



International Federation of Same-Sex Dance Associations
COMPETITION RULES FOR SANCTIONED INTERNATIONAL EVENTS
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Introduction

Purpose

"IFSSDA Competition Rules" are intended as a guideline for IFSSDA sanctioned and non-sanctioned international same-sex partner dance (and other configurations of partnering) competitions. Compliance with these rules is required to maintain IFSSDA's sanctioning of an event and to be authorized awarding IFSSDA titles. IFSSDA's expressed goal is to achieve a constant high standard for same-sex partner dance (and other configurations of partnering) competitions. These rules are an amalgamation of competition rules set forth by ESSDA (European Same-Sex Dance Association), IAGLCWDC (International Association of Gay/Lesbian Country Western Dance Clubs) and NASSPDA (North American Same-Sex Partner Dance Association), the founding members of IFSSDA. A standing agreement between these founding organizations has authorized the event of Dancesport at the quadrennial Gay Games to be IFSSDA's World Championships. These rules shall govern this event in addition to the existing FGG's (Federation of Gay Games) Red Book for Dancesport and any other future international event sanctioned by IFSSDA along with any other overarching set of rules.

Background

IFSSDA formed in 2010 following the Gay Games in Cologne and the three founding organizations ratified its Constitution on August 7, 2013, in Antwerp, Belgium.

The WDSF (World Dancesport Federation; *world amateur organization*) and WDC (World Dance Council; *world professional organization*) Competition Rules and the rules set forth by their national member organizations do not, with a few exceptions, cover dance competitions for couples that don't consist of a male leader and a female follower.

Some differences in comparison:

Same-sex (and other configurations of partnering) competitions have developed their own traditions and, in recognition of that fact, the following are some of the differences that give rise to the necessity of separate rules for IFSSDA sanctioned competitions.

- Greater flexibility regarding principles of participation.
- An elaborate classification/grading system, which can change the classification/grading of a couple from event to event
- No fixed function based on sex regarding 'leader' and 'follower.'
- Different distinction(s) in age.
- No restrictions in choreographies for lower classes.
- Fewer clothing regulations.
- No defined distinction between amateur and professional competitors.

Value Statement

IFSSDA strives to ensure that the values of inclusion, participation, and fairness are upheld in all of its sanctioned events.

IFSSDA supports the categorization of dancers in competitions by their proficiency level.

IFSSDA holds a position on the financial return from its sanctioned events as follows:

- IFSSDA supports non-profits and independent organizers alike to create a reasonable return from revenues to cover expenses and, if possible, make a modest profit.
- IFSSDA encourages and urges event organizers to run financially sustainable competitions while ensuring that dancers who need financial support will not be turned away.
- While recognizing that events need to be financially sustainable, IFSSDA encourages and urges organizers of IFSSDA sanctioned events to ensure accessibility and affordability through volunteering, scholarships, sponsorships, etc.

A. IFSSDA's Governing Role

Rule 1 Language & Application of 'Competition Rules'

A.1.1 Language

IFSSDA's official language is English.

A.1.2 Application

These 'IFSSDA Competition Rules' apply to all IFSSDA sanctioned and IFSSDA authorized titled events, alongside of any other overarching rules, should the event be part of a multisport event, such as the FGG's Red book for Dancesport, but overriding any other existing national and/or international set of rules from other dance organizations, such as WDC and WDSF. In addition, ESSDA's, IAGLCWDC's and NASSPDA's own rules may be utilized for complementing and/or for interpreting 'IFSSDA's Competition Rules.'

A.1.3 Situations not covered by these Rules

If a situation arises during a competition that is not covered by these rules, an appeal shall be made to the Chair(s) of the competition. His/her/their decision shall be final.

A.1.4 Amendments to these Rules

Changes, amendments and/or additions to these rules shall be subject to the unanimous agreement of ESSDA, IAGLCWDC and NASSPDA.

Rule 2 Glossary of Definitions

A.2.1 Style

These rules are intended to govern a dance style worldwide referred to as International Style also known as English Style, which divides into two sub-styles, Standard (also known as Modern and Ballroom) and Latin (also known as Latin American), but may additionally be applied to other styles, such as American Style (Smooth and Rhythm), Country Western, New Vogue, Argentine Tango, Swing, etc., and specific dances such as Hustle, Disco Fox, Salsa, Bachata, etc., unless other rules are chosen for those styles and dances.

A.2.2 Event

The entirety of one or more days devoted to dancing, which can include social dances, competitions, workshops, and show portions, which may be sanctioned and/or may have categories authorized for an IFSSDA title (see Section A., Rule 3 on “Event Sanction & Competition Title Authorization”).

A.2.2.1 Competition

The portion of any event that holds one or more dance contest(s) and may feature IFSSDA authorized titles, which shall be open to all levels of dancing from beginner to advanced without prior qualifications. Social dancers and competitive dancers shall be equally welcomed.

A.2.2.2 Category

A single portion of a competition devoted to and restricted to a particular style of dancing, age group, gender group, and/or particular dance(s) in that style. A category may be either single- or multi-dance (Examples: Men’s International Latin ages 45+; Women’s Beginner International Waltz). Competition organizers may choose to limit the number of couples for a given category due to space or time constraints.

A.2.3 Class

Also known as Grade or Level, which is a single portion of a multi-dance category that has been divided through a classification/grading process (see Rule A.2.5) into different levels of proficiencies.

A.2.3.1 Round

A category may require elimination rounds due to the number of couples in that category (see Section D.2, Rule 2). Classification/Grading rounds are used to place couples into different classes and elimination rounds are used to reduce the number of competitors within categories from preliminary rounds to a final round.

A.2.3.2 Heat

A single portion of a round where a limited number of couples is on the floor being judged. If there are too many couples in a round to be on the floor at the same time, the round will be subdivided into multiple heats. The head judge in consultation with the organizer(s) shall determine the set limit for a heat.

A.2.3.2.1. Revolving Heats

The term ‘revolving heats’ refers to a system that assigns couples to the heats of each dance in a round of a multi-dance category or classification/grading rounds by a random selection process in such a way that the selected couples of the heats in each consecutive dance are not the same as in the first dance.

A.2.4. Couple

A couple is formed when two people dance with each other in partnership, establishing a physical connection throughout the dance beyond dancing without touching.

A.2.4.1 Gender

Couples shall consist of two women or two men dancing together (regardless of sexual orientation), regardless of nationality and/or residency. Organizers may also offer other categories that define a couple differently, such as ‘Reverse-Role’ or ‘Mixed’ or ‘Open.’.

Everyone shall be welcomed to compete regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity. A transgender person should dance in the category appropriate to the gender that he or she uses to live his or her life and should dance with a partner of the appropriate gender for the chosen category.

In the event that issues arise related to ascertaining the gender of a person, any continental rules of an existing 'Gay and Lesbian Sport Federation/Association' regarding gender definition may apply.

A.2.4.2 Partners

Different categories may be danced with different partners. However, all dances in a particular category must be danced with the same partner regardless of classification/grading (Example: If dancers 1 and 2 compete as partners in International Standard and are graded into the B-Class, then neither of these dancers can compete in International Standard with another dancer even if they would be graded into a level other than the B-Class.). 'Showdance; is the only category that permits having different partners during the same event.

A.2.4.3 Role

The choice of the role of leader and/or follower in a couple is not pre-determined. It can be the same in all dances or vary from dance to dance or change within a dance any number of times.

A.2.5 Classification/Grading

The purpose of classification/grading is to group all couples of the same average level/quality in the same class (see Section D.1, Rule D.1.2.5, and Section D.2, Rule 1).

A.2.6 Showdance (Couples)

- A Routine shall be presented by one couple only.
- A Routine must be primarily partner dancing.
- There is no distinction of levels in regards to proficiency, type of performance, choice of dance and/or age.
- This category allows lifts (see Section D.3, Rule D.3.2.3.3.).

A.2.7 Formation Team / Showdance Team

- Formation Team (Couple Dance Routine): Any routine that is performed as couples dancing together in a joined configuration throughout the routine except for: entrance, exit, transition, separation where partner changes are made, or a movement is executed where the perception of partnership is maintained. A Formation Team must be primarily partner dancing. The majority (at least 60%) of the time spent couple-dancing must be either same-sex or reverse role.

Showdance Team (Open Dance Routine): Teams desiring to perform routines primarily for entertainment with significant dance content.

- Formation Teams and Showdance Teams shall compete and be judged as separate categories.
- A Routine must have a minimum of 3 couples or 6 individuals.
- There is no further distinction of levels in regards to proficiency and/or age.
- This category allows lifts (see also Section D.3, Rules D.3.2.2.2. & D.3.2.3.3.).

Rule 3 Event Sanction & Competition Title Authorization

A.3.1 Event Sanction

IFSSDA has no formal process in place to request sanctioning of an event. Any sanctioning inquiry may be directed at any of the three founding organizations. Note: IFSSDA is the officially recognized sanctioning body of Dancesport at every quadrennial Gay Games by the FGG.

A.3.2 Title Authorization

IFSSDA has no formal process in place to request the authorization of titles for competition categories. Any inquiry to have titles authorized by IFSSDA may be directed at any of the three founding organizations. Note: IFSSDA has authorized the event Dancesport at every quadrennial Gay Games to host IFSSDA's World Championships.

A.3.3 Eligibility to Garner Title

Anyone adhering to IFSSDA's Competition Rules may garner an IFSSDA authorized title, which will be awarded to the highest-ranking eligible couple of the A-Class in each category and style, the highest-ranking couple in the Showdance category and the highest-ranking team in the Formation Team and Showdance Team categories. Winners of all lower classes are title winners in their respective class. The second and third places are considered first and second runners up respectively.

B. Organizer's Responsibilities

Rule 1 Registration

B.1 Competition Registration

Event organizer(s) shall clearly indicate any requirements for registration to a competition as well as the date(s), fees and other useful information to competitors and clearly include these in all competition publicity.

B.1.1 Registration for Specific Categories

Event organizer(s) may allow dancers to enter additional competition categories at their discretion.

B.1.2 Registration with Different Partners

Event organizer(s) may allow change of partner(s) after the date of registration.

Rule 2 Compliance Requirements for Sanctioned Event

B.2.1 Organizational Name Recognition

Sanctioned events shall list IFSSDA's name at all times in all promotional material, such as in printed material, on social media, website and any other media.

B.2.2 Changes by Event Organizer(s)

Any changes in date, location, name and/or person(s) responsible for the competition should be reported to IFSSDA's founding members, ESSDA, IAGLCWDC and NASSPDA, in a timely fashion and this may result in the withdrawal of the sanction.

B.2.3 Sanctioning vs. Title Authorization

The granting of a sanction does not imply that IFSSDA has authorized any championship title(s) for that competition. Authorization of championship titles is separate.

B.2.4 Category Requirement

IFSSDA sanctioned competitions must offer categories for same-sex couples in International Latin & Standard.

B.2.5 Inclusion of other Categories

IFSSDA sanctioned competitions may include separate categories for any other gender combinations in a couple for leader and follower (female-male, defined as reverse-role couple, and male-female, mainstream's definition of a couple) and may include styles of dancing in addition to the required International Styles (American Rhythm & Smooth, Country Western, Argentine Tango, Swing/Lindy, Folk Dancing, Line Dancing, etc.) and configurations of groups of dancers, other than a couple (Formation Team, Showdance Team, Multi-Person Showcases, Team Matches, etc.).

B.2.6 Compliance with the Local Law

Organizer(s) of IFSSDA sanctioned events shall be aware and comply with any legal requirements locally in force where the event is carried out.

B.2.7 IFSSDA's Oversight Requirement

In order to ensure that all of IFSSDA's Competition Rules, as outlined herein, are applied and adhered to at any IFSSDA sanctioned event, IFSSDA requires the presence of one of its assigned members in attendance free of charge, which may be one of the invited officials.

Rule 3 Compliance Requirements for Authorized Titles

B.3.1 Restrictions on Participation

Event organizer(s) shall impose no restrictions on participation in IFSSDA titled events that are not included in these rules.

B.3.2 Separate Classification/Grading

Separate classification/grading rounds for categories separated by gender configuration are required for IFSSDA authorized titled events.

B.3.3 When a Title isn't awarded

Should a particular title be authorized for a category, but not competed, no title shall be awarded for that category in that time period.

Rule 4 Competition Officials, Staff & Volunteers

B.4.1 Officials

Event organizer(s) appoint(s) all officials, and the names of these officials shall be announced at the competition and published in the program.

B.4.1.1 List of required Officials

- Master of Ceremony (MC)
- Chair of Adjudicators/Head Judge
- Adjudicators/Judges
- Scrutineer
- DJ

B.4.1.2 Required Number(s) of Officials

- One or more MC's shall present;
- One or more DJ's may be engaged, who all need to be knowledgeable about required tempi and time limits (see Section D.3, Rules D.3.2.1 & D.3.2.2.1);
- One or two Chair of Adjudicators shall be in charge during the entire competition;
- The total number of adjudicators of any panel shall be no less than seven (7), must be an uneven number and an effort shall be made to have it gender and geographically balanced.

It is recommended to appoint nine (9) adjudicators, who may be allocated to several panels of seven (7) or one panel of nine (9), and to have more than half of the panel with a different residency than the hosting country (for example: 4 out of 7 or 5 out of 9). No more than two (2) adjudicators of a panel shall come from the same country except in the case of the host country.

B.4.2 Staff & Volunteers

The organizer is required to hire and/or assign staff and/or volunteers for the following tasks/areas:

- Registration/Competition Desk
- Runners to assist the Scrutineer
- On-Deck Captain (assembles and organizes each heat entering the floor)

B.4.3 Competition Desk

Competition desk availability during the contests is required continuously. Such desk serves the following functions:

- Initial registration point for each couple on arrival
- Supply participants' competition numbers and timetable
- Keep record of couples' full names and residency
- Confirm eligibility for categories registered
- Interface between participants and the competition management for handling last minute changes or cancellations
- Interface between participants and the competition management for suggestions and complaints regarding the current competition
- Information point for answering any questions as well as a collection and distribution point for information

B.4.4 First Aid Staff

First aid staff must be present at all times and must be proficient in CPR.

Rule 5 Competition Results

B.5.1 Result(s) Ceremony

The results ceremony shall be held at the end of a section of a competition (e.g.: afternoon session, evening session, etc.), but no later than three (3) hours after a participant's category.

B.5.2 Results of Final Round

Announcement of each placement of the final round is mandatory, and shall start with the lowest rank, followed by the couple's number, name and place of origin.

B.5.3 Result(s) Posting

The scrutineer and her/his team shall post to the public the results of each category including all rounds no later than at the end of the day of the event. If the event stretches over more than one day, this shall happen at the end of each day. Furthermore, the organizer is encouraged to additionally publish all results on their respective website.

B.5.4 Report to IFSSDA

The results of an IFSSDA sanctioned event shall be reported within 90 days to at least one of the founding members. This report shall include all scores for all rounds of each category, a list of the officials including the panel of judges, and a list of all participating competitors with their assigned number(s) for this event.

Rule 6 Privacy of Collected Data

B.6.1 Registration Information

All information collected from participants during the registration process shall be used solely by the organizer and assigned officials for the purpose of communications with the participants and to facilitate a smooth operation of the event. All rendered information is considered confidential.

B.6.2 Graded Events

Couples' self-assessment of their class(es) shall be kept confidential by the organizer. It shall not be published before, during, or after the competition, nor shall any indirect hints be provided (e.g. distribution of start numbers) that reflect stated preferences.

B.6.3 Other Collected Data

All data relating to the course and end results of a competition (i.e.: assigned numbers, achieved marks and placements, disqualifications) are considered to be accessible to the public.

Rule 7 Competition Venue Requirements

B.7.1 Dance Floor Requirements

The venue must have a suitable floor to dance on, preferably a sprung wooden floor approximately 3230 square feet or 300 square meters and no less than 80 feet long and 40 feet wide or 24.5 meters long and 12 meters wide.

B.7.2 Dressing Rooms

Separate changing/dressing rooms shall be allocated, aside from restrooms.

B.7.3 Warm-up Space

If no warm-up period is scheduled on the floor of the competition, a separate nearby floor for warm-up is required.

C. Participants' Rights & Responsibilities

Rule 1 Competitors

C.1.1 Registration

Competitors are responsible for their own competition registration and the payment of any fee(s). Competitors, who have missed the registration deadline, if one is imposed, are not entitled to compete. The organizer may allow registered persons to enter additional competition categories after such registration deadline and may permit change of partners as long as both partners have registered. Competitors may only enter categories appropriate in accordance to the definitions in these rules.

C.1.2 Adherence to Rules & Reasons for Disqualification

All competitors in an IFSSDA sanctioned and authorized titled event shall abide by IFSSDA rules in effect as of the date of that event. A dancer or couple may be disqualified from competing in a category for reasons such as performing a prohibited lift, failing to dance in a classification/grading round, refusing to dance in an allocated class and wearing inappropriately deemed costumes.

C.1.3 Obligation of Attendance

Once registered for a category, it is the competitors' obligation to be present in the "ballroom" at least one half hour prior to their category, as it is listed and announced by the organizer(s) on the day of the category. Failure to be present at the allocated time may result in a disqualification for that category. This includes all classification/grading rounds.

C.1.4 Dress Rules

The competitors' clothes should be in accordance with accepted rules of decency and good taste (no bare buttocks or breasts; tangas / thongs are not permitted).

C.1.4.1 Mainstream Costumes

Competition clothing as described by the Dress Regulations of the WDSF and WDC, and all its member organizations, are permitted.

C.1.4.2 Requirement for Award Ceremony

The same costumes worn during the finals should be worn at the results ceremony.

C.1.4.3 Non-Compliance

The competition management has the right to instruct any couple to change their clothes and to disqualify any couple that refuses to comply.

C.1.4.4 Advertisement on Competition Dress

Competitors shall be allowed to display a maximum of three sponsors' logos on their competition outfit which may take up a maximum of 40 sq mm or 0.062 sq inch per logo.

C.1.4.5 Advertisement on Competitors' Numbers

Event organizer(s) may display advertising material on competition numbers but not in excess of 20% of the surface of the number card.

C.1.5 Participation in Classified/Graded Categories

Participation in classification/grading rounds is mandatory for all couples competing in classified/graded events.

C.1.5.1 Separate Classification/Grading

Couples are classified/graded separately for each competition category.

C.1.5.2 Basis of Classification/Grading

Couples will be classified/graded by the adjudicators based on their performance in the classification/grading rounds and independently of self-assessment or any former results.

C.1.5.3 Self-Assessment by Couple

Each couple shall state their class preference within each category at the point of their registration. Couples who are not experienced with same-sex dance competitions are still required to estimate their expected entry level. Couples who are experienced with same-sex dance competitions are expected to register themselves consistently and fairly, based on personal experience and previous results. Self-assessment of couples serves the purpose of enabling organizers to create a rough timetable for categories after registration, as well as to provide the judges with a guideline for the expected numbers of couples in each class. However, details of self-assessments shall never be shared with adjudicators.

Rule 2 Officials

C.2.1 Technical Manager / Scrutineer

The technical manager of an event is responsible for all scrutinizing functions of the competition. This includes responsibilities such as the orderly formation of the adjudicators, time schedules, groupings of competitors, number of rounds and number of couples qualified for each category and round.

C.2.2 Chair of Adjudicators / Head Judge

The head judge may be one of the judges on the invited judging panel and his/her/their function is to guarantee the course of the competition in accordance to IFSSDA rules and guidelines, to which end the head judge shall conduct a meeting prior to the event with all engaged judges. He/she/they is available for providing support requested by the scrutineer, and has the authority to make decisions on matters not covered by these guidelines as well as all other matters or situations arising. The head judge assigns judges based on their qualifications, gender and residency to the panel for each category of the competition, ensuring a fair and balanced panel, and has the authority to exclude dance couples as well as judges from a competition category or from the entire event (see also in this section Rule C.1.2 and in Section E.2.2.). His/her/their decision (if necessary after consultations) is final.

C.2.3 Master of Ceremony (MC)

The MC's main function is to announce the dances and the competitors' numbers, and to cue the music. He/she/they, along with the head judge, are responsible for the running and progress of the competition.

C.2.4 Adjudicators/Judges

C.2.4.1 Adjudicators' Selection

Adjudicators are selected and engaged by the organizers of an IFSSDA sanctioned event, but need to fulfil all the requirements set forth in these rules.

C.2.4.2 Qualifications

An adjudicator for an IFSSDA sanctioned event shall have one of the two following qualifications, in addition to having previous experience in judging a sanctioned competition by IFSSDA's members:

- License for judging from a generally recognized Dancesport association. IFSSDA's founding members mutually agree to recognize each other as Dancesport Associations.
- Prior experience competing in same-sex competitions at top level and in the process of receiving licensing for judging from an official Dancesport Association.

C.2.4.3 Exception to Qualifications

IFSSDA reserves the right to reject a judge, even if all criteria are met, and to accept a judge not meeting all the listed criteria.

C.2.4.4 Exclusion from Judging

An adjudicator is not allowed to judge their life partner and/or close family relatives and be a competitor at IFSSDA or its members' sanctioned events. Adjudicators may apply to IFSSDA or one of its founding members for re-instatement as a competitor.

C.2.4.5 Separate Qualifications

An adjudicator slated to judge a particular style shall be familiar with the dances as they are presented in that style. For dances included in the event, such as Argentine Tango and Country Western, specialists in their field are preferred, defined as dancers and dance instructors whose primary dance and teaching focus is on that particular style.

C.2.4.6 Function & Task

C.2.4.6.1 Judging Standard

The judging by the adjudicators will be based on international standards as supplemented by the additional judging criteria of these IFSSDA rules.

C.2.4.6.2 Judging Charge

The adjudicators are charged with executing instructions given them by the competition management, unless these instructions are in conflict with any rules and/or requirements in this document.

C.2.4.6.3 Judges' Impartiality

The adjudicators shall mark impartially at all times.

C.2.4.6.3.1 Judges' Reason for Self-Recusal

A judge should recuse oneself from judging an event, if that judge feels that circumstances inhibit an impartial judging, such as family relations to a competitor, diminished eyesight or any other medical condition that prohibits full concentration, etc.

C.2.4.6.3.2 Judges' Guide for Impartiality

Size and shape of a dancer's body along with other aesthetic considerations, such as choice of costume(s), shall not be considered as judging criteria. It should be noted that the overall look of a same-sex dance couple might not adhere to mainstream standards of aesthetics. In same-sex dance competitions, it is important to allow possible new expressions, which are in alignment with IFSSDA's expressed mission to "acknowledge and celebrate its origins in the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender community," and "encourage the inclusion of dancers from diverse backgrounds with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, age, [dis]ability, gender identity and/or expression."

C.2.4.6.4 Judges' Marks

The adjudicators' decisions are final.

C.2.4.7 Judging Criteria

Adjudicators' judgement of all couples shall be based on all of the following elements:

- Musicality: interpretation of music into suitable passages of movements, time and rhythm
- Quality of movement: fluency of movement
- Harmony in a couple and interaction between the partners (partnering)
- Character of the dance
- Choreography
- Charisma, presentation
- Technical performance

If a couple executes a change of lead successfully within a dance (please note that the number of lead changes are not limited), judges shall consider it to be an additional plus in the overall judgment and shall place that couple higher against a couple of equal technical performance quality that does not switch the lead within that dance (see also notes below).

In order to ensure a fair grading process, adjudicators shall consider in addition to the above listed criteria the degree of difficulty of the material danced in grading rounds. A couple dancing more challenging steps, rhythmically and/or technically, should be placed in a higher grade than a couple not taking that risk, even if the quality of dancing seems at the same level.

NOTE:

- A. Changes of lead added to a couple's routine are considered to represent a higher degree of difficulty. If executed well, they shall be reflected in a higher score and not considered a break in the continuum of the dance.
- B. The character of dance shall not be judged based on a stereotypical understanding of gender roles. It shall be understood and considered positively that a change in lead can change that characterization by breaking a harmonious continuum.

- C. Judges shall not be influenced by the physical appearance of any dancer, unless it diminishes the quality of dancing, recognizing and acknowledging that dancers come in all sizes and shapes as well as with differing presentations from mainstream.

Rule 3 Vendors

C.3.1 Commercial Use and Advertising

Commercial activities in or around the dance competition venue shall be prohibited without prior approval of the event's organizer(s). This includes the sale of any articles or distribution of brochures and advertising materials.

Rule 4 Spectators

C.4.1 Conduct

Spectators whose conduct is unbecoming the event and its goals expressed in the mission statement of IFSSDA may be asked to leave the premises (see also Section E, Rule E.2.2.).

C.4.2 Adherence to Rules

All spectators shall abide by all rules set forth within this document and any additional rules by the organizer(s) applicable to spectators.

D. Event's Structure

D.1 Categories

Rule 1 Overall Competition Categories

D.1.1 Classified/Graded Categories

- International Standard
- International Latin
- American Smooth (optional)
- American Rhythm (optional)
- Argentine Tango (optional)
- Country Western (optional)

D.1.2 Non-Classified/Non-Graded Categories

- International 10-Dance
- American 9-Dance (optional)
- Showdance (Couples)
- Formation Team
- Showdance Team

Rule 2 Sub-Distinctions of Competition Categories

D.1.2.1 Distinction of Dance Styles

There are four major distinctions of dance styles:

- **International Style (danced in the order listed)**
Standard: *Waltz, Tango, Viennese Waltz, Slowfoxtrot, Quickstep*
Latin: *Cha Cha, Samba, Rumba, Paso Doble, Jive*
Additional dances not part of the International Style classified categories:
Disco Fox, New Vogue Dances, Sequence Dances
- **American Style (danced in the order listed)**
Smooth: *Waltz, Tango, Foxtrot, Viennese Waltz*
Rhythm: *Cha Cha, Rumba, Swing, Bolero, Mambo*
Additional dances not part of the American Style classified categories:
Hustle, Merengue, Peabody, Salsa, Bachata, other styles of Swing
- **Argentine Tango (danced in the order listed)**
Tango, Vals, Milonga
- **Country Western (danced in the order listed)**
Waltz, Night Club, Two-step, East Coast Swing, West Coast Swing
Additional dances not part of the Country Western classified categories:
Triple Two-step, Polka, Cha Cha

D.1.2.2 Distinction by Gender

In principle, separate judging and competitions for female, male, reverse-role and open-role/mixed couples is preferred (not applicable for Formation Team and Showdance Team categories). If an organizer wishes to present combined competitions for these couples for any reason, this must be coordinated with IFSSDA and clearly stipulated in all publicity prior to the competition. If less than 3 couples are registered in any category, an organizer may combine equal level categories of any gender configuration, and have them either judged together, meaning against each other, or separately on the day of the event. However, the combining of categories will not affect how IFSSDA-authorized separate male, female, reverse-role and open-role/mixed titles are awarded.

D.1.2.3 Distinction by Age

The overall age restriction is 18, is considered the adult category and shall be named '18+.'

A minimum of one senior level shall additionally be offered, requiring both partners in a couple to be 45 years of age or above at the time of the competition, and shall be named '45+.'

The following two senior levels are optional:

- a. Named '35+': both partners in a couple shall be 35 years of age or above at the time of the competition;
- b. Named '55+': both partners in a couple shall be 55 years of age or above at the time of the competition;

Proof of age is required for all senior categories on the day of the event. All couples entered in the senior categories may also compete in the adult categories.

D.1.2.4 Distinction by Dance Level

To achieve a fair contest, equally levelled couples must compete together in the same category and level.

D.1.2.5 Distinction of Class/Grade & Required Dances

Five possible class levels and three for Argentine Tango are defined for the classified/graded categories, which have a fixed required number and style of dances.

Class "A" (top level)

Standard: Waltz, Tango, Viennese Waltz, Slow Foxtrot, Quickstep

Latin: Cha Cha, Samba, Rumba, Paso Doble, Jive

Smooth: Waltz, Tango, Foxtrot, Viennese Waltz

Rhythm: Cha Cha, Rumba, Swing, Bolero, Mambo

Argentine Tango (advanced level): Tango, Vals, Milonga

Country Western: Waltz, Night Club, Two-Step, East Coast Swing, West Coast Swing

Class "B" (advanced level)

Standard: Waltz, Tango, Slow Foxtrot, Quickstep

Latin: Cha Cha, Samba, Rumba, Jive

Smooth: Waltz, Tango, Foxtrot, Viennese Waltz

Rhythm: Cha Cha, Swing, Rumba, Mambo

Argentine Tango (intermediate level): Tango, Vals

Country Western: Waltz, Night Club, Two-Step, West Coast Swing

Class "C" (intermediate level)

Standard: Waltz, Tango, Quickstep

Latin: Cha Cha, Rumba, Jive

Smooth: Waltz, Tango, Foxtrot

Rhythm: Cha Cha, Rumba, Swing

Argentine Tango (beginner level): Tango

Country Western: Waltz, Two-Step, West Coast Swing

Class "D" (beginner level)

Standard: Waltz, Tango, Quickstep

Latin: Cha Cha, Rumba, Jive

Smooth: Waltz, Tango, Foxtrot

Rhythm: Cha Cha, Rumba, Swing

Country Western: Waltz, Two-Step, West Coast Swing

Class "E" (optional newcomer level; can only be entered one time)

Standard: Waltz, Tango

Latin: Cha Cha, Rumba

Smooth: Waltz, Foxtrot

Rhythm: Cha Cha, Rumba

Country Western: Waltz, Two-Step

It is possible to carry out competition categories with less than five classes. This can be declared by the organizer after the end of registration or be a result of the classification/grading process (see below).

D.2 Organization

Rule 1 Classification/Grading System

D.2.1.1 Procedure to Achieve Classes

The procedure used to separate couples into levels of equal accomplishment and skill is referred to as 'classification,' also known as 'grading' or 'separation.' and the resulting levels are named 'class,' also known as 'grade.'

Depending on the size of participation, one classification/grading round might be deemed sufficient. It is recommended to run a non-judged 'sighting round,' also called 'general look,' to give the judges an idea of the potential classes prior to the classification/grading round, which could consist of any number of the 3 required dances of the classification/grading round. If it seems necessary to further qualify and/or confirm the result of the actual classification/grading round, another round may be called for each established class, during which any number of the 3 required dances for classification/grading may be used. During this second classification/grading round, a couple shall be moved up or down a class only, if the majority of the adjudicators have indicated such change in the couple's class.

If the number of couples is large enough to require splitting a classification/grading round into more than one heat for any of the dances, heat assignments must be at random not by self-assessed class.

In accordance to the judges' assigned lettered classes, for each couple per dance, each assignment shall be translated into an odd number (e.g.: Class E = 1, Class D = 3, Class C = 5, Class B = 7, & Class A = 9 or vice versa). The sum of all numbers for each couple places that couple in its assigned class, which is defined by the closest groupings of the resulting sums.

The judges shall be informed of which couples will be dancing in each heat prior to the beginning of the heat either by being provided prepared judging sheets and/or by a clear announcement from the MC of each couple's number at the beginning of each heat.

It is recommended to allow 10 seconds per couple for a classification/grading. The length of music played for classification/grading rounds shall never be less than 1.0 minute and shall not exceed 2.0 minutes. All heats shall contain as equal a number of couples as mathematically possible (for example: if 31 couples are entered, there shall be two heats of 10 and one heat of 11 couples, not two heats of 11 and one of 9).

D.2.1.2 Non Prepared Dance for Assigned Class

Couples may be placed in a higher class than expected. If any dance in that class has not been prepared by a couple that couple shall remain on the floor during that dance, but stand near the edge of the dance floor

(visible for the judges). This couple shall automatically receive no mark in the dance(s) missed and be marked last for that dance in a final by the judges.

D.2.1.3 Dances for Classification/Grading

The following dances shall be used for classification/grading in the respective style of dance. If potential E-Class couples participate, who have not prepared the third dance, they are excused from participation in that dance during the grading rounds. However, these couples may still be upgraded, based on the 2 dances presented in the grading rounds.

- International Standard: Waltz, Tango, Quickstep
- International Latin: Cha Cha, Rumba, Jive
- American Smooth: Waltz, Tango, Foxtrot
- American Rhythm: Cha Cha, Rumba, Swing
- Argentine Tango: Tango
- Country Western: Waltz, Two-Step, West Coast Swing

D.2.1.4 Separate Classification/Grading Requirement

Male, female, reverse-role and open-role/mixed couples shall be danced separately for all categories in both the classification/grading rounds and the subsequent related competition rounds. If after separate classification/grading, less than 3 couples have been classified/graded into the same class of any of the classes separated by gender configuration, then that competition class shall be run as a combined category. Any authorized IFSSDA title shall still be awarded separately even though the placements are not.

Rule 2 Course of Competition

D.2.2.1 Competition Rounds

D.2.2.1.1. Definition of Rounds

If one category has more than 6 couples entered/registered, elimination rounds shall be held in the following stages:

- First, second, third, etc. Preliminary Rounds – two-thirds to one-half of the participating field shall be recalled by the judges through the usage of the Cross System (see “Judging Format” below) for each consecutive round. If subdivided in heats, the system of revolving heats shall be applied.
- Quarter Final – (as above)
- Semi-Final – 6 couples shall be recalled by the judges through the usage of the Cross System (see “Judging Format” below) to the Final.
- Final - This final round shall be marked by the judges through ranking the couples against each other (see “Skating System” below).
- Repechage Round – This round may be inserted one time in between any of the above listed rounds.

Explanation:

Judges will be asked to advance only 50% of the number of couples required for the next round, which ordinarily would be two-thirds to one-half of the previous round. All couples who are not advanced to that next round will be asked to compete again in the repechage round, and the judges

will choose from the repechage round the remaining number of couples required to fill that next round. (e.g., if 14 couples are competing in round "A" and 8 couples are desired in round "B," then the judges will advance 4 couples from round "A" to round "B," invite the remaining 10 couples to dance in the repechage round, and then choose 4 additional couples from the repechage round to advance to round "B.")

D.2.2.1.2 Open Judging

Open judging (showing of the chosen rank in each dance for each couple after each dance) is allowed only for the finals of the A-Class.

D.2.2.1.3 Combining Finals

Two finals of different dance styles can be combined and the dances of these finals can be presented alternately, provided a couple has not been selected for both finals.

D.2.2.1.4 One Couple Categories

If a category has only one couple entered, the organizer may a) have the couple demonstrate its skills uncontested and unjudged, b) combine couples of the same level and category into one overall judged category, or c) cancel the event, in which case a refund might have to be issued depending on the organizer's prior publicized rules.

D.2.2.1.5 Combining Rounds/Heats

Separate classification/grading and competition rounds/heats may be run simultaneously, provided the judges are instructed to judge these separately, there is enough space on the dance floor and these rounds/heats use the same music.

D.2.2.2 Upgrading of Winning Couple

The winning couple of a lower category may be offered the opportunity to participate in the same event in a higher level of the same category.

D.2.2.3 Number of Couples on the Floor

The number of couples that shall be allowed on the competition floor at any given time shall be in adherence to other established guidelines of respective dance organizations that regulate this in the mainstream competition circuits. If preliminary rounds have to be split into multiple heats, couples shall be assigned to heats at random, and the system of 'revolving heats' shall be applied.

D.3 Format

Rule 1 Judging Format

D.3.1.1 Judging Systems Used (except Showdance, Formation Team and Showdance Team, see below)

All preliminary rounds and semi-finals shall use the cross system, whereas for all finals the skating system shall be used.

Cross System: During the first and further competition rounds and the semi-finals, the adjudicators shall use the 'cross system' (closed selecting classification/grading by cross signs for each dance). The quantity of cross signs/cross votes must be noted on the ballot. The cross votes for all dances of a couple must be added.

Skating System: During the finals the 'skating system' shall be employed (rank qualification by majority classification/grading). The couples must be classified/graded after every dance with rank numbers (1 for the first, 2 for the second, etc.). The rank for each dance must be decided by an absolute majority of the classifications/gradings delivered. The ranks must be determined by the summed total of the ranks of all dances, except the categories of Showdance, Formation Team and Showdance Team.

The disqualifying event of a lift during the course of a competition shall be marked with a 'D' and a last place in a final as well as reported directly to the head judge.

D.3.1.2 Judging Systems Used for Showdance, Formation Team and Showdance Team

The following principles shall be used in scoring Showdance, Formation Team and Showdance Team categories. All 3 captions (a., b. and c.) shall be marked in a all rounds.

a. Technical Merit

The technical quality of the dancing. Demonstration and use of partner dance technique.

b. Artistic Impression

- Choreography (is it used to express the music/theme to its fullest extent?)
- Musicality (how well is the performance related to the music?)
- Use of theme (choreography, performance style, choice of dress, music, etc)
- Originality of the idea (are there clever and musically related ideas used in the choreography?)

c. Entertainment Value

Entertainment and emotional value, including audience appeal/applause.

The range of marks shall be between 1.0 (lowest) and 7.0 (highest) for each caption. Each judge will give a score in each caption a., b. and c. (see above), except for any preliminary round, for which only a. and b. shall be considered. The scores of all captions added together shall determine the placement, with the highest total of marks moving to the next round or in the final receiving first place, second place for the second highest, etc. In the event of a tie, the marks in captions a. and b. combined will decide the result, and if a tie still exists then the better of caption a. alone will decide the result.

Rule 2 Tempi & Style Restrictions

D.3.2.1 Tempi

For all styles of dances with the exception of Showdance, Formation Team and Showdance Team competitions, the tempi required shall be in adherence to other established guidelines of respective dance organizations that regulate this in the mainstream competition circuits.

D.3.2.2 Duration & Format of Dance

D.3.2.2.1 Classified/Graded Categories (except Argentine Tango, see below)

Each dance shall be played 1.5 to 2.0 minutes per round, except Jive and Standard Viennese Waltz, which shall be played for 1.0 minute only. In any grading round, the duration of the graded dances may range from 1.0 to 2.0 minutes.

D.3.2.2.2 Formation Team / Showdance Team

- Routine must be at least 4.0 minutes long, but no more than 7.0 minutes, including entering and exiting the dance floor.
- Routine may include changes in rhythm, but such changes are not mandatory.
- Routine must include at least 2 changes in formation.
- Routine may be based on one dance only or multi-dances.

D.3.2.2.3 Showdance (Couples)

- Routine must be at least 2.0 minutes long, but no more than 4.0 minutes, including entering and exiting the dance floor.
- Routine may include changes in rhythm and dance style.

D.3.2.2.4 Argentine Tango

Each song shall be no longer than 3.0 minutes each, and the couples shall dance the full length of the song.

D.3.2.3 Prescribed Figures

D.3.2.3.1 Syllabi Restriction

No syllabi restrictions are applicable for all levels and styles.

D.3.2.3.2 Prohibited Figures

Figures that might endanger or hinder other couples are not permitted.

D.3.2.3.3 Definition & Restriction of Lifts

Lifts are not permitted in any categories, except Showdance, Formation Team and Showdance Team categories. NOTE: A lift is any movement during which one of the dancers has both feet off the floor at the same time with the assistance or support of the partner. The exception is an “assisted jump,” which is permitted, but may last no more than 4 beats of the music.

D.3.2.3.4 Required Closed Hold

Though International Style Standard is particularly defined by a continuous “closed hold,” this requirement does not apply for changing the lead.

D.3.2.3.5 Description of Allowed & Prohibited Moves in Argentine Tango

Couples may perform any figure commonly used on the social dance floor, including Barridas (sweeps), Sacadas, Enrosques (twists), Ganchos and Boleos (with respect to awareness of the nearness of other couples), etc. At no time may any figure be performed which endangers other couples. Saltos (jumps), Trepadas (climbs), Drops, Drags, Lifts, and any other typically “Stage Tango” moves are prohibited.

Rule 3 Requirement(s) for Offered Categories

D.3.3.1 Minimum Requirement

At a minimum, all IFSSDA sanctioned events shall offer the following categories:

- Men's and Women's graded International Standard
- Men's and Women's graded International Latin

- Men's and Women's International 10-Dance
- Showdance (Couples)
- Formation Team
- Showdance Team

D.3.3.2 Combined Dance Categories

All listed classified/graded categories and distinction of levels must be offered by any title-authorized event. However, the 'International 10-Dance' (as well as the 'American 9-Dance category, if offered) may be omitted due to a lack of participation and/or time constraints, in which case the results of the 2 respective separate categories comprising that style may be used to calculate an overall result for this omitted category.

E. Arbitration of Disputes & Non-Compliance

Rule 1 General Exceptions

E.1.1 Right to Exceptions

IFSSDA reserves the right to grant an exception to any policy.

Rule 2 Exceptions for a Specific Event

E.2.1 Appeal & Final Decision

If a situation arises during a competition that is not covered by these rules, an appeal may be made to the designated representative of IFSSDA. Any decision made on the day is final, but does not necessarily establish precedence.

E.2.2 Reasons for resulting Event Ban

Any participant may be banned from attending an event due to indecent behavior, unsports (wo)man conduct and/or consuming or being under the influence of drugs or applying methods that are forbidden in the WADA code (see also Rule 4 below).

Rule 3 Consequence of Non-Compliance

E.3.1 Infractions/Non-Compliance

Any infraction of these rules should be reported in writing to any of the three founding organizations of IFSSDA within 30 days of such an incident, which subsequently shall be shared with the other two organizations for a combined response.

E.3.2 Process of Reports of Infractions

Infractions will be judged case-by-case.

E.3.3 Infractions/Non-Compliance

If IFSSDA determines that an infraction has taken place and a requested action of correction has not been adhered to, this may result in loss of sanctioning and/or authorizing of titles.

Rule 4 Anti-Doping

E.4.1 Policy

Doping is strictly forbidden. Doping covers the use by or distribution to a dancer, adjudicator or member of the management team, of substances or methods in contravention of the WADA code (www.wada-ama.org).

E.4.2 Non-Compliance

Doping shall lead to automatic disqualification.