



NATIONAL COUNTRY WESTERN DANCERS  
RULES, CONTEST PROCEDURES

SOUTH AFRICA

# RULE BOOK 2023

## - 2025

### TEAMS

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# I. GENERAL INFORMATION

## A. NCWD'S MISSION & VISION

### 1. OUR MISSION

NCWD is committed to encouraging all dancers to strive for excellence and promote Country Western Couple Dancing & Line Dancing as fun and healthful pursuits and social activities and to enjoy the journey along the way. We believe each dancer has the ability to increase her/his physical, emotional and intellectual well-being through dance.

NCWD is dedicated to all studio families to ensure you are kept well-informed of the progress of each dancer. We believe in open communication and encouragement across cultures and that dance is essential to a healthy society, demonstrating the infinite possibilities for human expression and potential.

By providing national leadership and services, NCWD enhances the infrastructure for dance creation and distribution, education and dissemination of information.

### 2. OUR VISSION

NCWD will lead the professional dance industry by providing value to a strong, diverse membership base and encouraging the membership to be responsive to current economic, demographic and participation realities.

- NCWD will be accessible to all dance groups through a Dual Membership and will embrace strategic partnership on a local, national and international level to increase visibility, relevance and impact.
- NCWD will create value for members through strong core services of convening, advocacy and research that have a national focus and frequently evaluated.
- NCWD will offer tangible benefits to the membership based on timely needs.
- NCWD will be known as the national voice for professional Country Western Couple Dancing & Line Dancing in South Africa within and across the industry, the media and among international dance service organizations.

## B. NCWD BUSINESS OFFICE

The NCWD Business Office is the official center for submitting to the NCWD, information requests by letter, telephone, e-mail. Requests will be forwarded to the appropriate NCWD Directors as needed.

**Mailing Address:** National Country Western Dancers  
640 Rutgers Street  
Moreleta Park  
Pretoria  
Email: [ncwd.sa@gmail.com](mailto:ncwd.sa@gmail.com)  
Phone: +27 -71-673-0807

## C. NCWD WEBSITE

([www.ncwd.info](http://www.ncwd.info)) It is full of information about the organization and its dance events. It contains many valuable contact links.

## **II. DANCE RULES**

### **A. DANCE SEASON**

1. A year that begins on January 16th and continues up to January 15th of the following year.

### **B. ELIGIBILITY PERIOD**

1. Each competitor's period of eligibility is the two (2) previous Dance Seasons combined with the current Dance Season. (For example, on 3 October 2019, the eligibility period would be from 15 January 2017 to 3 October 2019. On 5 February 2019, the eligibility period would be from 15 January 2017 to 5 February 2019)

### **C. DANCE TYPES**

1. Teams

### **D. GENDER REQUIREMENTS**

1. A Couples dance pair must consist of one (1) man and one (1) woman where the man leads and the lady follows, except for momentary role reversals
2. A Team may compete with any gender make-up except a Team "Couple" who must look like and portray one man and one woman.

### **E. AGE REQUIREMENTS**

1. There are no age requirements in Team Divisions

### **F. DIVISIONS ARE OFFERED AS FOLLOWS:**

1. Teams (3 or more competing members):
  - a. Team Line Dance Classic Country
  - b. Team Line Dance Open
  - c. Team Partner Dance Classic Country
  - d. Team Partner Dance Open
  - e. Team Combo
  - f. Team Cabaret
  - g. Team International
2. ShowTime (any number of members)

### **3. NCWD ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP & UCWDC MEMBERSHIP**

1. NCWD welcomes all fellow South Africans, dancers, dance teachers, club heads and associate bodies to feel free to register for membership with NCWD.
2. All Country Dance enthusiasts, who don't need to be contestants, may join the NCWD Associate Membership. New and renewed memberships become "current" the day the payment is received. Annual membership expires on the 31<sup>st</sup> of December of each year.
3. Active membership is required, to track their competitive credentials for each Dance Season and eligibility period. This tracking is used to determine "NCWD Classic Series Championships Challenge" & "Worlds Championship" eligibility and to graduate contestants from one division to the next division.
4. Membership is compulsory for all Clubs or Dance Studios before their dancers may compete in any NCWD Classic Series Event. Registered Clubs or Dance Studios will also benefit from all workshops, etc. Online memberships registration is available on [www.ncwd.info](http://www.ncwd.info)
5. NCWD also offering Dual - Membership to contestants who are registered with another organization, who are recognized by NCWD, by a lower registration fee.
6. UCWDC Associate Membership is also mandatory for:
  - a. All competitors before they register for any UCWDC Division at UCWDC Sanction event, e.g., "South African Classic". This allows the UCWDC to track their competitive credentials for

each Dance Season and Eligibility Period. This tracking is used to determine The Country Dance World Championships eligibility, Points Champions, and to graduate competitors from one skill level to the next at the end of the Country Dance World Championships.

- b. Competitors can also only select the membership option: "Local Event Membership" if the competitor don't foresee to participate in the future in The Country Dance World Championships

#### **4. DIVISION ENTRY REQUIREMENTS**

1. Competitors may enter any division for which they are qualified except for the following:
  - a. Each Team member may only dance once in any specific division at each event.

#### **5. DIVISION RULES**

For an explanation of the movements listed below, see "Team Appendix A"

##### **1. Team Format**

- a. Teams may enter in separate divisions under the same Team "Name" but may only compete once in any single division at a UCWDC event. Teams competing in separate divisions must do so with different song selections and different choreography
  - b. An individual member of any team may dance in any Team division under any Team Name but may not dance in a division more than once at the same event.
  - c. Team Line Dance Classic Country Movement Limitations:
    - i. Moves that include acrobatics, pirouettes, fouettés, sitting on the floor, lying on the floor, bridging on the floor, spins in adagio, splits, and sits to recover from splits are not allowed except for SuperStars, RisingStars, and Crown.
    - ii. Jumps and jetés are not allowed, except for SuperStars, RisingStars, and Crown.
    - iii. Dance movements that rotate on balance in adagio are permitted to turn only up to 360 degrees.
    - iv. Use of hands, arms, facial expressions, body styling, skirt work, and hat work are allowed without limit throughout the dance.
  - d. Team Partner Dance Classic Country Movement Limitations:
    - i. Moves that include lifts (any type), throws, carries, aerals, acrobatics, drops (any type), rides, drags, slashes, pirouettes, fouettés, sitting on the floor, lying on the floor, or bridging on the floor are not allowed.
    - ii. Jumps and jetés are not allowed.
    - iii. Dance movements that rotate on balance in adagio are permitted to rotate more than 360 degrees.
    - iv. A rotating pedestal cannot be seen as counter-balanced.
  - e. Team Line Open Movement Limitations:
    - i. Aerals are not allowed
  - f. Team Partner Open Movement Limitations:
    - i. Aerals are not allowed.
    - ii. Inverted lifts held on the vertical plane (rather than cartwheels that move through the vertical plane) and throws transporting the partner through the air are not allowed.
    - iii. Two-beat rule: A partner may be lifted for up to two beats of music as long as any part of the lifted partner's head, torso, arm, or leg remains at or below the shoulder level of the lifting partner and the lifted partner is not inverted. Medium lifts (with a part of the body at or below waist level) are allowed.
  - g. Combo:
    - i. Aerals are not allowed
    - ii. Inverted lifts held on the vertical plane (rather than cartwheels that move through the vertical plane) and throws transporting the partner through the air are not allowed.
    - iii. Two-beat rule: A partner may be lifted for up to two beats of music as long as any part of the lifted partner's head, torso, arm, or leg remains at or below the shoulder level of the lifting partner and the lifted partner is not inverted. Medium lifts (with a part of the body at or below waist level) are allowed.
  - h. Team Cabaret or International:
    - i. There are no performance limitations.
- ##### **2. ShowTime Format**
- a. There are no performance limitations when performing a ShowTime routine (wheelchair competitors may perform)

## **6. FLOOR CRAFT**

1. There are no floor craft rules for teams.

## **7. COSTUMING**

1. Competitors in Team Line Dance Classic Country and Team Partner Classic Country must wear:
  - a. Costumes that are Country-Western and are appropriate to the dance, the arena, and the competitors wearing them.
  - b. Traditional looking Cowboy boots.
  - c. Traditional looking Cowboy hats for men.
  - d. Hose (tights) and dance pants (shorts) for women, if either are revealed during the dance performance.
  - e. Sponsored logos on costumes are allowed if they are no larger than 5 inches by 5 inches (12.7 centimeter by 12.7 centimeter) in dimension per article of clothing. Logos should be tasteful and not detract from the costume.
  - f. Team members under 18 years of age may not wear boots or other footwear with more than a 1.5 inch/3.75 cm heel.
2. Team Line Dance Open, Team Partner Dance Open, Combo Team Cabaret, Team International, and Team ShowTime competitors have no costuming requirements or limitations and are highly encouraged to wear whatever clothing fits the style or theme of the performance.
3. Please remember that how a competitor presents him or herself for performance is part of the final placement on every judge's ballot, in every dance, according to the style and story of the dance. It is essential to consider that the entire visual or "look" of the performance is judged including costuming as well as steps.
4. Props are anything that is not normally worn as clothing and are allowed in all Team Divisions. Props must be portable, not living, and delivered to and removed from the performance arena only by the competitors. Performers and props must not touch audience or staff. Time for setup will be included in performance time – no extra time will be allowed- and removal of the prop must occur on the walk-off after performers take their bow.

## **8. CHOREOGRAPHY**

Like music, under international law, all original choreography is automatically copyrighted when it has been performed and may not be copied, reproduced, or imitated without permission by the owner under penalty of law.

## **9. MUSIC**

1. Competition Music length minimums are maximums (which may extend to the end of the phrase):
  - a. Teams – 3 to 5 minutes
  - b. ShowTime – 2 ½ to 5 minutes
2. Competitor-selected music limitations must be as described below for Team Line Dance Classic Country and Team Partner Classic Country for all parts of their performance:
  - a. For the purposes of selecting competition music for our organization, music and artists that are identified by the following categories or descriptions are considered acceptable for country dance competition music within the NCWD:
    - i. Country
    - ii. Contemporary Country
    - iii. Country Pop & Country Rock
    - iv. Americana/Alternative Country
    - v. Classic Country/Hillbilly
    - vi. Neo-traditionalist
    - vii. Western Swing
    - viii. Honky Tonk/Hardcore Country

- ix. Bluegrass
  - x. Bakersfield
  - xi. Nashville/Countrypolitan
  - xii. Progressive Country & Outlaw Country
  - xiii. Urban Country
- b. Two competition dances, Cha-Cha and West Coast Swing, have roots outside the country music genre. Therefore, Tejano music is acceptable for Cha-Cha and Blues music is acceptable for West Coast Swing. These music types are allowed only for these dances.
- c. Country music artists and songs appropriate for NCWD competition may be identified by their presence on these platforms or by membership in these organizations:
- i. Billboard or similar country music charts
  - ii. AM/FM/Satellite radio airplay on country stations
  - iii. iTunes, Spotify, internet-based music services in the country genre
  - iv. Record labels within the country genre
  - v. Halls of Fame – national, state and regional
  - vi. Nashville songwriters performing their own material
  - vii. Nominations for country categories at Grammy's and other music industry awards
  - viii. Included on soundtracks for country-themed movies
  - ix. Performs/ed at the Grand Old Opry
3. Competitor-Selected Music:
- a. It is the competitor's responsibility to submit music 24 hours prior to the competition at every Regional Event where it is to be used and at least 96 hours prior to the performance at The Country Dance World Championships. The music must be accompanied by a properly filled out Competitor-Selected Music
4. Brief, recorded introductions and curtain calls are permitted. Clocking begins when the performance-sound begins. Clocking ends when the performance-sound ends (not including curtain calls).

## 10. GRADUATION CRITERIA – UCWDC REGIONAL & WORLDS EVENT

- 1. Does not apply to Team Divisions.

## 11. DANCE CATEGORIES

1. **Team Dance Categories:** (Team competitors may enter and perform in these divisions, which are danced separately at all UCWDC events and the Country Dance World Championships)
- a. **Team Line Dance Open:** (3-5 Minutes, No BPM limitations) A dance or medley of dances choreographed to music of the competitor's choice. The program must include 100% Line Dancing with recognizable patterns, rhythms, motions and character. Patterns from any dance form may be used as appropriate for musical interpretation, however no couples' lead and follow patterns may be used. Momentary touching is allowed. Movement limitations are the same as Showcase Crown Solo Medley.
  - b. **Team Line Dance Classic Country:** (3-5 minutes, No BPM limitations) A dance or medley of dances choreographed to 100% Country Music of the competitor's Choice. The program must include 100% Line Dancing with recognizable patterns, rhythms, motions and character. Any solo dance patterns may be used as appropriate for musical interpretation; however, no couples' lead and follow patterns may be used. Momentary touching is allowed. Line dance Classic movement limitations apply.
  - c. **Team Partner Dance Open:** (3-5 minutes, No BPM limitations) A dance or medley of dances choreographed to music of the competitor's choice. The program must include 100% Partner Dance with recognizable patterns, rhythms, motions and character. Patterns from any dance form may be used as appropriate for musical interpretation; however, no Line or Solo dancing may be used. Couples Crown Showcase Solo Medley movement limitations apply.
  - d. **Team Partner Dance Classic Country:** (3-5 minutes, No BPM limitations) A dance or medley of dances choreographed to 100% Country music of the competitor's choice. The program must include 100% Partner Dance with recognizable patterns, rhythms, motions, and character. Patterns from any dance form may be used as appropriate for musical interpretation; however, no Line or Solo dancing may be used. Classic Masters (flights) rules apply.
  - e. **Team Combo:** (3-5 minutes, No BPM limitations) A dance or medley of dances choreographed to music of the competitor's choice. This is an open category where a minimum of 90 seconds each Partner dance and Line Dance must be clearly shown during the performance. Movement limitations are the same as Showcase Crown Solo Medley.
  - f. **Team Cabaret:** (3-5 minutes, No BPM limitations) A dance or medley of dances choreographed to music of the competitor's choice. This category may use any type of music, costuming,



props, or movement and is an open category where Line, Solo, and Partner dance may be used in any combination and wheelchair competitors may be members. Setup and tear-down may be no longer than 6 minutes combined.

- g. **Team International:** (3-5 minutes, No BPM limitations) A dance or medley of dances native to the nation dancing. There is no costume, music or movement limitations.
2. **ShowTime:** (3-15 minutes, No BPM limitations)
  - a. An extensively conceived, thematic medley choreographed to music to the competitor's choice and performed by any number of competitors. This category is a long Cabaret which may use any type of music, costuming, props or movement. It is an open category where Line, Solo, and Partner dance may be used in any combination and wheelchair competitors may be members. Setup and teardown may be no longer than six (6) minutes combined.
3. Team Partner Classic Country Dance Categories are: Triple Two, Polka, NightClub, Cha-Cha, Waltz, Two-Step, East Coast Swing, West Coast Swing, Pony Swing, Shuffle (Ft. Worth Shuffle), Schottische, and Rhythm Two (Arizona Two Step).
4. To fully define the dances, refer to [www.UCWDC.org/rules](http://www.UCWDC.org/rules) (The Fundamentals Curriculum and Standards). Timing notations in the dance categories: Black indicates a weight change; Grey (or Red) denotes no weight change. To meet the Basic Rule for the 'phrased' dances e.g., Waltz, Polka, NightClub, ad Cha-Cha, two measures of basic timing must be performed in each phrase of music (32 counts for 4/4-time or 24 counts for 3/4-time) but need not be back to back.
  - a. **Triple Two:** 80-92bpm Basic Triple Two timings are 1 2 3&4 5&6 and 1 2 3&4 5 6 7&8. Triple Two is a smooth, progressive dance with looped and laced patterns performed with curved sway and shaping actions, emphasizing connected feathers.
  - b. **Polka:** 112-120bpm. Basic Polka timing is 1&2 3&4 5&6 7&8. Polka is a progressive dance with 2-rail (streamlined) patterns performed with Lilt motion, emphasizing downward action on the numbered counts.
  - c. **NightClub**54-62bpm. Basic NightClub timing is 1 2&3 4&5 6&7 8& (S QQS QQS QQS QQ). NightClub is a stationary dance with linear and geometric patterns performed with draping sway and counter sway, shaping actions, emphasizing developed slows.
  - d. **Cha-Cha:** 104-116bpm. Basic Cha-Cha timing is 1 2 3 4&5 6 7 8&. Cha-Cha is a stationary dance with intersecting patterns performed with Cuban motion, emphasizing the first beat of each measure.
  - e. **Waltz:** 80-92bpm. Basic Waltz timing 1 2 3 4 5 6. Waltz is a progressive dance that uses patterns that move diagonally and are performed with Rise & Fall accentuated with Swing & Sway emphasizing hover. Waltz tempos in self-selected music division must be 120 BPM or less.
  - f. **Two-Step:** 172-194bpm. Basic Two-Step timing is 1 2 3 4 5 6 ; 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 ; and 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (QQS S ; QQS QQS ; QQQS S). Two-Step is a smooth, progressive dance with weaved patterns and rhythm accents that separate the quicks and slows, emphasizing slows.
  - g. **East Coast Swing:** 126-144bpm. Single, Double and Triple time swing are all permitted and interchangeable. Basic Triple East Coast Swing timings are: 1&2 3&4 5 6 and 1&2 3 4 5&6 7 8. Basic Single East Coast Swing timings are: 1 2 3 4 5 6 (S S QQ) and 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (S QQ S QQ). Basic Double East Coast Swing timings are: 1 2 3 4 5 6 (S S QQ) and 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (S QQ S QQ). East Coast Swing is a stationary dance that uses rotary patterns and is performed with semi-Cuban, emphasizing downward compression.
  - h. **West Coast Swing:** 96-112bpm. Basic West Coast Swing timings are 1 2 3&4 5&6 and 1 2 3&4 5 6 7&8. West Coast Swing is a smooth, stationary dance with slotted patterns and rhythm accents, emphasizing back-beat.
  - i. **Pony Swing:** 102-116bpm. Basic Pony Swing timing is &1 &2 &3 &4 &5 &6 &7 &8. Pony Swing is generally stationary with revolving patterns performed with Lilt, emphasizing downward action on the numbered counts.
  - j. **Shuffle (Ft. Worth Shuffle):** 102-114bpm. Shuffle timings are 1 2 3, 4&5, 6&; or 1 2 3, 4&5, 6 7, 8&). Shuffle is a progressive dance with leap-frog or pig-tail patterns, performed with Flat motion shaped in its movement. The dance accents 2 3 (six-count timing), or 2 3 and 6 7 (eight-count timing) with two progressive walks.
  - k. **Schottische:** 120-132bpm. Basic Schottische timing is 1 2 3 4[kick] 5 6 7 8[kick]. Schottische is a progressive dance performed with plié on 2 and relevé on 4, with zigzag patterns accented with lifted kicks, scoots, hops, or brushes.
  - l. **Rhythm Two (Arizona Two-Step):** 148-160bpm. Basic Rhythm Two timing is 1 2 3 4[kick or touch] 5 6[kick or touch] and 1 2 3 4 5 6[kick or touch] 7 8[kick or touch]. Rhythm Two is a spot dance performed with semi-Cuban motion and circular patterns.



## **12. COMPETITOR CONDUCT AND ETHICS**

1. All decisions of the contest judges, the Contest Coordinator, and Event Director will be final. Competitors are expected to act and comply with the standards and rules. Competitors are required to provide on any competition registration form their full name, mailing address, birthdate, phone number (cell preferred), e-mail address and NCWD Associate Membership number.
2. All Associate Members and participants acting on behalf of the NCWD are expected to comply with all applicable laws at all times. The NCWD reserves the right to exclude any competitor from an event for acting in violation of applicable law, or contrary to the NCWD's mission, Associate Membership Code of Conduct as determined in the NCWD's sole discretion.
3. Before entering a NCWD Event, competitors may be required to sign an event waiver form that limits the event's liability with regards to injury or other damage, allows data collection and tracking, assigns the distribution rights of audio and video recordings of the attendee(s) to the event, and addresses privacy. Competitors under the legal age of 18 must be accompanied by a parent or legal guardian who has written parental permission to act as 'guardian', and who is responsible for the minor's safety and conduct at all times.
4. Information provided on the competition registration form will be used for tracking of performance results to determine divisional graduation status, divisional age eligibility, County Dance World Championships eligibility, and The NCWD Classic Championship Points Championships.
5. All attendees are expected to act in a friendly, cordial, respectful, and professional manner throughout the event.

## **13. REPORTING AND STAGING PROCEDURE**

1. For all team categories competitors should report to the Floor Coordinator thirty (30) minutes before a division's first contest heat to check-in, unless the size of the contest warrants an earlier reporting time (see event schedule). When reporting, a designated team member will make themselves known to the Floor Coordinator by competitor number, confirming that they are dressed, ready, and able to perform in the proper division.
2. Even though UCWDC contests post the heats of competition for all divisions, the exact heat order is not guaranteed to any competitor. A competitor who fails to report to the Floor Coordinator on time or fails to answer the calls of the Floor Coordinator for a specific heat will be scratched (disqualified) from that dance category.

## **III. AWARDS & CHAMPIONSHIPS**

### **1. OVERALL CHAMPIONSHIPS**

1. Overall Eligibility:
  - a. Team divisions offer NO Overall Championship.

## **IV. COUNTRY DANCE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS (WORLDS)**

Each year the UCWDC presents the Country Dance World Championships, which offers world-class Couples, ProAm, ProPro, Line Dance, ShowTime, and Team competitions.

### **A. ELIGIBILITY**

1. Associate Membership: Each individual competitor may not begin to accrue qualifications for Worlds until their Associate Membership dues are current and paid for the Dance Season.
2. To be eligible to compete at The Country Dance World Championships:
  - a. Competitors who are permanent residents of North America and Europe must qualify by competing at three (3) or more UCWDC Events during the preceding Dance Season, except for all juniors and Manitoba and western Canada who must compete at two (2) or more events.
  - b. Competitors who are permanent residents of Asia and Africa must qualify by competing in at least one (1) UCWDC Event during the preceding Dance Season.

- c. Each Team Name whose permanent residence is a continent other than North America, Europe, Asia, and Africa may enter without pre-qualification but must be active, dues paid Associate Members before dancing at The Country Dance World Championships.
3. The Country Dance World Championships qualification in Teams does not count for any other competition Dance Type.
4. The Country Dance World Championships Team Name must have competed at least once in the Dance Category in which they intend to compete, except:
  - a. ShowTime who need not qualify

## **B. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP TITLE**

1. An "Overall Champion" title at The Country Dance World Championships is awarded only to the first-place overall winner in each Team dance category. When used, the year and the full name of the division must precede that title. i.e., "John Doe is the 1988 UCWDC Team Cabaret World Champion."
2. Conversely, when used in a competitor's dance resumé, 2nd Place through 5th Place Overall winners' titles must be followed with the full name of the division. i.e., "John Doe is the 3rd Place Team Cabaret" winner at the Country Dance World Championship.
3. Titles are bestowed upon winners by the UCWDC. Titles which are abused by the recipient may be withdrawn.

## **V. JUDGES CODE OF ETHICS**

1. During his or her shift on a panel, each Judge must focus all of his or her attention on the competitors, have a positive demeanor and facial appearance and complete his or her ballots only in the last few seconds of each song.
2. When not on shift, Judges are encouraged to socialize equitably with patrons. They may not isolate themselves in the company of any competitor(s) that they might judge during the event. i.e., room with, privately converse with or publicly fraternize with.
3. Private lessons may not be given to competitors until after they have finished competing.
4. A judge may never coerce, intimidate, or in any way perceivably threaten competitors into taking private lessons or coaching from them.
5. Judges may not discuss dance information with any competitor they are judging until after the contest session has been completed.