



DANCESPORT ADJUDICATING PRINCIPLES

**Developed by
DSA
Accreditation
Commission**

Adjudicating Principles

Index

Chapter 1.	Introduction	3.
	Aims of the Manual	4.
	Structure and Perspective	5.
	Technical Assessments	8.
Chapter 2.	Ethics and Conduct of Adjudicators	9.
	Roles and Responsibilities	9.
	Mentors	10.
	Chairman of Adjudicators	12.
	Scrutineers	12.
	Licensing Requirements	14.
	Adjudicators Code of Conduct	15.
	Adjudicator Dress Code	18.
	Rules Interpretation	18.
	Rule Enforcement	19.
Chapter 3.	Marking Requirements—Adjudicator Cards	21.
	Obligations -- requirements of Skating System	21.
	“N” Marking procedure	23.
	Sample Adjudicator Cards	25.
Chapter 4.	Scrutineering – The Skating System explained	27.
Chapter 5.	Assessment of Competitors	30.
	Priorities of Assessment	31.
	Technical Merit as a Basis for Adjudicating	33.

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 or New Vogue, 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 DSA Accreditation Commission, 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

DanceSport Australia's Adjudicating Principles Manual is designed to provide :-

- A clear understanding of the role and responsibilities of Adjudicators.
- A clear awareness of the DSA 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 DSA 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 or for DSA accreditation upgrading purposes.

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.

Following a thorough study of the DSA Adjudicating Principles Course Manual, as part of the Adjudicator Accreditation process at Levels 1 & 2, applicants will be required to complete (in the company of an appointed invigilator) a written Examination Paper based upon the contents of the manual. This exercise may be arranged on a separate occasion or more ideally at the time of attempting the Technical Assessment.

It is highly recommended (*and assumed*) that the Technical Assessment Module of the Accreditation process will have been completed prior to undertaking this study of Adjudicating Principles, and whilst there is absolutely no suggestion that this exercise will produce instant “experts”, the information and advice given, if considered diligently will

certainly result in a good understanding of the Principles of Adjudicating and hopefully provide sufficient confidence to proceed to the “Practical Module” of the Accreditation process.

Perspective

The Adjudicating Principles Course is only one of the three modules in the development of competencies required for DSA. Adjudicator Accreditation for Levels 1. & 2

(Refer to Table on page 5.)

The ideal order in which modules should be completed is:

- **Technical Module**

Satisfactory pass in the DSA Technical Adjudicating Examination for the relevant style

- **Principles Module.**

Successful completion of the Question Paper following study of this Manual.

- **Practical Module**

Attendance and participation at 5 (Five) DSA registered events one of which must be a Championship. **Participation by a Trainee Adjudicator in a National Championship is not permitted.** This practical experience module is to be conducted under the supervision and instruction of an appointed Mentor for each event.

Processing of Trainee Adjudicator Judging Cards.

The Trainee Adjudicators Cards will be reviewed by the Mentor and discussed with the candidate.

While this is a learning experience for the candidates, they are still expected to demonstrate satisfactory knowledge of DSA Rules, style specific technical competency in evaluating competitors, and appropriate manner of conduct, in order to achieve a signoff by the Mentor.

Trainee’s cards will not be used in the calculation of results for any event.

DSA ADJUDICATOR ACCREDITATION LEVELS AND RELEVANT MODULES

Level	Technical	Principles	Practice	Restrictions
1 Introductory Accreditation process may take at least 3 months Candidates may commence at this level	DSA Syllabus Level 1 Style Specific	DSA Adjudicating Principles Course	Attendance and participation at 5 DSA registered events at least one of which must be a championship, all of which must be under supervision of a Mentor.	Restricted to adjudicating DSA registered competitions (not championships). Candidates to be 18 years or over
2 Intermediate Level 1 accredited adjudicator with 2 years adjudicating experience	DSA Syllabus Level 2. Style Specific	DSA Adjudicating Principles Course	CPD requirements apply	Accredited to adjudicate DSA registered competitions and championships
3 Advanced	Level 2 adjudicator who meets the criteria set by the Accreditation Commission may be appointed to this level, CPD requirements apply			

All inquiries regarding Accreditation procedures should be directed in the first instance to the relevant DSA State Branch Executive Officer.

TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT.

DSA State Board of Examiners shall carry out all Technical Assessments for DSA Adjudicator Accreditation. **With the exception of granted “Recognition of Prior Learning” there are no exemptions for applicants.**

Applications and fees for accreditation as an Adjudicator must be completed on the DSA website, via the candidate’s account login.

- On receipt of the application form, the Accreditation Officer will issue and forward to the applicant, a Clearance Certificate showing amongst other detail, the applicants name and address, and the address of the State Board office.
- The applicant must ensure that the Clearance Certificate is signed off as modules are completed. When all modules have been completed the Clearance Certificate must be returned to the relevant DSA State Branch Accreditation Officer.

Applicants for Accreditation at Levels 2 & 3 should note also the requirement of attaining Units as specified in the Continuing Professional Development program. Refer to appendix at end of this manual.

- The Clearance Certificate will then be certified/endorsed by the State Accreditation Officer and forwarded to the Convenor of the National Accreditation Commission.

The issuing of an Adjudicator’s Accreditation to an applicant is not mandatory: DSA reserves the right to decline an application for an Adjudicator’s Accreditation.

Accredited Adjudicators may advertise or publicise the level of their accreditation.

The Accreditation of an Adjudicator who has not met the Continuing Professional Development (CPD) requirements as determined from time to time by the Accreditation Commission, shall be downgraded.

DSA reserves the right to suspend, permanently withdraw or downgrade the adjudicating accreditation 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.

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 DSA Syllabus requirements relative to each style
- Previous competitor and / or coaching experience ***is a distinct advantage.***
- Attention to detail and a broad perspective of what constitutes a “good dancer”
- Ability to assess and mark competitor's performance by age and relative degree of competence
- Speed. Accuracy and neatness of card marking while still devoting maximum time available to observe competitors

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 which is above reproach.

Mentor

This is a concept introduced by DanceSport Australia. 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 State Branch Accreditation Officer or Accreditation Convenor 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 5 DSA registered events including 1 championship). It is preferable that the same person be the Mentor on each occasion. Mentors are preferably, Level 2 or higher Adjudicators. *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 Branch Accreditation Convenor 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 Clearance Certificate for the Practice Module once all 5 events have been completed**, attaching a copy of the written assessments. The applicant must forward the completed documentation to their DSA State Branch Executive Officer or Accreditation Convenor 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 DSA 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 Notification 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 an accredited Level 2 or higher Adjudicator in the relevant style **and must hold a DSA Scrutineers Licence**.

On request, the Chairman of Adjudicators may be required to forward to the CEO of DanceSport Australia, 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 Scrutineer must hold a DSA Scrutineers Licence and is responsible for the correct recording of the marks. It is his/her duty to ensure the correct implementation of the Notification 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 DSA Competition rules. *An example would be the issue of "N" 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.*

The 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 DSA 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 DSA Competition rules are enforced without fear or favour, fairly and consistently throughout, including music and tempos, restrictions on Syllabus, Grade and Dress and Codes of Conduct for Competitors, Coaches, Adjudicators and Parents.....***In this regard DSA Rule 21.12 provides for the appointment (in the case of Championships) and discretionary appointment (for Competitions) of Invigilator(s) to assist in the proper functioning of this essential requirement.***
- Ensure that the Scrutineer is competent and efficient and knows that they must immediately advise the Chairman of any "N" 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 "N" marking or other contentious issues arise. If they have not witnessed an issue

leading to a “N” marking, they should accept the Adjudicator’s marking and follow due process. (“N” 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.
- Direct persons with complaints about Adjudicators to submit same in writing within 30 days to their Branch Ethics and Conduct Committee. (as per Item 23.2 DSA Member and Technical Handbook.).
- 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.
- Prepare a written report on any issue arising and action taken, or required to be taken, and submit to the appropriate DSA Branch Board within 7 days of the event.

LICENSING REQUIREMENTS

Once you have successfully completed all modules of the Adjudicator Accreditation System as required for a particular Level, and have been advised by the Accreditation Commission that your certification has been approved, you may apply to DSA for your Adjudicator Licence in accordance with the following:

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

The issuing of an Adjudicator Licence to an applicant is not mandatory. DSA reserves the right at its absolute discretion to decline an application for an Adjudicator’s Licence. DSA reserves the right to suspend, cancel or permanently withdraw the Adjudicating Licence 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 membership of DSA, or who refuses membership of DSA, or who refuses to correctly complete the DSA membership application/renewal form, or who refuses to pay the correct combined membership/licence fee shall not be separately granted an Adjudicators Licence.

The purpose of the combined membership/licence fee is to ensure automatic DSA membership for all licensed Adjudicators, thereby ensuring that DSA has the appropriate authority to govern the affairs of the DanceSport fraternity, and to ensure that DSA remains representative of the whole of the DanceSport fraternity.

An Adjudicator’s Licence 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 licence and current level of accreditation, except for special circumstances, as may be approved by the DSA National Executive.

Licensed Adjudicators may advertise or publicise the fact that they hold such DSA Licence.

It is a condition of holding an Adjudicators Licence that:

- The Adjudicators Code of Conduct be adhered to at all times, and likewise if also an accredited Coach, that the Coach's Code of Conduct be adhered to at all times.
- An Adjudicator shall not accept nomination to judge or participate in an Adjudicating Panel at a prescribed unregistered event.
- An Adjudicator shall not participate in or provide support or cooperation to any combination, organisation or individuals seeking to undermine DSA's role as the governing body for DanceSport in Australia.
- ***Questions relative to Adjudicator Licences or licensing procedures should be addressed to the respective DSA Branch Board Executive Officer.***

THE ADJUDICATOR'S 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.

DSA 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 Items 22 to 24 in the DSA Member and Technical Handbook 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 Branch Ethics and Conduct Committee.*

The following conduct shall constitute a breach of the Adjudicators Code of Conduct

Knowingly committing or conniving in any breach of this Code by:

- Not retiring from the panel of an event on any occasion he/she has a member their immediate and extended family including de facto relationships, competing in that event.
- Misrepresenting his/her Adjudicator's Accreditation Level or experience.
- Making a false statement in relation to his/her Adjudicator's Licence.
- 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.
- Coaching, teaching, or giving advice to a participating couple during an event, which he/she is adjudicating.
- Seeking by any means to improperly influence or intimidate another Adjudicator.
- Where he/she is not on the adjudicating panel for a particular event, discussing with an Adjudicator who is on that panel, the merits of the performance of a competitor or couple in that event, prior to the completion of the final.
- Discussing the merits of a competitors' performance with the competitor before completion of the final of an event which he/she is adjudicating.
- Seeking to influence the outcome of an event other than by the marking of all couples on their merits.
- Marking a couple other than on their merits.
- Undertaking any conduct that is intended to gain for a competitor or couple, an unfair advantage over other competitors.
- Falsely claiming to officially represent DSA in any capacity.
- Condoning discriminatory or improper behaviour by a fellow Adjudicator.

- Participating on a judging panel knowing that another member of the panel has had their licence suspended or withdrawn.
- Participating on the adjudicating panel for an unregistered event
- Otherwise acting in such a way as to bring the image of DSA or DanceSport generally into disrepute.
- Discussing with Spectators, Competitors or Coaches, the performance of any couple he/she is adjudicating, prior to the completion of the final round.

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 saved for a properly constituted Branch Ethics and Conduct Committee.
- 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 DSA Continuing Professional Development program.***

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.
- 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 one's folder 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	Dinner Suit / Tuxedo and Bow Tie
Female	Daytime	Smart daywear

Evening 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 Item 22.7 (a), [Adj. Code of Conduct—Member & Technical Handbook], under such circumstances it does not automatically imply the Adjudicator has done something requiring disciplinary action. However, if they used the close proximity to deliberately interrupt a competitor’s performance or compare cards with other Adjudicators (a breach of Item 22.7.(c)), disciplinary action would be warranted.

Because an Adjudicator converses with spectators it should not be assumed that they are breaching rule 22.2 – 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 hence 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 (breach of rule 22.1 (e), 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 Rule 22.1.(l). 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 these words were delivered by an Adjudicator, either prior to or during a competition or championship, they are inappropriate, and likely to be construed as a threat.

Rule 22.5 (b) asks Adjudicators to apply common sense to avoid unnecessary, idiosyncratic or dogmatic interpretation of style. This rule cannot be used by an Adjudicator to fail to “N” mark competitors who intentionally breach rule restrictions. For Example, a couple releases hold in New Vogue where the approved text books state that it should be a closed hold. Even if the

Adjudicator personally thinks that it looks better— failing to “N” mark on that basis is incorrect.

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

Rule Enforcement.

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

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

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.

COMPLAINTS AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION

The subject of:

Complaints about Adjudicators, the procedure to be followed, the disciplinary action that can apply and the appeal procedure, is detailed in the DSA Members and Technical Handbook Items 23, 24 and 25 on Pages 24 to 27.

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 No. the dance(s) and your identification symbol.

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.*

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 2nd 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 which 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 who 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 (under IDSF rules) 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 are 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.

“N” Marking Procedure.

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

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 “N”, or pressing the “N” button on the electronic pad, 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 DSA 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 has been made in DSA Rules (rule 21.12) for the provision of one or more “invigilators” (Penalty Judges) to be engaged.

Under this rule,

- *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:

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

In the circumstances where there is no Chairman of Adjudicators and the organiser is unable to complete the procedures of Rule 31, the Scrutineer is responsible for reporting the N (Notification) to DanceSport Australia through the Sports Director.

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

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

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 Australia mainly because of its’ time consuming nature.

The public display of Adjudicators marking is at the discretion of the Organizer. 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 each competitor, as their number is announced by the compere.

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

8 th			7
-----------------	--	--	---

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 who 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.*

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 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. Prioritizing 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
- Floorcraft
- 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
- Floorcraft
- 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 arcing 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 or 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 is seen 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 is 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.*

Poise, Line and Shape Poise and line. 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 ND 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 cannot 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) which 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 used as a tool for assisting balance, but either 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 who 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.

-o-

Floorcraft: Harry Smith-Hampshire / Anthony Hurley.

Floorcraft 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 an essential quality* as is the fluidity of Movement, excellence of Style and expressive Musicality

Floorcraft 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 floorcraft 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 floorcraft 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 which 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-coordinated 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 who 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’ provides 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.