



2026 ACDA New Rules and Amendments

The following are the newest rule changes and amendments to the 2026 ACDA Rules for the upcoming dance season. Please look carefully as we have revised several rules to make them clearer. These changes or revisions are in red in the following document.

We, as Directors, strive to provide a welcoming and transparent atmosphere and want to Thank you ALL for being a part of and supporting the ACDA Dance Organization!

GENERAL RULES

1.0 Costuming (Pro-Am, Pro-Pro, Couples, Teams, and Line Dance)

Clarified:

1.02 Costumes must provide appropriate coverage suitable for a general audience.

2.0 Music

Updated:

2.01 All music, except for self-selected music, may be played at a **BPM of +/- 4 BPMs** of the optimum BPM listed in APPENDIX D.

2.03 Music for dances as outlined in Appendix D used in an ACDA sanctioned event must be "Country" music, except where outlined below. Country music is defined as any music with country style. The usage of non- country music in the Cha Cha, West Coast Swing, Waltz, Viennese Waltz, and Night Club will be allowed. Non- country Line Dances such as Cuban, Street, and Novelty can use non-country music. **The use of AI generated music will be approved for Superstar, Royal, and Regal couples and line as well as teams.**

Clarified (and duplicated from the Line Dance section):

2.11 **Music for line dance will be faded at approximately 1 ½ minutes for all dances except for dances that have multiple A, B, C, and D pattern structure, which will be the entire song.**

3.0 Divisional Cross-Over from Other Organizations

Added New Language:

Any person competing in the ACDA circuit must enter a level equal to or above, except for ascension divisions, at which they have competed at any other regional or national competition.

PRO-AM & PRO-PRO

1.1 Pro-Am and Pro-Pro Divisions

Changed:

Pro-Am & Pro-Pro Showcase:

Competitors must have earned 24 Novice points (i.e., earned Intermediate status) to be eligible to dance in any Showcase division. No self-graduation is allowed.

1.2 Pro-Am Skill Levels

Updated and Clarified:

Open Role Divisions: (all divisions are eligible): For Pro-Ams where each partner may be of any gender to include one (1) leader and one (1) follower. Amateurs and Pros must adhere to the existing dress code to the gender for which they identify.

COUPLES RULES

2.0 Couples General Rules

Clarified:

2.01 Couples must consist of a leader and a follower. The ACDA Rules & Regulations define a traditional couple in Country dance as a male and a female, where the male leads and the female follows. In the Open Role category, couples may be of any gender combination. Once a leader or follower is established in a heat, they must remain so throughout the entirety of said heat with the exception of choreographed role reversal not to exceed 16 beats in 4/4 dances, 12 beats in Waltz, and 24 beats in Viennese Waltz (i.e., dancers may switch lead/follow role in different heats). (See 2.12 for definitions and divisions offered)

2.1 Couples Divisions

Updated and Clarified:

Classic SuperStars

This division is for couples who have Graduated from Open Division I or who last won a Championship title **or qualified to dance** in the highest possible division in any other regional or national competition on another Country and Western dance circuit. A full program consists of Two Step, Waltz, one (1) Swing dance, two (2) Non-Swing dances, and a Show Dance. (See Music Rules 2.10).

LINE DANCE RULES

4.2 Line Dance Levels

Change:

4.28 Added a Rising Stars Division of Line Dance for Junior Teen (ages 13 – 17 as an ascension division)

4.4 Line Dance Competition Music

Updated:

Any music preview will be at the discretion of the Event Director. Music will be faded at approximately 1 ½ minutes for all dances except for dances that have multiple A, B, C, and D pattern structure, which will be the entire song. Dance selections **will be rolled out at the beginning of the month for any or all dances that may be changing throughout the year and will remain in effect for the entire dance season.** See ACDA Line Dance Matrix on the website at www.DanceACDA.com

5.0 ACDA CHAMPIONSHIPS

Update:

5.04 Winning in any division with at least three (3) Couples, Pro-Am, or Line Dancers in a division will require the competitor to graduate up to the next division. Any winner with less than three (3) competitors MAY move if they wish after the (Championships), but competitors will not be forced to graduate; **this does not apply to ascension division winners. (see 5.04 (a) below)**

5.04 (a) Any ascension division winner with less than three (3) competitors may only ascend after having earned at least 50% Gold Graduate scores at the Championships.

APPENDIX A – Graduation Criteria

Clarified:

- A dancer must graduate up after earning:
 - Twenty-four (24) points in any skill division (e.g., Novice, Intermediate, etc.), with at least one (1) of the competitions danced having three (3) or more competitors. Points will not be combined by age divisions (e.g., points for Silver and Gold will not be combined).
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APPENDIX B - Movement Limitations

Update:

NO LIFTS, DROPS OR AERIALS ---- The use of these movements in Classic divisions may be grounds for disqualification in that dance. Exception: Classic Superstars, Classic Royal Superstars, Classic Regal Superstars, and Pro-Pro Classic may dance rides (aka “horse and cart”) type movements (see definition below). Note: Showcase SuperStars, Showcase Royal SuperStars, Showcase Regal SuperStars, Showcase Couples, Pro-Pro Showcase, Pro-Am Showcase, and Cabaret Teams have no movement limitations.

APPENDIX D – Dances

Update Speed Standards:

All dances listed below are acceptable for entry into all divisions offered by the ACDA.

TRIPLE TWO

26 beat syncopation limit, Optimum BPM: Newcomer/Novice = 80 to 88, Intermediate/Advanced = 74 to 84

A step pattern that uses six beats of music and includes two triple steps and two 1 beat steps and progresses counter-clockwise around the dance floor. A smooth and semi-circular dance with a repetitive dance count of: 1,2, 3&4, 5&6

POLKA

28 beat syncopation limit, Optimum BPM: Newcomer/Novice = 104 to 114, Intermediate/Advanced = 114 to 120

A step pattern that consists of continuous triples and progresses counter-clockwise around the dance floor. A pitched dance with lilt and a repetitive dance count of: 1&2, 3&4

NIGHT CLUB

28 beat syncopation limit, Optimum BPM: Newcomer/Novice = 56 to 62, Intermediate/Advanced = 50 to 55

Any 8-count basic Night Club pattern (1, 2&, 3, 4&, 5, 6&, 7, 8&) may be used that has a generally stationary pattern. The dance generally accents counts 1 and 5 with a slow developing “sidestep” and has a definite sway motion to it.

CHA-CHA

26 beat syncopation limit, **Optimum BPM: Newcomer/Novice = 100 – 110, Intermediate/Advanced = 110 - 120**

A step pattern of any combination of eight counts (1, 2,3, 4&, 5, 6,7, 8&) Cha-Cha patterns that breaks (rocks) or accents the 2nd and 6th beat of music. “Chase” patterns are considered a basic part of cha-cha and may be danced beyond the 26 beats of music.

VIENNESE WALTZ

Newcomer is CLOSED BRONZE DVIDA SYLLABUS. See Dance Vision at: <https://www.dancevision.com/>
Novice and Up is OPEN

Optimum BPM: Newcomer/Novice = 133 to 150, Intermediate/Advanced = 145 to 162

Progresses counter-clockwise around the dance floor, using the step pattern of (1,2,3 / 4, 5, 6)

WALTZ

24 beat syncopation limit, **Optimum BPM: Newcomer/Novice = 86-92, Intermediate/Advanced = 78 -86**

Progresses counter-clockwise around the dance floor, using the step pattern of (1,2,3 / 4, 5, 6)

TWO-STEP

26 beat syncopation limit, **Optimum BPM: Newcomer/Novice = 166 -184, Intermediate/Advanced = 184-196**

A pattern that has a generally forward counter-clockwise progression accenting the downbeat and contains the Two-Step rhythm of: 1, 2, 3_, 5_ (Q,Q,S,S) OR 1, 2, 3_, 5, 6, 7_ OR (Q,Q,S, Q,Q,S) OR 1, 2, 3, 4, 5_, 7_ (Q,Q,Q,S,S)

EAST COAST SWING

26 beat syncopation limit, **Optimum BPM: Newcomer/Novice =124-132 Intermediate/Advanced = 132-146**

A step pattern of any combination of six or eight count swing patterns that has a generally stationary, circular step pattern, each style having mutually performed rock steps or variations thereof. 6-count or 8-count swing may include single, double and/or triple rhythms. Basic dance rhythms are: (1&2,3&4,5,6) OR (1&2 ,3,4, 5,6, 7,8)

WEST COAST SWING

26 beat syncopation limit, **Optimum BPM: Newcomer/Novice = 90 – 100, Intermediate/Advanced = 90 - 102**

A step pattern that consists of any 6 OR 8 count swing pattern that has a generally stationary, slotted step pattern: Basic dance rhythms are: (1,2, 3&4, 5&6) OR (1,2, 3&4, 5,6, 7&8) A coaster step is considered a forward progressive step and is not allowed in place of the anchor step.

Other recognizable country dances may be offered at the Event Director’s discretion.

Example: Pony, Hoe-Down (Heel-Toe Polka), Cotton-Eyed Joe, Ft. Worth Shuffle

Note:

While some of these are minor rule changes, updates and clarifications, please note that we removed the Event listing from the rules as well as our Committees and committee members. We also removed Appendix C – scoring. These will be stand-alone documents on the ACDA website (www.danceacda.com).

Thank you all for voicing your opinions and for letting the ACDA know what you want to see from our organization. We try to listen to everyone and hope that you know we are wanting to progress our dance sport in any way we can. We look forward to seeing you all on the dance floor. Feel free to contact any one on the rules committee members with your Questions and concerns.

Rowdy Dufrene,
ACDA Rules Chairman