
 - 3.1. An adjudicator's behaviour both on and off the dance floor must be consistent with the principles of good sportsmanship.
 - 3.2. An Adjudicator must not behave in a questionable or unseemly manner in public or at any Dancesport related function or occasion where members of the public (including spectators and media) are present in any capacity
4. An Adjudicator must be consistent, objective and neutral in his decisions. Biased judging undermines the whole basis of competition
5. An Adjudicator must be meticulous in penalising dangerous and/or violent behaviour.
6. An Adjudicator must not publicly question his fellow adjudicators judgement and never their honesty.

7. Adjudicators invited by Organisers to Adjudicate at NZBDC registered competitions are required to be seated together throughout the period of the competition, in an area specifically set aside for Adjudicators. With the permission of the Organiser and/or the COA the Adjudicator may leave the assigned area at the completion of their Adjudication duties or at other times deemed appropriate by the Organiser and/or the COA. It is not acceptable practice for Adjudicators, during the competition, to be seated among the general public and or competitors.
8. Adjudicators must follow the recommended protocols of the Organiser and/or the COA in the interests of Professionalism and the smooth running of the competition. Any failure by an Adjudicator to follow the requirements of the Organiser and/or the COA may result in their exclusion from the judging panels.

Adjudicators are reminded that they occupy a position of trust in their capacity as an Adjudicator. Accordingly, a higher standard of behaviour is required of them above all other persons, before, during and after the conduct of events that are adjudicating.

Adjudicators are required to comply with the following conduct so as to uphold the highest standards of behaviour: -

- An Adjudicator's behaviour both on and off the competition floor must be consistent with the principles of good sportsmanship. An Adjudicator must not behave in a questionable or unseemly manner in public or at any DanceSport related function or occasion where members of the public (including spectators and the media) are present in any capacity.

An Adjudicator must:

- Be consistent, objective and neutral in his/her decisions. Biased adjudicating undermines the whole basis of competition.
- Be meticulous in penalising dangerous and/or violent behaviour.
- Not publicly question his/her fellow Adjudicator's judgement and never their honesty. Comments of this nature should be referred to NZBDC for further enquiry
- Be a disinterested observer of the performance of couples he/she trains or coaches when adjudicating events in which they are participating.
- Maintain and develop his/her adjudicating skills by keeping himself/herself informed on developments in technique, style, and sound adjudicating principles. ***In this regard Adjudicators should check regularly on the current requirements of the NZBDC.***

Where an Adjudicator is judging a couple who no longer engage his/her services as a coach, the Adjudicator must be on their guard against adjudicating the couple by measuring his/her own worth as a coach against that of the couples' current coach.

In applying his/her knowledge, experience and skill to the criteria that the Adjudicator uses in forming his/her assessments, the following shall demonstrate compliance with the Adjudicators Code of Conduct.

- Technique and competition rules being interpreted to match the age and skill level of the competitors.
- Common sense being used to ensure that the spirit of competition is not lost by an unnecessary, idiosyncratic or dogmatic interpretation of style.

It is a basic requirement for the holding of the Adjudicators Licence, that any Adjudicator engaged to judge at an event shall on arrival at the venue: -

- Report his/her presence to the Organiser and Chairman of Adjudicators.
- Ascertain the program details together with their Adjudicating Schedule.
- Be available as scheduled.

During the conduct of a competition, the Adjudicators on the judging panel shall: -

- Stand apart or be seated apart from one another whilst adjudicating, and at such locations that they do not interfere with the competitors
- Move to whatever position is necessary to view all of the couples.
- Judge independently and not compare notes with (or show their card to) other Adjudicators
- Mark and sign their score cards in ink, including their identification code if applicable. The Adjudicator must initial each and every alteration to the scorecard
- Where electronic marking is utilised keep their PIN code secret and submit marks as soon as they have finished judging
- Immediately leave the floor after the competitors (except where rotating panels are involved)

Depending upon the size of the promotion, Adjudicators will generally be advised of any time constraints in relation to length of music, however if and when it is found necessary to request more music in order to complete assessment the usual practice is to clearly indicate to the compere by raising ones hand. Likewise it can be of great assistance to a compere for Adjudicators to indicate when their assessment is complete---the usual practice here is to simply lower ones folder (or tablet) to the side.

DRESS CODE

Personal presentation must always be a priority. The recommended dress code for Adjudicators unless specified by the event organiser is as follows: -

Male Daytime: Lounge Suit and Tie

Evening: Lounge Suit and Tie, or, Dinner Suit/Tuxedo and Bow Tie

Female Daytime: Smart Daywear

Evening: Smart evening wear, long evening or cocktail dress/Evening trouser suit

Interpretation of the Rules

Exploitation of the rules by individuals, to either avoid their responsibilities as Adjudicators, or to be used by others to adversely criticise an Adjudicator for an unavoidable breach is not what is intended. Examples of this are as follows.

When a situation arises where due to venue size, there is no room for Adjudicators to stand apart: Although this could be seen as a breach of Appendix 9 (NZBDC Rules of Dancesport), under such circumstances it does not automatically imply the Adjudicator has done something requiring disciplinary action. If however they used the close proximity to deliberately interrupt a competitors' performance, or compare cards with other Adjudicators, a breach of Item Appendix 9 (NZBDC Rules of Dancesport), disciplinary action would be warranted.

Because an Adjudicator converses with spectators it should not be assumed that they are breaching a rule – the rules are not designed to eliminate common pleasantries. But, any prolonged discussions with competitors, parents, coaches or other Adjudicators are bound to create suspicion (whether founded or unfounded), particularly if it seems they are “in a corner” or away from public view, and should be avoided. If the subject matter is in any way confidential, even if not related to dancing, a competition or championship is neither the time nor place.

While an Adjudicator may not have directly threatened to mark a couple in a particular way, any threat to coerce the couple into doing or refraining from doing some act, or designed to disrupt the couples' ability to perform, is clearly unconscionable conduct.

An example would be a threat made to a couple to mark down a competing family member. Although not a breach of NZBDC Rules, it is definitely against the spirit and intent of the rules, and morally and ethically wrong.

Any choice of language to veil a threat is still a threat. e.g., “I once knew a couple like yourselves but unfortunately they failed to listen to good advice”. If an Adjudicator, either prior to or during a competition or championship, delivered these words they are inappropriate, and likely to be construed as a threat.

Adjudicators are required to apply common sense to avoid unnecessary, idiosyncratic or dogmatic interpretation of style. This cannot be used by an Adjudicator to fail to “D” mark competitors who intentionally breach rule restrictions. For Example, a couple releases hold in New Vogue where the approved textbooks state that it should be a closed hold. Even if the Adjudicator personally thinks that it looks better— failing to “D” mark on that basis is incorrect – note that there is reasonable relaxation of holds at all age divisions and grades in New Vogue under the NZBDC rules.

Clarification of Rules should be sought from the Chairman of Adjudicators, or your Mentor.

Rule Enforcement

There are two major issues for you as an Adjudicator to remember.

- You must know and comply with all NZBDC rules. You cannot arbitrarily decide which rules you will comply with and which you will ignore or breach. Like all NZBDC Registrants, if any Adjudicator feels any rule is unfair or unworkable, comments or suggestions should be sent to the NZBDC.
- Reasonable explanations as to conduct or markings must be given, if so requested by the Chairman of Adjudicators or NZBDC.

Adjudicators are appointed because of their professional and technical competence. Stating that a couple was marked in a particular placing because the Adjudicator thought they didn't dance well or it was thought another couple danced better, would not be considered a "reasonable" explanation. Competence or motives would be thought questionable if a more substantial explanation could not be supplied.

Wide variations in marking in themselves do not indicate inept or corrupt conduct. No two Adjudicators see exactly the same things at the same time for the total of any one event.

If you were to mark a couple last because right in front of you the man danced incorrect footwork in the Natural Turn in Waltz or a Reverse Turn and Feather Finish in Slow Foxtrot or worse still the couple were out of time with the music, which in your view made them perform worse than other couples, this would be a "reasonable" explanation.

Particularly in your early days as an Adjudicator, take the opportunities to discuss with your Mentor or Chairman of Adjudicators how they would have marked what they saw and why they would mark in a particular way.

CHAPTER 3.

MARKING REQUIREMENTS - - - - ADJUDICATOR CARDS

The information contained in this chapter will assist in preparing the reader to: -

- Understand the requirements for the use of a range of adjudicating cards, and
- Understand application of the rules relating to infringement of unacceptable practices by couples in a competition or championship.

The Adjudicators' expertise, particularly in the technical arena, is the main attribute distinguishing their decisions from the opinions of a layperson.

Speed and accuracy of card marking is essential in addition to valid competitor assessment. This does not mean that you should start marking your card before the music starts or that you must make rushed judgements. The process of selection (in rounds) and allocation of placings (in finals) is open to personal preferences (based on acquired knowledge) and the Adjudicator must make a quick *but accurate* judgement.

Professional reputation should be of ultimate importance. Always mark performances on how you see them *not* as you might think others would expect you to mark.

Adjudicating Cards.

Samples of typical adjudicating cards are to be found at the end of this chapter.

As a general principle (and depending upon the size of the event), adjudication cards are usually prepared in advance showing amongst other things, the Event No. and if appropriate, the number of couples to be recalled. Any changes to recall requirements will be announced by the Chairman of Adjudicators or the Compere.

In cases where cards are not prepared in advance, be sure to always insert (at the very least) the Event Number, the dance(s) and your identification symbol.

Where electronic marking is utilised, adjudicators still need to be mindful that changes may be necessary to the information on their tablets, for example a couple enter the floor other than from the marshalling area and have not had their number scanned into the system. Adjudicators should continue to assess the competitors and remember what they intend for the missing couple number – the scrutineers will update the tablet or the compere may request adjudicators to “refresh” when the corrected information is available.

Obligations of Adjudicators. - - - Requirements of the Skating System.

Rules 1 to 4 of the “Skating System” (the process of assessing the collective marks of the Adjudicators) set out obligatory requirements to be observed when marking cards.

Rule 1. Applies to the Rounds up to and including the Semi Final / Qualifying Round.

In each round of the event, the number of couples to be passed forward to the next round shall be nominated by the Chairman (in practice usually 2/3 and preferably not less than 50% of the total number of couples) and each adjudicator must vote accordingly.

It must be understood that until completion of the SEMI-FINAL, Adjudicators are merely VOTING in each round, for the couples whom they consider are worthy of further consideration in the following round. THEY DO NOT NECESSARILY MARK THE COUPLES IN ORDER OF MERIT.

When a Round involves more than one heat, the number of couples selected from each heat to make up the required vote, IS AT THE DISCRETION OF THE INDIVIDUAL ADJUDICATOR. *All that matters is that each Adjudicator votes in each dance for the number of couples required over the whole round. So all or no couples in a heat may be recalled.*

Rules 2 to 4 Relate to the Adjudicators’ marking of Cards in the FINAL ROUND.

Rule 2. *Each Adjudicator shall place the competing couples in order of merit in each dance.*

Rule 3. *The order of merit established by each Adjudicator shall be indicated by 1 for first, 2 for second, etc.*

Rule 4. *It is not permissible for an Adjudicator to tie couples for any place in the final in any dance.*

Repechage

The repechage system **is a method of organising the recall requirements in the initial** round of an event that ensures all participants the opportunity of dancing at least twice. It in no way varies from the requirements of Rule 1.; in effect it creates a “second chance” round for couples that were not selected to pass to the next round.

BY WAY OF EXAMPLE: 48 couples compete in Round 1, 12 couples are selected to pass to Round 3, the remaining 36 couples compete again (as Round 2 – the “repechage “round) from which a further 12 couples are selected to compete in Round 3.

When using the Repechage system, apart from the requirement to have an overall recall of not less than 50% of the original entry (to what effectively becomes the third round of the event), there is no specific requirement regarding the number of couples to be recalled from a round or a repechage round.

General obligations.

- **Cards must be signed.**
- **Cards must be legible.**
- **Changes should be clearly made and initialled by the Adjudicator.**
- **Mark only the required number of couples to pass forward to the next round.**
- **Mark all couples in Finals.**

Marking less than the required number may be depriving a couple of a place in the next round. If more than the required quantity is marked then the Scrutineer will only take the first required set of numbers from the card.

Some computerised scrutineering programs will only accept the specified number of couples required while others incorporating a scanning device will not accept cards with excess selections, which must then be returned to the respective Adjudicator for amendment.

- In situations where cards have not been prepared in advance with printed numbers, take care to record a couples' number on the card only once.

If the card is marked incorrectly particularly in Finals, the Chairman of Adjudicators will return the card for correction. Occasionally in a tightly packed program schedule it can happen that a correction is found necessary and called for two or three events later. This can sometimes be not only extremely embarrassing for the Adjudicator but as well, grossly unfair if recollection is not accurate.

“D” Marking Procedure.

Competitors in all grades of Juvenile events and “Level 1” events in all other age divisions are not permitted to use figures outside of those contained in the Restricted Syllabus set by NZBDC.

Adjudicators are to be fully conversant with the contents of the Restricted Syllabus and any other competition performance rules such as the “Guidelines in New Vogue Dancing” which may apply from time to time.

The documents referred to here are included in the Appendices section of this Manual.

If an infringement of such rules is witnessed, it must be noted on the judging card by marking “D” against the number of the couple concerned even if this includes the couples for selection into the next round.

At the time of publication of this Manual, the preceding paragraphs outline the current requirements under NZBDC rules, however (and whilst not removing any onus of compliance) recognising the task for Adjudicators in assessing the competitive performances as being onerous enough without the expectation of rule infringement identification at all times, provision is made for one or more “invigilators” (Penalty Judges) to be engaged.

- *Invigilators report directly to the Chairman of Adjudicators or Organiser.*
- *The decision as to what course of action (if indeed any) is to be taken remains the sole and absolute discretion of the Chairman.*

It is important to understand that: -

- A “D” mark is NOT a disqualification as such.
- Adjudicators are not required/obliged to mark a couple last in spite of a “D” notation.
- At no time is an Adjudicator permitted to approach any couple and advise them of their action in relation to “D” marks. ***Only the Chairman of Adjudicators (or the organiser) is authorised to discuss the infringement with the couple concerned.***
- The onus rests with the Scrutineer to report “D” marking to the Chairman of Adjudicators or in their absence, the organiser.
- In all cases of “D” markings, Adjudicators are required to substantiate this action to the Chairman of Adjudicators or (in the absence of a Chairman the Organiser).

In subsequent rounds prior to the final, the same procedure applies except that, where the same couple collects “D” marks from at least two Adjudicators in the same dance, the onus rests with the Chairman of Adjudicators or in the absence of Chairman, the Organiser (after being informed by the Scrutineer) to delete the marks of that couple in that dance in that round.

“D” Marking Procedure - - - In the Final Round.

Adjudicators must mark the couples in their selected order of merit, marking “D” for any observed infringement against the couple concerned.

Should any couple collect “D” marks from at least two Adjudicators in the same dance, the onus rests with the Scrutineer to place the couple last in that dance and report such action to the Chairman of Adjudicators (or the Organiser) in addition to noting the “D” marking on the scrutineer marking sheet.

Visual Judging: This method of judging is widely used by the International DanceSport Federation in the finals of events in Europe and at World Championships under their jurisdiction but has limited use in New Zealand mainly because of its’ time consuming nature.

The public display of Adjudicators marking is at the discretion of the Organiser. It can be done after each dance, following a specific number of dances, or after the final dance.

The procedure is for the Adjudicator to hold up, or have displayed, a sign with the number corresponding to the placing given for competitors, as the compere announces their number.

Sample Adjudicator Cards. Are shown on the following pages. Since there is no set format/layout, this will vary from organiser to organiser however the information/instructions shown are pretty much standard. Whilst these samples are formatted as “Single Dance” cards, it is by no means unusual to have cards covering multiple dances.

Round	Number of Heats	Select	Out of	Event No.
QR	3	16		23

ADULT STANDARD LEVEL 1

107		204				Dance QSTEP
124		206				
147		220				
149		223				Select Couple ✓
154		229				
156		232				
159		234				Cancel Selection X
165		235				
179		239				
189		245				Reinstate Selection 
190		257				
195		261				
198		275				Scratch Pad
199						
200						
201						
202						
203						
Signature:						SYMBOL

EVENT	Grade	Style
Sub Juvenile	Level 1	
Juvenile	Level 2	Standard
Junior	Level 3	
Adult	Level 4	Latin
Youth	Open	
Masters I	6 Dance	New Vogue
Masters II	8 Dance	
Professional	10 Dance	

Position	PLACE ALL COUPLES		EVENT No.
1 st			83
2 nd			
3 rd			
4 th			DANCE Jive
5 th			
6 th			
7 th			SYMBOL 7
8 th			

Signed: _____

CHAPTER 4 SCRUTINEERING

Although questions on the mechanics of the Scrutineering process will not form part of the Adjudicating Principles Assessment papers, it is nevertheless strongly recommended that Adjudicators acquire a reasonable understanding of its workings.

The “Skating System” is the method used world-wide to assess the collective markings of the Adjudicators, determine the recalls to subsequent rounds and ultimately the allocation of positions in the final.

The brainchild of Mr Arthur Dawson. The Skating System originated in the early 1940's. The current format, comprising 11 rules, accepted by the then “English Official Board” has been in use since 1956.

Rules 1 to 4 Dealing with the actual marking of the Adjudicator Cards are detailed in the previous chapter.

Ascertaining which couples go forward to the following round is established by starting with the HIGHEST aggregate total of selection marks (awarded over all dances in the event) and working down until the required number of couples is obtained.

Should it happen that the LOWEST total of marks allowing for progression to a subsequent round is held by more than one couple, then EITHER all the couples concerned are passed through OR none of them. This decision rests with the Chairman of Adjudicators or in the absence of Chairman, the Organizer.

Rules 5 to 8 Deal with the allocation of positions in the INDIVIDUAL DANCES.

The APPLICATION AND CONCERN upon which each of these rules is based is MAJORITY markings of the Adjudicators.

- **Rule 5** *The winner of a particular dance is the couple who is placed first by an absolute majority of the Adjudicators. Second, the couple that is placed second or higher by an absolute majority. The remaining positions are allocated in the same way.*
- **Rule 6** *If two or more couples have a majority of markings for the same position, the couple with the largest majority shall be allocated the position under review and the couple with the next largest majority, the following position.*

- **Rule 7 is set in two parts.**

(a) *If such majorities are equal, then the lowest total of marks given by those Adjudicators who form the majority shall determine the allocation of the position under review.*

(b) *If the total of these marks are equal, then the next lower place (or places, if necessary) in respect of the particular couples concerned must be included and the process as in 7a repeated.*

In a case like this, should it happen that when the marks are exhausted, the couples remain tied (equal) then they shall be allocated the mean (average) of the positions that would normally be awarded between that number of couples.

• **Rule 8** *If no couple receives a majority of marks for the position under review then the next lower place marks must be taken into account until a majority is found.*

Rules 9 to 11 Deal with the allocation of positions in the FINAL SUMMARY of events that are contested over more than one dance. The result allocated to each couple in each dance is carried forward to the Final Summary. These marks are then simply ADDED TOGETHER.

Rule 9 *The aggregate totals, commencing with the LOWEST and working up to the highest, determine the allocation of final positions from first place onwards.*

If there is a tie between two or more couples for a position because of equal totals then Rule 10 must be applied.

Rule 10 It is important to note that in the application of this rule the basis of concern is with the “most or greatest” number of marks *NOT* majorities.

The position shall be allocated to the couples with the most number of places (or higher) for the position under review. When making calculations under this rule if ½ marks are involved they must be considered as “higher than the next full mark” e.g. a mark of 2 ½ would be calculated as a “3rd and better” mark NOT a “2nd and better”.

When dealing with ties under rule 10 if it happens that none of the couples involved have actually won a place (or higher) in the individual dances for the position under review, *they will remain tied under rule 10 and reassessed under Rule 11.*

If it happens that two couples have won the same number of places (or higher) for the position under review, the LOWEST aggregate of those places determines who is allocated the position. The remaining couple will be placed next.

If it is the case that both couples have the same aggregate total of those place marks (or higher), they will remain tied under Rule 10 and reassessed under Rule 11.

If the tie involves say three couples, the position under review is allocated in the same way with the remaining couples being then considered again under Rule 10 for the following places.

Rule 11 Deals with the breaking of ties that remain after the application of Rule 10.

All the dances in the event are treated as one with the calculations (using the application of procedures under rules 5 to 8) based on MAJORITY of Adjudicators markings. By way of example a five dance event with seven Adjudicators would have a maximum of 35 marks for any particular position so in this case the total of marks need to have a majority would be 18 or more.

In the possible but highly unlikely event of a tie remaining after the application of RULE 11, the decision as to how to deal with the matter rests with the Organiser.

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CHAPTER 5

ASSESSMENT OF COMPETITORS.

The information contained in this chapter will assist the reader to understand the many issues surrounding the assessment of performances and to learn from the experience of established Adjudicators (both National and International) in formulating priorities of assessment.

The “Art” of Adjudication

Competitive dancing which we call DanceSport, certainly at its higher levels of achievement is an *artistic physical activity* which with its many unquantifiable elements of performance makes its’ adjudication an exercise of great complexity, and even more so when the comparative analysis of the competing couples has to be made and a ranking decision made within such a limited timeframe.

With little more than a few seconds (depending upon the number of couples involved) spread over probably several quick glances, it seems to be almost next to impossible, but it has to be done and no doubt amplifies why so often different Adjudicators can receive varying impressions of the same couple quite apart from allowing for variations in the individual approach to the adjudicating process.

This then explains why experienced adjudication is an art, almost an instinct, developed from that experience. Furthermore it underlines the justification for the use of panels of Adjudicators whereby the collective result from the marks given by a variety of considered opinions (bearing in mind the “non-measurable” nature of the activity) is undoubtedly the closest to perfection that can be achieved and usually ensures that the end result is the correct and equitable one.

The Duty of the Adjudicator

Above all else, competitors are relying on the honesty and integrity of the Adjudicators.

The duty of the Adjudicator is to use their knowledge to give an informed personal opinion based on the performance(s) being viewed. He/she should NOT be concerned with agreement or otherwise with the other Adjudicators on the panel.

The late (and most highly experienced and respected) international authority Alex Moore once wrote in his Monthly Letter Service “the marking of six really top couples in a good final *should* vary, otherwise the judges might as well sit at home and send their marks in by post”.

Priorities in Assessment

Dictating how Adjudicators should make their assessments relies upon the supposition that on any given occasion they will think alike. *Sometimes they may, but in reality the likelihood is that they will have different priorities and emotional attachment.* Also the elements of performance to be considered are many and varied, and by and large are difficult to analyse individually

Adjudicators will, with experience, assess the total performances without consciously analysing each element and very often their choice is made by default. That is, they will favour the couple with the least number of faults rather than in reverse. Prioritising of criteria also alter slightly depending on the particular level of competition or which round of the event is in progress, or perhaps the age division being adjudicated

Elements of Performance.

Elements of performance for consideration would be roughly the same for both Standard and New Vogue styles and should include:

- Timing
- Technique
- Fluidity of Movement
- Style/Hold/Posture/Shape
- Partnering/Togetherness
- Floor craft
- Musicality/Expression/Characterisation
- Presentation

In regard to the Latin American style, whilst the technique is laid down clearly enough in the textbooks, the lack of body contact allows for a high degree of freedom of expression in choreography, and drawing heavily on ballet, theatrical dance and floor gymnastic disciplines for new ideas, has tended to move away from the original authentic concepts of Latin dance resulting in the need for a slightly different approach.

Particularly at the higher levels of competition, after Timing, the two main aspects of performance evaluation involve *Technical Ability and Artistic Interpretation*, and a combination of high skills in both these aspects is indispensable, however, whilst theatrical type movements may be readily appreciated by the layperson, ***Technical Ability should still be a priority in the assessment process.***

At the lower levels of competition the emphasis should certainly be on the dancers demonstrating a thorough grounding in sound technique *before* attempting to use advanced choreography. *Adjudicators should encourage this by marking accordingly.*

Elements of performance for consideration in the Latin American style should include: -

- Timing
- Technique
- Rhythmic Interpretation/Musicality/Expression
- Style/Posture/Shape
- Floor craft
- Choreography/Characterisation
- Presentation.

It should be noted that in both instances as shown, the Elements of Performance are not listed in any specific order, however the element of TIMING *irrespective* of the style of dance is of absolute significance. If a couple is not dancing in time with the music (or is consistently in and out of time with the music) no amount of proficiency in any combination of the other elements can overcome this *and they should be marked accordingly.*

In the early rounds of competitions the performance elements of timing, a stylish look (meaning a good carriage of the head and arms) and fluidity or ease of movement (in Standard and New Vogue) and rhythmical action (in Latin American) are easily recognised, and can generally be relied upon as a good indication of the worthiness of selection for closer scrutiny as the numbers thin out in subsequent rounds.

TECHNIQUE

Notwithstanding the segregation of aspects in the foregoing lists of *Elements of Performance* TECHNIQUE means everything concerned with the mechanical part of artistic performance. ***IT IS THE VERY FOUNDATION OF GOOD DANCING.***

The informative notes that follow have been collected from a number of influential sources and will no doubt assist with the recognition of ***CORRECT TECHNIQUE & QUALITY OF PERFORMANCE.***

TECHNICAL MERIT AS A BASIS FOR ADJUDICATING.

Whether it be Standard, Latin American or New Vogue, *Technical Merit* is of vital importance as a basis for teaching, coaching and **adjudication** and equally so, is the recognition of *Correct Technique* which covers the major elements of the way dancers produce, and connoisseurs appreciate, *Style, Movement and Musical Interpretation.*

The following points are extracts from notes by Harry Smith-Hampshire and whilst they deal primarily with the Standard dances much of the content can be applied also to New Vogue sequence dances.

Posture and Balance: The correct carriage of the body is the first important element of Technique. Both partners' bodies should be stretched and with the weight poised over the forepart of the feet at set-up, body upright for the man, body curving in a gentle curve from the feet upwards for the lady. This curve should bring her waist into contact with the man's middle, her upper body describing an outward curve from the middle line. The lady's hips should be stretched upwards and forwards. The controlled curve of the lady's body should be indicative of elegant femininity. Exaggerated arching of the upper part of the body detracts from this elegance.

The Correct Hold: When the partnership hold is completed, the effect should be to highlight the masculinity of the male and the femininity of the female. The man's arms should be (and look) supportive, though relaxed, while the lady's arms should be as soft and fluid as though made of chiffon. This softness is so that relative changes of partnership position from, say, normal closed hold to promenade or fallaway positions can be achieved without distortion of the man's arm and back lines. The shoulders should not be lifted but remain settled. A clean, unbroken shoulder line with the arms extending the natural *declining* line of the shoulders down to the elbows is the ideal for the male. *"The artificial position with the elbows as high or higher than the shoulders is technically incorrect for either partner and the tension induced by this excessive elevation is the direct opposite of artistic"*.

Body Contact: The maintenance of Body Contact in the Standard dances has always been one of the most solid of the pillars of the Ballroom style. "Gapping" is to be regarded as a sin and must be penalised as such, The higher the grade of the couple the more deadly is the sin, Unbroken body contact is imperative for all international class competitors and is important for all other grades of competitors and medallists.

Body Swing and Rise and Fall: In the "swing dances" these qualities are inter-related. *Body Swing* is used to initiate progression on all leading steps of basic figures and variations. As a consequence, the correct use of Body Swing will induce a *natural* feeling of Rise to be followed by a controlled lowering action each of which should appear as though *effortless*.

There are two main types of Rise, though many variants exist. **Pendulum** type swing is used in the "English" waltz and a shallower form of this for the Natural and Reverse Turns of the Viennese Waltz (there is no rise used in Fleckerls). A **waveform type** (i.e. undulating-swing typifies the Slow Foxtrot. The Quickstep embraces both main types of Rise, using waltz-type rise in Progressive Chasses and Lock Steps but Foxtrot type Rise in the Turns.

Tango. NO Body Swing – NO Body Rise – NO Foot Rise

Body Swing is not used in this dance, hence neither Body Rise nor Foot Rise. Tango is historically and characteristically a *rooted* dance. It is still the only dance to be based on a walking action. The knees are always slightly flexed and every step is placed with a firm foot pressure into the floor. NO forward step is taken on the toe. On the Forward Walks the back-foot heel is lifted only slightly clear of the floor before the foot is released to move

forward. Where a heel is elevated, the ball of that foot should *always* remain in contact with the floor. *“Sometimes seen is the affectation of stretching and elevating the heel of the unweighted foot high off the floor on the entry into Promenade Position with only the tip of the toe remaining in contact with the floor. This is totally out of character”*.

In Tango all forward steps including the “Quicks” are made with a Heel Lead and the foot is instantly placed flat. Most closing steps are placed with the whole sole of the foot meeting the floor at the same time...it is ***not*** necessary to stamp.

Contra Body Movement: The correct use of CBM is very important to style and movement. It may be defined as the turning of the opposite side of the body as a whole (hip and shoulder) in the direction of the moving leg. In its application to dance CBM is used to commence all turns and Outside-Partner figures. It gives continuity and fluidity to the action of turning. It also facilitates a smarter partnership shape when taking a step outside partner and makes possible the maintenance of body contact on all such figures.

Natural Balancing Sway: The *body-swing dances* use sway as a balancing force on turns (but not on Spins) in a similar manner to an aircraft banking as it makes a turn. This mental image is an excellent illustration of the use of **dynamic** Sway in dancing. (If an aircraft were perfectly balanced by its precise degree of inclination during a turn—with forces of turn-and-bank being equalised, a passenger would still feel as though the aircraft were flying level). *The bodyline during this kind of balancing sway should be a straight line from head to toe. There should be no breaking at the waist in this kind of sway. “Balancing Sway” is not used in Tango...Sway when used for effect/shape in “Picture” steps such as Oversways and Lunges etc. is referred to as “broken” Sway.*

Quality of Leg Action: Legs, ***led*** by *body-swing*, should swing from the hips. The legs should not appear to lead the body. Precision leg tracking is important, as though moving along rails. The insides of the legs should brush when passing. *“Width between the legs when passing is a clear sign of poor quality dancing”*.

Seamless Fluidity of Movement in the Swing Dances.

Seamless fluidity in dance movement is a quality that distinguishes the real expert from the less expert in the same way that a Rolls Royce expresses the epitome of **smoothness** when measured against lesser cars. ***Fluidity of Progression, of Rise and Fall, of Turn and Spin, of acceleration and deceleration so that the two partners move as one is the ideal.***

Quality Footwork: With the exception of step 2 of inside turns, feet should be seen to be parallel to each other both in movement and placement and there should be a stretched tension in the feet in order to create clean, straight-line heel-to-toe shapes **together with a centralisation of weight passing over the feet** for which *ankle control* is absolutely vital in order to avoid the feet rolling outwards over the outer edge in Forward and Backward steps.

Characterisation: The dance portrayal should convey the specific character of the various dances. By way of example, robust or aggressive dancing is out of character in the Waltz, which is a dance suggestive of romantic love, likewise the lively nature, and often seen light-hearted movement of the Quickstep is not suited to the more sedate and silky flow nature of Foxtrot music.

Floor craft: The standardised general direction of progression on the dance floor is anti-clockwise. The height of bad floor craft is when couples choose to dance movements that travel for several metres *against* the normal flow of movement **or** when they travel *across* the centre-line of the floor, thereby interrupting the movement of other couples. **Penalising bad floor craft should encourage good floor craft.**

Ballroom (Standard) Fundamentals. Bill Irvine M.B.E.

One of the most beautiful aspects of Ballroom Dancing is to see a couple gliding their bodies through intricate patterns and movements in complete harmony not only with the music, but also with each other. It is this “togetherness” which has made the British style of Ballroom Dancing famous throughout the world.

If someone were to take the trouble to work out how much time a judge has to assess the qualities of the dancers in the early rounds of the British Championships it would probably be so infinitesimal it would not be worth recording, SO WHAT DOES THE DISCERNING EYE OF THE JUDGE SEE AS THE COUPLES DANCE PAST HIM? . *He has only time to look at the overall picture and in this overall picture he will most probably register a good line and style; movement; rhythmical interpretation.*

One cannot possibly separate these three important factors in Ballroom dancing, but I do feel that a smart and well-balanced line will give the couple a great advantage in going further in the competition.

Poise, Line, and Shape. Shape –a word much used today – The line of two bodies moulded together as one unit, moving effortlessly across the floor with no distraction of exaggerated lines, is what is deemed to be elegant. ***Dancing is a natural action and when strain and stress are felt or seen, it cannot be correct.***

Choreographic Characterisation of Competitive Standard Dances

BDF Lecture Notes by Anthony Hurley.

Recent years have seen a development in choreographic trends in all dances. These modern trends are constantly challenging the couples to the very limits of balance AND DANCE DYNAMICS IN THEIR QUEST TO BE AS SENSATIONAL AS POSSIBLE. All very exciting and perhaps to the individual and the public alike, very exhilarating. Unfortunately these desires to be choreographically sensational are not always being selected with either the character of the dance in mind, or the music, and very importantly, the physical structure of the couple.

The choreography should enhance both the character and the music to create the very feel of the dance in question. The following analysis is offered as a guide in the selection of suitable figures.

WALTZ: *Superb swinging motion of forward, side and backward actions, elegant spins and pivoting should be choreographed to enhance the characteristics of the dance, with controlled use of rise and lowering through strong feet.*

TANGO: *A more compact body and arm positioning should be instantly recognisable. The leg and ankle work correctly applied tells the judge if the couple have a good basic grounding for this dance. There must be no swing or rise. Sharp body and head movements are all essentials of the dance.*

SLOW FOXTROT: *A classical dance of light continuous flowing movement must be maintained at all times. A controlled slow leg action is the ultimate quality of the dance to keep the couple moving elegantly across the floor.*

QUICKSTEP: *The fastest rhythm of the standard dances. It must therefore be fast moving incorporating light action and importantly because of the speed, contrasting rhythms.*

Clearly much of today's spectacular routines whilst very clever are not necessarily enhancing the performers' natural ability to show individuality or correct characterisation and this is particularly noticeable in couples with obviously limited experience whose routines are overloaded with complex figures. Aspiring champions should understand that a win couldn't be expected based solely upon choreography but rather by the perfection of basic principles, which in turn gives the dancer the ability to attempt difficult figures and to make them look easy. ***Choreography should be a selection of basic and advanced figures*** always ensuring it is aesthetically picturesque to the dance in question.

THE VIENNESE WALTZ

Notes by Richard Gleave/Harry Smith-Hampshire/Bill Irvine MBE

The Viennese Waltz is a free flowing, swift moving dance. The music delightfully lilting.

Music, movement and line are the most important factors in dancing a good Viennese Waltz and it is the skilful blending of these three vital elements that make the dance attractive to watch and enjoyable to dance. Ideally, the progression of movement should follow an orbital –like “Curve of Progression”. Fleckerls should be danced in or near the centre of the floor.

Music and Movement: The music is fast, there is no time for rubato phrasing as in Foxtrot. In Viennese waltz try to be perfectly with the front half of the beat. *The body on the foot on the beat is the musical goal.* The body must go forward not only downward. It is a common mistake to lower through the standing leg too much thereby preventing the use of the big muscles of the hip and thigh to propel the body forward. *Drive the body forward not downward.*

The Change Steps: May be commenced either forward or backward as appropriate with the feet being placed along the “orbit of progression” so as to show no interference to the smooth flow of the movement.

The Natural Turn: If the first powerful thrust action is correct, steps two and three will be a natural consequence. It is important for the both bodies to remain centred, turning as one unit. The most common fault is for either partner to turn too early. The CBM of the dancers must be the same, and at the end of the first step the body should be square to the feet and not twisted across the feet. The weight of the heads should always be kept to the correct outside circle of the couple so as to use the natural centrifugal forces to improve the body swing and movement.

Rise and Fall: The characteristic Rise and Fall pattern (a shallow, lilting arc) that is almost wholly a result of Body Swing should be felt more in the knees than in foot elevation. Even a little too much foot rise will create a jerky action. The dancer on the inside of the turn should keep the closing foot flat – or nearly flat.

Sway: Sway should be the natural reaction to the turn and not a break from the waist. Viennese Waltz Sway, led by the Man but extended by the Lady, is a slight flexible arcing of the body from the waist upwards. In this dance Sway should not so much be used as a tool for assisting balance, but rather for adding impetus to body swing or for adding artistic effect.

Footwork: The major fault is for the man to release the toe of the left foot on step six of the Natural Turn. The foot must be closed with the toe of the left foot in contact with the floor ending with the foot flat.

Judging Criteria: Stephen Hillier.

Think of a Jigsaw Puzzle, all the pieces have to be fitted together for the picture to be complete. So it is with Ballroom Dancing—the completed picture results from an understanding and application of the correct principles and techniques. If these principles and techniques such as Swing, CBM, CBMP, correct use of the feet, turning etc., are not correctly applied then the result is an incorrect or incomplete picture.

So judging is, or should be, about assessing a couple on the basis of how complete and correct their picture is. This can be made more difficult for the adjudicator by couples that try to disguise a lack of fundamental principles, or technique, through some form of distraction. Facial expression and costuming are often used to take the eye away from the lack of correct dancing. A lack of sound foundation may be covered by not dancing any basic figures, only choreographed routines, which may look good superficially but the adjudicator must be able to see through these ploys and place the best dancer first.

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Floor craft: Harry Smith-Hampshire /Anthony Hurley.

Floor craft is one of the finer skills of the art of DanceSport: a skill which separates “the men from the boys”: the alert, considerate thinking dancers from the clumsy. *It is as important and essential quality* as is the fluidity of Movement, excellence of Style and expressive Musicality

Floor craft also extends to the avoidance of one’s fellow- competitors. The odd collision is perhaps forgivable BUT for the kamikaze competitor who consistently ricochets off every couple (and sometimes adjudicators as well) in sight, *the adjudicator may well be justified in weighing the standard of floor craft in the balance* when determining the which couples should go through to the next round.

It may well be that rocketing round the floor when performing a high-speed Quickstep group is an attention-getter which will yield good results, BUT THIS IS ONLY TRUE when the couples’ flight path and braking ability are both under control.

The basic rules of floor craft could be summarised as follows: - *Stay out of trouble: predict and take advantage of clear spaces; aim for an uninterrupted flow of artistic movement.*

Never cross the centre line of the floor against the flow of dancers. Avoid use of figures that travel against the Line of Dance for more than two or three steps... AND Employ sufficient flexibility in choreography to be able to make spontaneous changes of pace, figure or direction, not only to avoid collisions but also for the more profitable reason of using clear spaces on the floor to show your dancing to the best advantage.

NEW VOGUE --- Sequence Dancing

Much of what has been detailed in the preceding pages regarding the mechanics of technique and *“Technique as a basis for Adjudicating”* in the Standard style, applies similarly to the New Vogue style, however since New Vogue is a form of Sequence Dancing with set routines/choreography employing the use of a variety of Holds (and movements with release of partner contact) the *“carriage and line of the arms”* component is deserving of added consideration in assessment.

Quite apart from the requirement of adherence to the *“Standardised General Competition Technique for the New Vogue Championship Dances”* ---- Expressive use of the Arms and Hands through rhythmical and well co-ordinated actions that are in complete harmony with the flow of the movement, *and the music*, are conducive to QUALITY Sequence Dancing.

Likewise in dances where *“release of partner contact”* is part of the choreography, reasonable proximity needs to be maintained together with *matching* and balanced use of arms and hands in order for the picture to be complete.

Generally speaking, excessive distancing in *“release of partner contact”* figures, the excessive use of *“semaphore-like”* arm movements, the use of exaggerated Sways and worst of all the attempt to *“play with the timing”*, which are employed as attention grabbing exercises, *in most cases come at the expense of controlled and expressive use of the feet and ankles* which is every bit as important to the production of QUALITY PERFORMANCE in New Vogue as it is in the Standard dances.

Quality of Performance in the New Vogue style, because it is a form of Sequence Dancing with limited fixed choreography and *with* all couples dancing the same movements at the same time, *needs* to be measured *initially*, against the comparative accuracy of technical competency, such as the aspects of Timing, Footwork, Controlled use of Rise and Lowering and Flow of Movement before taking account of artistic embellishments.

ALL DANCES: Poise, Leg and Ankle action, Use of Arms, The Latin (Cuban) Cross, Weight distribution, Physical and Shaping Leads, Leg and Body speeds.

RHYTHMIC INTERPRETATION.

Since the Latin Dances (with the exception of Paso Doble) are rhythm dances it is essential for any couple that are to succeed competitively to be very strong rhythmically.

Rhythmic interpretation is one aspect of Latin Dancing that cannot be faked or successfully hidden and comes from an understanding of the rhythmic construction of each dance and how to advantageously use the accented beats of the music.

CHOREOGRAPHY

The inclusion of one or two tricks that catch the eye can be used for choreographic interest but routines that are overloaded with tricks and gimmicks do not allow the adjudicator an opportunity to assess the *Quality of Performance* when there is a lack or complete absence of movements that show the fundamental action and character of the dance.

The end product should be a well-balanced combination of patterns/movements that suit the couple and are within their capabilities. Overuse of “poised lines and shapes’ provide little or no opportunity for the assessment of rhythmic quality.

CHARACTERISATION

Each dance of course has its own character or story and whilst it is probably one of the most difficult of tasks to achieve it is desirable (and at the higher levels of competition, essential) that this aspect be portrayed and easily readable

PRESENTATION

This refers to appearance (including grooming and attire), walking on and off the floor, standing between dances, attitude on the floor, facial expressions, focus when looking at partner or the audience, positioning on the floor for each dance, all of which can influence the focus of the adjudicators’ attention.

“EFFICACITY”

That quality variously described as “Magic”, “Presence”. “Dominance”, “Impact”, “Flair”, “Wizardry”, “Genius”...It is the ability to command attention on the competition floor or the power for a couple to produce their best at the right time.

Confidence is the ingredient of “efficacy”.

From a more abstract perspective, in addition to the above, which clearly identifies the elements that should be given consideration of varying degrees, it should not be forgotten

that Dancesport is a language and the Latin American genre is a specific dialect of Dancesport that needs to be clearly identified and understood as Latin American.

Correct grammatical use and sentence structure is necessary to make clear and precise points in language. In terms of Dancesport, the same could be said for choreography, use of syllabus figures and variations, characterisation and musical interpretation. The overall presentation means nothing if the structure defining that language/dialect is not there.

In other words, when we adjudicate we should ask ourselves, “Can I understand this story? Is it fluently expressing the overt and subtle elements of the dance?”

At the highest levels we should be open to the various interpretations of this dialect, expecting at least partial retention of the identifying elements. After all, the dancers’ integrity and freedom of expression is also valuable.

Essentially, the adjudicators’ capability of perception, bearing in mind their role is ultimately that of providing comparative feedback on a specific performance, should be the guiding principle in establishing an appropriate outcome for each round of the event.