

The Open Swing Dance Championships – 2024

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide the best possible environment, to showcase the highest level of competition from around the world, and thus provide the most exciting entertainment for our attendees.

About Our Event

The Open takes pride in being the flagship International Swing Dance competition, paving the way for dancers all around the world. The “best of the best” of West Coast Swing gather here to compete for the coveted title, “The Open Champion” and work all year to take home an **OPUS**. More competitors come to *The Open* to perform their swing routines than any other event in the world. Dancers consider *The Open* to be the most challenging and exciting swing competition of the year. Spectators get to witness the most amazing dance performances that will be seen in one place, at one time.

The Open is home to the “*Walk of Legends*,” an award given to those who have been legendary in their influence on swing, their contribution to making *The Open* Champion title so prestigious and who helped make *The Open* a highly celebrated event.

This will be the 40th Year of *The Open Swing Dance Championships*, which makes it one of the longest running swing competitions in the world. We invite you to come and become part of *The Open* tradition. Reunite with old friends and meet new ones.

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-beats, 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, swingouts, 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 but not limited to 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.

This statement is 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.

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Responsibilities as the Organizers

1. **Selecting the competition officials.** We will select a panel of Judges, Chief judge, Scorer, Referee Judge, Review Panel, MCs, Chief DJ, and Competition DJs. We will provide the names of these officials prior to the event on our website. Our MC will announce the judges for each competition at the start of the competition. There will be a minimum of seven (7) judges for all routine competitions.
2. **Determining the rules and schedule.** We will determine the rules for our competitions and post them in advance on our website. We will also post a full weekend schedule listing the times for all meetings, competitions, and awards. We will follow our posted schedule as much as possible. If we need to make any last-minute changes, we will announce them at the event.
3. **Registering contestants and verifying eligibility.** We will collect entries from eligible competitors in advance (using our online registration system) and at the event (during contest registration times listed on the weekend schedule). We will verify that you are eligible for each competition you enter. We will assign Bib numbers to Strictly Swing Leaders, and Jack & Jill Leaders and Followers.
4. **Holding all competitions as planned or modifying them if necessary.** We will do everything we can to hold all competitions as planned. If necessary, we may extend the registration deadline or change the eligibility requirements (if we are allowed to do so) if we receive insufficient entries.
5. **Cancellation of a competition.** If we must cancel a competition, we will refund your entry fee, and we may invite you to perform an exhibition instead.
6. **Scoring the results.** We will select a qualified independent scorer. Our scorer will use callbacks for all preliminary and semi-final heats, and relative placement for all finals. (A detailed explanation of relative placement is available on the WSDC website at www.worldsdc.com.) Our scorer will post QR Codes for all the competitions for public examination for approximately 1 hour after the announcement of the results and presentation of awards. Scores will also be posted online after the event.
7. **Announcing the results and presenting awards.** We will announce the results of all competitions at our Awards Ceremony. We will set aside a significant prize fund for the winners. (See the section on “Prize Money” at the end of this document for a list of prize amounts.) We will present all monetary prizes in the form of checks. If fewer couples enter than the number of places scheduled to receive prizes, we reserve the right to redistribute or retain any unused prize money.

Responsibilities as a Competitor

You may register for competitions in advance using our online registration system, or at the event during the contest signup times listed on the schedule. If you registered in advance, you should plan to pick up your Bib Number(s) at the event, at the contest sign-up desk during open hours. Be sure to check for any last-minute changes to the schedule.

1. **General Rules.** Competitors must have a full weekend pass, pay any required entry fee, and sign a legal waiver (if you are under 18, your parent or guardian must sign for you).
2. **Knowing the rules.** You should read the rules carefully prior to the competition. You are responsible “for following the rules” whether you have read them. If you have any questions, you should ask them at the contestants’ meeting or contact our Chief judge at usopencjyma@gmail.com ahead of time.
3. **Attending the contestants’ meeting.** It is recommended that at least one partner of a couple attend this meeting and if this is your first time competing at *The Open*.

4. **Being prepared to compete.** You should be in the Green Room at least 30 minutes before your competition. If you are not in line when the division is announced, you will not be able to compete. For Strictly Swing and Jack & Jill competitions, remember to bring your bib number.
5. **You must wear your bib number for all competition rounds including finals** (unless our competition officials tell you it is not needed). If you are not wearing a bib number, you will not be allowed to dance. If you are disqualified, miss the competition, or withdraw after the registration deadline, you will forfeit your entry fee.
6. **Demonstrate good sportsmanship conduct at all times.** You must demonstrate good sportsmanship conduct at all times, both on and off the competition floor. This includes treating your partners, other competitors, competition officials, spectators, event staff and volunteers, and the event itself with respect. Demonstrating a poor attitude by behaving in ways that our competition director, Chief judge, judging panel, or other competition officials deem inappropriate or disrespectful may result in a violation penalty or disqualification.
7. **Using appropriate channels to communicate your concerns.** If you have questions or concerns about our competitions, you should use appropriate channels to share your concerns, such as at the contestants' meeting or in a private discussion with our competition director or Chief judge. You are not allowed to confront, pressure, challenge, or argue with individual judges. If you harass or verbally abuse a judge or any other competition official, we may disqualify you and may also ban you from competing at our events in the future.
8. **Reviewing your scores.** Our scorer will post QR codes for all scores for approximately 1 hour after the announcement of the results and presentation of awards. You may review this information to see how you did. If you are unable to review your scores at the event, you may also view posted scores online or contact our competition director after the event.
9. **Appropriate behavior and attire.** It is our desire to encourage expressive and exciting dance performances without sacrificing the quality of dancing and good taste. To maintain this balance, we encourage you to put on a good show (including humor where appropriate) but within the context of presenting solid dance fundamentals. Comedy routines where a couple dances poorly on purpose for comic effects are not allowed.
10. **Age Appropriate.** Keep in mind that all ages (including young dancers) will be present at our event, and that your performance will be streamed live online and recorded for the future. Any action that our judges believe would make them uncomfortable in social dancing (such as inappropriate touching or simulating sexual behavior) may earn a violation penalty.
11. **Questions.** Check with our Chief judge in advance if you have any questions regarding the acceptability of your choreography or competition attire at: usopencjyma@gmail.com

Registration

1. Online registration opens August 1st.
2. Competitors who register by October 1st are guaranteed entry. Entry fees increase October 2nd.
3. Routine Divisions must register by November 11th. Late entries may be allowed at the discretion of the Organizers.
4. The Organizers can cancel any division due to **lack** of entries.
5. If a division does not have the required number of entries, the Organizer may choose to cancel that division. If a division is canceled, the entry fees will be refunded. If a division has at least three (3) entries and the Organizer decides to run the division with less than the required number of entries, the Organizer has the right to adjust the prize money. Competitors will be notified prior to the event about a canceled division or a division with adjusted prize money.
6. The Event Registration desk will be open Wednesday, November 22nd from 7-10 PM. We encourage everyone to register online prior to November 17th.

- Multiple registrations are allowed. You may choose to enter any competition for which you meet the specific entry requirements. However, if you enter more than one couples competition (Strictly Swing, Rising Star, Showcase, Classic, Sophisticated, Masters), you must compete with a different partner each time.

Program

Our program is part of THE **OPEN SWING DANCE CHAMPIONSHIPS, INC.** history and has been a collector's item since 1983. It documents the history of all who compete and with whom. We encourage every competitor to register in time and provide the information needed to be in our program.

- THE PROGRAM DEADLINE IS OCTOBER 10th.** If registering after October 30th, the organizer is not obligated to include you in the program. You may or may not be included in the program after Oct 10th based on editor and printing timelines. If you have questions, please contact info@usopenswing.com.
- Jack & Jill, Pro-Am Routines, and Strictly Swing divisions** will have their name, city, state, and country (if outside the United States of America) listed in the program.
- Routine Divisions:** We encourage Competitors in Routine divisions (N/A to the Pro-Am Division) to provide their "Bio" and picture for our program. They must be submitted in the proper format.
- How To Submit Your Program Info:** When you register and provide payment, you will upload your photo on the registration system.
 - Picture. -- The picture should be a head shot rather than a full body shot. We are interested in your faces. Full body shots end up being too small to be effective. Submit images in JPEG format, at least 300 dpi and size it no smaller than 2" x 2". We will be printing in black and white, so contrast is important. A color image is fine, as we can convert it to B&W. Your image should be a recent photo of you and your partner.
 - The Organizer reserves the right to reject any image that does not meet standards of good taste.
 - Please do not submit silly shots, pictures of kids, or pets.
 - To ensure your picture is processed properly you **MUST SUBMIT** your picture through the link provided to you upon payment. If you bypass the recommended process, we do not guarantee it will be in the program.

Music Submission

We encourage those competing in Routine divisions to submit their music prior to the event following the instructions below. If you do not submit prior to the event and choose to submit at the event, please see instructions below.

You may not submit your music on the day of your competition after floor trials.

All music will be played from a computer in digital format (preferably MP3 files at 320 kbps compression for best sound quality). Music in digital format will be emailed, CD's will be converted to MP3, and/or Flash (Thumb drives) will be transferred to the computer.

- Submitting Music prior to Event via email:
 - Email your digital music file in MP3 format to music@usopenswing.com.
 - Subject line: 2024 **The Open** Swing Dance Championships (YOUR DIVISION).
 - Please list divisions specifically, as this is how they will sort to ensure the deejay can locate your music.
 - Classic
 - Showcase
 - Rising Star
 - Sophisticated Swing
 - Masters
 - Pro-Am—Leader
 - Pro-Am—Follower
 - Young Adult
 - Young America
 - Teams

- e. You will receive confirmation that the music was received. Bring this confirmation with you to the music turn in/dance order draw, along with any set up, start points or pitch adjustments needed.
 - f. Labeling – Digital music files will be labeled as follows:
 - “2024usopen” _” divisions ” _”Names of Competitors”.mp3
 - Competitors will be responsible for their own practice music as you will not have access to your music except during the Main Ballroom Open Practice Schedule/scheduled floor trials.
 - It is the responsibility of the competitor to listen to their music from beginning to end to verify its accuracy and that there are not any discrepancies that may have occurred during digital transmission or digital conversion.
 - Neither *The Open* nor the deejays will be responsible for any issues pertaining to the music.
 - We recommend having a backup Thumb Drive with you in case there are any music problems.
2. Multiple Routines: If a competitor is performing in more than one routine division, music must be provided on separate Thumb Drives or files. Submitting music at the Event via Flash (Thumb drive). Submit a Digital copy of your music on a Flash (Thumb) drive immediately following competitors’ meeting.

Bib Numbers

All competitors are provided with a randomly selected Bib Number.

1. Bibs must be picked up at the Competitors Service desk, at least 2 hours prior to your first competition and after you have received your wristband.
2. Your Bib must accompany you when you check into the Competitors Green Room, 30 minutes prior to the competition.
3. Jack & Jill Divisions—both the Leaders and the Followers are required to wear their assigned Bib numbers for Prelims, Semis, and Finals.
4. Strictly Swing Divisions—only the Leader is required to wear Bib numbers. **You are required to collect your Bib** and take it to the Competitors Green Room for Check-in.
5. Show your Bib to the Competition Coordinators, in the Competitors Green Room, every contest.

Wrist Bands

1. We do not recommend removing your wristband for Jack & Jill and Strictly Swing divisions.
2. Routine competitors do not have to compete with their wristbands. Allow the Green Room staff to remove.
3. After competing, one of the Green Room staff will replace your wristband.
4. Wristbands are your responsibility. **Do not throw them away or lose them.**

Schedule

The Organizer will determine the date and time for each competition.

1. A tentative schedule will be listed on *The Open’s* website.
2. The organizer reserves the right to change the schedule based on the number of entries in a division and whether a prelim and/or semi-final is needed.

Practice Times

The Organizer will try to provide as much practice time in the main ballroom as possible.

1. Main Ballroom Open Practice Schedule: Priority is given to the divisions competing that day. Divisions not competing that day will be given separate times. SEE THE SCHEDULE FOR DETAILS. Please line up near the deejay booth and you will be processed in order. Competitors can queue up again as time permits.

Dance Order

1. **Jack & Jill Divisions.** Prelims and Semis will rotate partnerships and will be danced in heated format. The order of the Leader lineup and the order of the follower lineup is determined by the competitors' randomly assigned Bib number (ascending order). Finals may or may not be danced in heated format. For Jack & Jill Finals, the final round pairings will be computer generated, randomized by the Fisher-Yates shuffle algorithm.
2. **Strictly Swing Divisions.** Computer generated, randomized by Fisher-Yates shuffle algorithm. Prelims and Semis will be danced in heated format. Finals may or may not be danced in heated format.
3. **Pro-Am Divisions.** Computer generated, randomized by the Fisher-Yates shuffle algorithm.
4. **Opus Routines.** Computer generated, randomized by the Fisher-Yates shuffle algorithm will take place in the Ballroom, during the Competitors Meeting (see schedule for day and time).

Eligibility – Verification Process

1. We will verify that you are eligible for the competitions you enter by checking the World Swing Dance Council (WSDC) Points Registry and other sources of information, if applicable.
2. If you are concerned that other contestants are entered in an incorrect division or are ineligible, please inform our competition director or chief judge privately, as soon as possible. We will investigate and take appropriate action, if necessary.

If we determine before a competition that you registered for the wrong division or are not eligible, we will reassign you to the correct division (if possible) or allow you to withdraw. If we do not discover until after finals that you misrepresented your status and were not eligible, we may drop you (and your partner) out of awards. If we made an error and assigned you incorrectly, no penalty will be applied.

Petition Process

It is our goal to encourage you to compete with your peers. If you are unclear about which competition or division is right for you, check with our Chief judge at yantonacci@gmail.com before you register. If you want to enter a competition for which you do not meet the entry requirements, or want to change divisions, you must submit a petition.

1. To petition in advance: Complete Petition Application online through at: <https://usopenswing.com/wp-content/uploads/us-open-petition-to-dance-1.pdf>. You must make your request prior to November 1st. Please check WSDC rules for petitioning “up” and “down.”
2. List division, partner’s name, ages, partner relationship/history and present your case, to petition to dance together.
3. **The Open’s** Chief judge will review your petition “down.” Based on past decisions and what is best for that division, your petition will either be approved or disapproved.
4. The Chief judge will notify you of the decision. The Chief judge’s decision is Final.
5. For information regarding Jack & Jills petitions, please go to: <https://www.worldsdc.com/wsdc-points-registry-rules/>

Restart

1. You may request a restart if something happens during your dance that could impact safety, such as:
 - a. **Technical problems** – factors outside your control, such as: lights in the ballroom go out; flooring is faulty or damaged; music suddenly stops; or our DJ plays the wrong music for your dance.

- b. **Costume malfunctions** – your shoe breaks or becomes unfastened or untied; your costume tears or breaks; or you lose a piece of clothing that could endanger other dancers or expose a part of your body that would not normally be exposed in a public setting.
2. You may **not** request a restart if you are dissatisfied with your dance order, performance, partner, music, or because you fail to remember part of your routine.
3. For your own safety, you also will **not** be allowed to restart if you are injured during your dance.
4. You must request a restart prior to your departure from the floor, and our Chief judge must approve your request. Our chief judge may also call for a restart without a request from you if our Chief judge believes it is fair to all and in your best interest.
5. If our Chief judge allows a restart, your previous scores will be voided.
6. The restart will begin at the Chief judge’s discretion depending on whether it is a Showcase or Classic routine. They will not automatically perform last, if possible. If the Chief judge denies your request for a restart, or you decline an offer to restart, your prior performance will be scored.

Awards

The Organizer will determine and award all prizes and money. Monetary awards will be given in the form of a check at the Awards Ceremony.

1. **Friday Awards.** Pro-Am and Jack & Jills (if possible).
2. **Sunday Awards.** All remaining divisions.
3. If your check or checks total more than \$600, you will be required to complete an IRS 1099 tax form.
4. Your award envelope will direct you to the Green Room to pick up your checks. This should be done prior to Sunday evening at 7:30 PM. If not picked up, the checks will be mailed once the required information has been provided.

If for whatever reason, there is a national disaster or a severe economic downturn beyond the Organizer’s control, the Organizer reserves the right to adjust the prize money. Registered competitors will receive advance notice if this should become necessary.

Scores – Posting

QR Codes will be posted in the Green Room after the Awards Ceremony on Sunday evening. QR Codes will remain posted for one (1) hour. The Chief judge and Referee will be present to answer any questions. Please be respectful. The results will be posted online shortly after.

Appeals

No appeals will be allowed. All decisions of competition officials are final. However, you may use appropriate channels to discuss any concerns with our Chief judge or competition coordinator.

Judging Criteria

You will be judged on the following criteria:

1. **Timing. “How Your Body Connects to the Music.”** Swing is danced beginning on the downbeat. Good timing includes not only dancing to the correct beat but finer distinctions such as whether you are dancing to the syncopated “swing” of the music. Your syncopations and footwork also need to be on time.
2. **Technique. “How Well You Do What You Do.”** How well you execute the movements in your dance constitutes technique. Good technique includes clean execution and completion of dance elements such as control of balance and weight, foot placement, body lines, spins and turns, and control of arms and hands.
3. **Teamwork. “How Well You Work Together.”** Swing is a connected partner dance. Demonstrating this connection through lead/follow or action/reaction with your partner is an expected part of any swing dance competition. A balanced performance of give-and-take with your partner should be your goal. Ignoring, disrespecting, or jeopardizing the safety of your partner indicates poor teamwork. Compensating and adjusting for your partner is an expected part of good teamwork.
4. **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.
5. **Showmanship/Presentation. “How Well You Sell What You Do.”** Creating an atmosphere of excitement by inviting interest in your performance is the desired effect of a good presentation. A good presentation begins with your selection of appropriate attire and shoes. While providing a good show is one aspect of presentation, it cannot substitute *good dancing*. You should aim primarily for demonstrating positive dance chemistry together as a couple. Gratuitous mugging to the audience or the judges may result in a lower score. Good sporting conduct before, during, and after your dance is also an expected element of good presentation.
6. **Musical Interpretation. “How Well You Interpret the Music.”** Good musical interpretation consists of adjusting the flow of your dance to fit the style, tempo, mood, and rhythm variations in the music. You should strive to demonstrate the ability to hear and interpret nuances in the music throughout your dance.
7. **Level of Difficulty. “How Difficult is the Performance.”** Depending on “the degree of difficulty” that is executed will keep the audience engaged and the performance exciting. An elevated level of difficulty includes intricate and innovative movements that should be maintained throughout the performance and the execution should not appear “difficult.”

Guidelines for “Swing Content” for the West Coast Swing Routine Dancers

Swing Content is measured by percentages required within event rules. Each individual judge considers Swing Content percentages within their scores.

Primary Identifiable Characteristics (Spatial Structure)

1. Danced in a slot
 - a. follower stays in the slot
 - b. the leader moves off the slot to allow the follower to pass
 - c. The follower moves forward on counts “1” and/or “2” of the pattern

Structural Identity (Rhythm Structure)

1. Built on 6-beat and 8-beat foundation patterns: passes, push breaks, whips, tucks, open-to-closed and closed-to-open position patterns
2. Incorporates all 2-beat rhythm patterns: singles, doubles, triples, delays, holds, and syncopated rhythm patterns
3. Built on a foundation of 2-beat rhythm patterns: doubles and triples
4. 2-beat and 4-beat pattern extensions are frequently used to reconnect with musical phrasing
5. Patterns are connected by a 1 or 2 count stretched redirection referred to as an anchor
6. Stretch (default connection)

Musical Identity

1. The Open strongly recommends that Swing divisions be danced to music with consistently 2 or 4 beats per measure. Variations on these meters should look appropriate to swing dancing. Please remember that Swing is best danced when a swung rhythm is present.
2. Music should pulse (accent) the Upbeat (2,4,6,8)
3. Accents and interpretive *Musical Nuances* should be choreographed within the context of recognizable swing patterns.

Swing Content Violations

Please go to: <https://nasde.net/nasde-scoring/>

Violations & Errors

If you fail to follow *The Open's* rules, and a Referee is not part of the judging panel for a particular competition, our judges may assess a penalty. Unless defined elsewhere in our rules, the levels of severity and associated penalties are as follows:

1. Errors. An error is a minor and unintentional breach of the rules. For example:
 - a. A brief and unintended loss of contact with your partner (where the rules require contact)
 - b. A momentary loss of balance
 - c. A momentary loss of composure

Errors may be penalized (or not) at the discretion of each judge observing the error.

2. **Violations.** A violation is a serious and intentional breach of the rules. For example:
 - a. Making a face or expressing unhappiness with your draw of a particular partner or musical selection
 - b. Behaving disrespectfully toward your partner, another competitor, a spectator, a judge, or the event
 - c. Wearing an inappropriate outfit or costume
 - d. Competing while intoxicated or under the influence of mood-altering drugs
 - e. Using prohibited choreography, such as a lift in a Jack & Jill competition
 - f. Performing a “trick” move that endangers your partner, other competitors, or spectators
 - g. Choosing choreography that blatantly ignores or contradicts the phrasing of the music
 - h. Failing to include the required percentage of recognizable swing content in your dance

Judges may assign violations at their discretion, and they may choose to penalize a violation by a drop of one more position in their final placements.

Referee Judge and Review Panel

Routine and designated Final competitions will use the **Wayne Bott Referee System**, developed by Wayne Bott. A referee judge uses a checklist to determine whether each routine follows the rules.

1. If all couples pass, the review panel is not needed.
2. If any couple fails, our chief judge will appoint a review panel, which consists of the chief judge plus two (2) other judges.
3. These judges will review the video of the flagged couple to determine if a violation occurred.
4. If a majority of the review panel agrees that a violation has occurred, the review panel will determine the number of placements to be dropped based on the magnitude of the violation.
5. The penalty for a severe violation may include being dropped out of the money.

Time Violation for Routines

If our referee judge determines that your routine is over the maximum or under the minimum time limit and verified by our Chief judge, you will be disqualified (placed last). You will have the opportunity to try out your music before the competition during floor trials. It is your responsibility to ensure that your routine meets the time requirements.

Costumes -- Performance Attire

1. Performance attire is required for all routine divisions, including Showcase, Classic, Sophisticated Swing, Rising Star, Masters, Young Adult, Young America, Teams, and Pro-Am Routine. Vintage clothing is considered a costume, especially in Lindy routines.
2. Performance attire is NOT allowed in the Strictly and Jack & Jill divisions, however matching and/or dressy dance clothing is encouraged.
3. Please “Dress to Impress – Perform to Win.” Clothing and costumes should be in good taste, suitable for dancing and flattering in all divisions.
4. Halloween style costumes are not allowed. (Except for Floor Sweepers).

Dress Code

1. Blue Jeans and/or torn jeans are not allowed in any Jack & Jill or Strictly Swing Divisions. (Chief judge may disqualify the competitor).
2. If jeans are worn in a Routine division, they must connect to the music and a petition must be submitted to the chief judge prior to the event. If jeans are worn as costumes without prior approval, it will be reviewed by the review panel.
3. Age-appropriate costumes for the Young American and Young Adult divisions are required.
4. Age-appropriate clothing for the Junior Jack & Jill and Strictly Swing divisions is required.

Definitions

1. **Age restrictions.** There are divisions that have age restrictions/requirements. Please check each division for age requirements.
2. **Break-aways.** Breaking physical contact for 8-beats of music.
3. **Costume.** A costume is any attire specifically designed for dance routines and that would not be worn for social dancing. Costumes are allowed only in Rising Star, Showcase, Classic, Teams, and Pro-Am. (Matching or complementary outfits suitable for social dancing are not considered costumes and are allowed, although not required, in Strictly Swing).
4. **Couple/Partnership.** A couple consists of one leader and one follower.
 - a. A Routine couple may not compete together in another routine or strictly swing division.

5. **Dancing twice in the same division.** A competitor may not dance in the same division twice. even with a different partner.
6. **Entrance.** An entrance is an initial, pre-choreographed segment of a performance, where competitors formally enter the floor and prepare to dance. An entrance is allowed only in Rising Star, Showcase, Classic, Teams, and Pro-Am. (Acknowledging your partner, the judges, or the audience is not considered an entrance).
7. **Exit.** An exit is a final, pre-choreographed segment of a performance, where competitors formally leave the floor. An exit is allowed only in Rising Star, Showcase, Classic, Teams, and Pro-Am. (Acknowledging your partner, the judges, or the audience is not considered an exit).
8. **Prop.** Props are not allowed in any divisions.
 - a. A prop is anything used in the routine that is outside of the costume and is used to help tell a story.
 - b. Hats, jackets, capes, sunglasses, and other reasonable dance clothing items are considered costumes and may be worn in all divisions. However, clothing or items may NOT be discarded, nor switched from one partner to another.
 - c. If you are concerned if something might be considered a prop, you must ask prior to competing.
 - d. Microphones and/or headsets are not permitted during any routine.
 - e. Using a prop in any division will result in a violation.
9. **Routine.** A routine is any dance performance or segment using prearranged choreography rather than spontaneous lead/follow moves. Routines are allowed only in Rising Star, Showcase, Classic. (Coordinated footwork or mirror patterns from Carolina Shag are not considered routine).
10. **Side-by-side.** A side-by-side is any set of symmetrical or complementary movements of foot work executed by a couple that is not part of a recognizable lead/follow swing dance pattern. Such segments are often executed with the partners next to each other, both facing the judges (i.e., side-by-side), but segments executed in other positions (e.g., back-to-back, open position, closed position) are included in this definition for the purpose of these rules. Side-by-sides (no longer than 8 beats of music) are allowed in all our competitions. However, our judges may mark down excessive use of side-by-sides.
11. **Time Limit.** Performances must be a minimum of 2 minutes and a maximum of 3 minutes in every division with the exceptions below:
 - a. Pro-Am Routine performances must be a minimum of 1 ½ minutes and a maximum of 3 minutes.
 - b. Team performances must be a minimum of 3 minutes and a maximum of 5 minutes.
 - c. Choreographed Floor Entrances and Exits are included in the time limit (whether there is music).
 - d. A five-second buffer will be allowed to accommodate differences in music equipment. Time starts at the first performance movement.

Not adhering to time limit requirements will be treated as a violation.
12. **Weight Support Moves.** When the Center Point of Balance (CPB) is leveraged beyond the supporting leg, to the point that release of connection, would result in falling.
 - a. This does not include slides. Unless the body position of the slide falls in line with the above statement.
 - b. When the dancer is not able to get up from the floor without the connection of their partner.
 - c. When the partner cannot get into position without full support from their partner.
 - d. One part of the body below the waist must remain on the floor through all weight supported moves. All these criteria will assume they are being performed by highly athletic individuals, so judges will err on the side of the dancers.
 - e. A weight support move is counted as two (2) weight support moves when the dancer comes back up in a vertical position over their Center Point of Balance (CPB) and then back off of their CPB. However, if the CPB is not gained, then it is one (1) continuous weight support move.

Divisions and Rules

Classic and Showcase Divisions (18+) -- OPUS Divisions

Please go to the following link for Classic and Showcase rules: <https://nasde.net/nasde-rules/>

Rising Star Division -- "OPUS" Division

Please go to the following link for 2024 Rising Star Rules: <https://risingstartour.com/rules/>

Sophisticated Swing Division (35+) -- "OPUS" Division

This division is characterized by Swing dancing at a performance level. This division is open to all styles of Swing and can include, but is not limited to, 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.

1. The rules governing the Sophisticated Swing Division are the same as those governing the Showcase Division, except lifts and aerials are permitted but not required, and both competitors must be 35 years of age or older on or before the Sunday of the event.
2. Choreographed routines are required.
3. Partner weight support moves, such as lifts, aerials, and acrobatic moves, are allowed but not required.
4. Break-away is to be no more than 8 beats of music.
5. A couple must remain in their designated roles throughout the entire performance with an allowable exception of (1) 8-beat maximum of role switching.
6. A competitor may also dance in Masters, Classic, or Showcase if age requirements are met. They must dance with a different partner and a different routine.
7. Competitors must have purchased a full weekend Pass to compete.
8. Competitors select their own music and have choreographed routines.
9. Dance costumes are required (Halloween-style costumes are not considered appropriate).
10. Performance time is a minimum of (2) minutes and a maximum of (3) minutes. Timing starts with the first performance movement with or without music.
11. Competitors must register by November 11th. We will not be taking registrations at the event.
12. A minimum number of five (5) entries are required to run this division for full prize money to be awarded. If 3-4 entries are registered, the division may run, but the prize money may be adjusted. If (2) or less entries are registered, the division will be canceled, and entry fees refunded. The event Organizers will make this decision prior to the event.

Masters Division (50+) - "OPUS" Division

This division is characterized by social Swing dancing at a performance level. This division is open to all styles of Swing and can include, but is not limited to 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.

1. The rules governing the Master Swing Division are the same rules that govern the Classic Division, except both competitors must be 50 years of age or older on or before the Sunday of the event.
2. A breakaway is to be no more than 8 beats of music.
3. A couple must remain in their designated roles throughout the entire routine with an allowable exception of (1) 8-count maximum of role switching.
4. Choreographed routines are required.
5. A competitor may also dance in Sophisticated Swing, Classic, or Showcase if age requirements are met. They must dance with a different partner and a different routine.
6. Competitors must have purchased a full weekend Pass to compete.
7. Competitors select their own music and have choreographed routines.
8. Dance costumes are required (Halloween-style costumes are not considered appropriate).
9. Performance time is a minimum of (2) minutes and a maximum of (3) minutes. Timing starts with the first performance movement with or without music.
10. Competitors must register by November 11th. We will not be taking registrations at the event.
11. A minimum number of five (5) entries are required to run this division for full prize money to be awarded. If there are 3-4 entries registered, the division may run, but the prize money may be adjusted. If there are (2) or less

entries registered, the division will be canceled, and entry fees refunded. The event Organizers will make this decision prior to the event.

Team Division (6+) -- "OPUS" Division

This division consists of teams of eight or more dancers comprised of any combination of gender and/or skill-level. They will be judged as a group. This is a Swing division open to all styles that can include but is not limited to 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.

1. Lifts, aerials, acrobatic moves, drops, slides, break-aways, switching of partners, and reverse lead/follow are all allowed, but not required.
2. Dancers must be aged 6 or older on or before the Sunday of the event.
3. A dancer can only dance on one Team.
4. A team member is allowed to enter a Couples Division.
5. All members performing on a Team must have purchased a full weekend Pass to compete.
6. Teams select their own music and have choreographed routines.
7. Dance Costumes are required. (Halloween style costumes are not considered appropriate).
8. Performance time is a minimum of (3) minutes and maximum of (5) minutes. Timing starts at the first movement with or without music.
9. A minimum number of (5) entries are required to run this division for full prize money to be awarded. If 3-4 entries are registered, the division may run, but the prize money may be adjusted. Two or less entries registered, the division will be canceled, and entry fees refunded. The event Organizers will make this decision prior to the event.
10. Competitors must register by November 11th. We will not be taking registrations at the event.
11. The first 10 Team entries received by the ***The Open*** entry deadline (October 1st) will be guaranteed acceptance into the Team Division.

Young Adult Division (14-17) -- "OPUS" Division

This division is characterized by Swing dancing at a performance level. This division is open to all styles of Swing and can include, but is not limited to 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.

1. The rules governing the Young Adult Division are the same rules that govern the Showcase Division except: lifts and aerials that have one (1) partner's torso rise above the other partner's shoulders are NOT allowed. The intent of this rule is for the safety and/or lack of experience to execute these moves for this age group.
2. Weight support moves are optional.
3. This division is for Competitors aged 14 to 17 years of age, on or before the Sunday of the event.
4. If an established partnership has one partner 18-19 years of age, that couple may petition the Organizer for an exception to the age restrictions rule. Go to:
<https://usopenswing.com/wp-content/uploads/us-open-petition-to-dance-1.pdf>
5. If one partner has reached the age of fourteen by the Sunday of the event, and the other partner is under the age of 14, this couple must compete in the Young Adult Division.
6. Competitors must have purchased a full weekend Pass to compete.
7. Competitors select their own music and have choreographed routines.
8. The rule for Swing Content is 75% (as in Showcase).
9. Costumes are required and must be in good taste and age appropriate for this age group. A breach of this rule may be considered as a penalty or a violation. (Halloween style costumes are not considered appropriate).
10. Routines and choice of music must be in good taste and appropriate for this age group. A breach of this rule may be considered as a penalty or a violation.

11. Performance time is a minimum of (2) minutes and a maximum of 3 minutes. Timing starts with the first movement with or without music.
12. Competitors must register by November 11th. We will not be taking registrations at the event.
13. A minimum number of five (5) entries are required to run this division for full prize money to be awarded. If 3-4 entries are registered, the division may run, but the prize money may be adjusted. If there are (2) or fewer registered entries, the division will be canceled, and entry fees refunded. The event Organizers will make this decision prior to the event.

Juniors Division (6-13) – “OPUS” Division

This division is characterized by Swing dancing at a performance level. This division is open to all styles of Swing and can include, but is not limited to 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.

1. The rules governing the Junior Division are the same rules that govern the Showcase Division, except lifts and aerials that have one (1) partner’s torso rise above the other partner’s shoulders are NOT allowed. The intent of this rule is for the safety and/or lack of experience to execute these moves for this age group.
2. Weight support moves are optional.
3. Age requirements: This division is for Competitors aged (6-13) years of age on or before Sunday of the event. If one partner has reached the age of 14 by the Sunday of the event, and the other partner is under the age of 14, this couple must compete in the Young Adult Division.
4. Competitors must have purchased a full weekend Pass to compete.
5. Competitors select their own music and have choreographed routines.
6. The Swing Content rule is 75% (as in Showcase).
7. Routines and choice of music must be in good taste and appropriate for this age group. A breach of this rule may be considered as a penalty or a violation.
8. Costumes are required and must be in good taste and age appropriate for this age group. A breach of this rule may be considered as a penalty or a violation. (Halloween style costumes are not considered appropriate).
9. Performance time is a minimum of (2) minutes and a maximum of 3 minutes. Timing starts with the first movement with or without music.
10. Competitors must register by November 11th. We will not be taking registrations at the event.
11. A minimum number of 5 entries is required to run this division for full prize money to be awarded.
12. If 3-4 entries are registered, the division may run, but the prize money may be adjusted.
13. If 2 or fewer entries are registered, the division will be canceled, and entry fees refunded.
14. The event Organizers will make this decision prior to the event.

Pro-Am Routines/Pro-Am Follower & Pro-Am Leader (6+) -- Star Trophy Division

This division will follow the Rising Star rules with the exceptions listed below. Please go to the following link for the 2024 Rising Star Rules: <https://risingstartour.com/rules/>

Exceptions:

1. Amateurs must be at least 6 years of age on or before the Sunday of the event.
2. Costumes are encouraged but not required.
3. To qualify for a partnership in our Pro-Am, there must be an instructor/student relationship.
4. Amateurs are defined as anyone who does not teach West Coast Swing on a regular, ongoing basis.
5. A Professional is defined as someone who earns a significant amount of income teaching or performing West Coast Swing.
6. Each Pro is limited to five (5) students per Division.
7. ***The Pro-Am Division will be limited to the first thirty registrations.***
8. Competitors must register by November 11th. We will not be taking registrations at the event.
9. Prize money paid to 3rd Place for both divisions.

There are four categories that you can select from:

1. Open Pro-Am Follower (6+)
2. Open Pro-Am Leader (6+)
3. Sophisticated Pro-Am Follower (35+)
4. Sophisticated Pro-Am Leader (35+)

While you may enter as a leader and a follower using different routines, you may only dance in 1 leader division and/or 1 follower division. Amateurs that are 35+ must choose whether they want to dance in the Open or Sophisticated division. Amateurs that are under 35 can only enter the Open division.

Strictly Swing Divisions (Age Varies by Division) – Star Trophy Division

1. If you compete in more than one Strictly Swing Division, you must compete with a different partner in each division.
 - a. **Exception:** You may dance with the same partner if you dance in a different dance genre (i.e., Strictly Swing WCS and Strictly Swing Shag). All competitors must have purchased a full weekend Pass to compete.
2. Costumes are not required. Matching clothes are optional.
3. The Deejay will randomly select the Music. It will not be previewed in advance for competitors.
4. Preliminary rounds will be heated. The chief judge will determine the Final round format.
5. All divisions require a minimum of seven (7) entries by November 18th, or the division will be canceled and entry fees refunded.

Strictly Pro/Champion WCS (18+) – Star Trophy Division

1. This division is designed to highlight social West Coast Swing dancing skills at a Champion performance level.
2. Lifts, aerials, and acrobatic moves are NOT allowed.
3. Support moves, such as drops, slides, and splits, are allowed (but not required) to the degree that they would be considered safe and appropriate on a social dance floor.
4. Break-aways are allowed with an 8-beat maximum.
5. Swing content **75%** of recognizable West Coast Swing present throughout the performance.
6. Costumes are not required. Matching clothes are optional.
7. Competitors must be 18 or older on or before the Sunday of the event.

Strictly Open Level WCS (18+) – Star Trophy Division

This division is designed to highlight social West Coast Swing dancing skills.

1. Competitors in this division should not have competed in a Champion or Pro Strictly in the last three (3) years.
2. Moves such as lifts, aerials, and acrobatic moves are NOT allowed.
3. Support moves, such as drops, slides, and splits, are allowed (but not required) to the degree that they would be considered safe and appropriate on a social dance floor.
4. Break-aways are allowed with an 8-beat maximum.
5. Swing content is 75% of recognizable West Coast Swing present throughout the performance.
6. Costumes are not required. Matching clothes are optional.
7. Competitors must be 18 or older on the Sunday of the event.

Strictly Masters WCS (50+) – Star Trophy Division

This division is designed to highlight social West Coast Swing dancing skills.

1. Moves such as lifts, aerials, and acrobatic moves are NOT allowed.

2. Support moves, such as drops, slides, and splits, are allowed (but not required) to the degree that they would be considered safe and appropriate on a social dance floor.
3. Break-aways are allowed with an 8-beat maximum.
4. Swing content is 75% of recognizable West Coast Swing present throughout the performance.
5. Competitors must be age 50 or older on or before the Sunday of the event.

Strictly Juniors WCS (6-17) – Star Trophy Division

This division is designed to highlight social West Coast Swing dancing skills.

1. Lifts, aerials, and acrobatic moves are NOT allowed.
2. Support moves, such as drops, slides, and splits, are allowed (but not required) to the degree that they would be considered safe and appropriate on a social dance floor.
3. Break-aways are allowed with an 8-beat maximum.
4. There should be at least 75% of recognizable West Coast Swing present throughout the performance.
5. Competitors must be between the ages of 6-17 on or before the Sunday before the event.

Strictly Shag (6-20) -- Star Trophy Division

1. These divisions are designed to highlight social Shag dancing skills and are open to all Shag styles, including those listed in the Statement of Swing.
Moves such as lifts, aerials, and acrobatic moves are Not allowed.
Support moves, such as drops, slides, and splits, are allowed (but not required) to the degree that they would be considered safe and appropriate on a social dance floor.
2. Competitors must be between the ages of 6-20.

Strictly Shag Open 21+

1. This division is designed to highlight social Carolina Shag dancing skills.
2. Moves such as lifts, aerials, and acrobatic moves are NOT allowed.
3. Support moves, such as drops, slides, and splits, are allowed (but not required) to the degree that they would be considered safe and appropriate on a social dance floor.
4. Competitors must be aged 21 or older. (see Petition requirements)

Jack & Jill General Rules – Star Trophy Division

The Open is proud to be a member of the World Swing Dance Council since its inception. We are offering the following WSDC divisions: **Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, Masters, All Stars**, and (NEW this year) **Champions**. Jack & Jill's highlights social dance skills with an emphasis on lead and follow, technique, timing, and teamwork. This division is open to all styles of Swing and can include, but is not limited to 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.

1. For updated WSDC rules, please go to their website at: <https://www.worldsdc.com/wsdc-points-registry-rules/>
2. The music will be selected by our deejay staff.
3. Each competitor must have a Weekend Pass.
4. Lifts, aerials, and acrobatic moves are **NOT** allowed **except in the Champions Division**.
5. Support moves, such as drops, slides, and splits, are allowed (but not required) to the degree that they would be considered safe and appropriate on a social dance floor.
6. Switching roles is not permitted.
7. Costumes are NOT allowed, but tasteful and dressy clothing is encouraged. Blue jeans or torn jeans are NOT allowed.
8. Competitors enter as individuals and will be randomly assigned partners.

9. Depending on the number of entries in each division, there may or may not be a preliminary or semi-round. The chief judge and the competition coordinator will determine rounds.
10. The preliminary and Semifinal Rounds will be heated. The organizers and chief judge will determine whether or not the finals will be heated.

Juniors Shag Jack & Jill (6-20) -- Star Trophy Division

1. Competitors must be at least 6 years of age by the Sunday of the event.
2. A Junior Jack & Jill Competitor 6-13 may also dance in one level of Jack & Jill. may also dance in WSDC J&Js. See WSDC Rules. <https://www.worldsdc.com/wsdc-points-registry-rules/>

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