

NDCA Rule Book Changes Log - January 2026

(Strikeout text = deleted, Underlined text = added)

V.B.3. (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

Competitors entering an NDCA ~~registered~~ Sanctioned event shall accept as final the individual markings of the adjudicators, and no appeal against them may be made except when it can be shown that the actual markings have been incorrectly evaluated.

Entire Rule Book (January 2026)

The word sanctioned was changed to Sanctioned throughout the rule book.

V.B.3. (January 2026)

This was added as a new rule.

NDCA Licensees are not permitted to hold office or board positions in ballroom dancing organizations that are not recognized by the NDCA without prior approval.

- a. Licensees who hold office or leadership positions in ballroom dancing organizations not recognized by the NDCA may have their NDCA License reviewed and/or revoked at any time at the discretion of the Council.

II.A.4.f. (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

Pro/Am Student Competitors who are found to be in violation of any of the above definitions, will not be permitted to continue to compete in NDCA Sanctioned competitions or championships, and the organizers of all NDCA Sanctioned competitions and championships will be so notified. Should the Pro/Am Student Competitor cease the activity that violated the above definitions, his or her right to compete as a Pro/Am Student Competitor in NDCA Sanctioned competitions and championships may or may not be restored upon application to the NDCA. A waiting period may or may not be required when such reinstatements are made.

II.B.4. (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

CABARET, THEATRICAL BALLROOM, EXHIBITION, AND SHOWDANCE EVENTS

(2) Cabaret: A solo performance presenting aerial dancing and artistry, transitioning on and off the floor. Uses lift work and dancing in any genre/amalgamation the couple desires to their own selection of music.

(1) ~~Theatrical Ballroom~~ Theatre Arts Compulsory: All couples dance at the same time to the same preselected music, the compulsory element is: performing recognizable ballroom dancing ~~enhanced~~ with lift work not to exceed 50% of the bars of music.

(3) ~~Exhibition: A solo performance of a Ballroom dance with a maximum of 3 lifts.~~

(4) Showdance: As per the Showdance rules in section XI.

III.D.7. (January 2026)

This was added as a new rule.

Proficiency Scoring for Single Dances and Solo/Formation Performances must be within the following ranges:

90 - 93: Room for Improvement

94 - 96: Well Done

97 - 99: Excellent

III.D.7.a. & b. (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

~~In events where only one couple is entered the following are offered as guidelines:~~

~~a. When the event is a one dance event and the category is at medalist level, the adjudicators may judge the couple against an accepted standard and the couple's placement be determined by majority opinion of the adjudicators.~~

~~b. When the event is a multiple dance event, i.e. two or three dances, each dance may be treated as in (a) above with the overall placement determined by the overall adjudicators' marks.~~

~~Alternatively, the organizer may choose to allow the couple to dance without evaluation and automatically award the couple first place.~~

In events, single dance or multi dance, where only one couple is entered, they are considered the de facto winner and must receive a 1st place mark.

III.DF.13. (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

For contested Pro/Am events the length of music must be as follows:

a. Single dance events: 1:00 - 1:10 plus a fade (the Chairman may adjust this time for heats with four or fewer couples dancing)

b. Multi-dance events: 1:10 - 1:20 plus a fade (the Chairman may adjust this time for heats with four or fewer couples dancing)

IV.A.2. (January 2026)

This was added as a new rule.

Two members of an "immediate family" and/or household, may not be on the same professional panel or open amateur panel for any Sanctioned Championship.

VI.B.2.c.(1).(b). (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

c. NATIONAL ADJUDICATOR CLASSIFICATION: Before a NDCA registered Adjudicator may judge any Closed or Open United States National Championship they must be certified by the NDCA as a National Adjudicator.

(1) To be a National Adjudicator a person must:

(a) be a citizen or resident alien (Green Card Holder) of the U.S.A.

(b) have been certified at the A+, B+, C+ and D+ classifications for a minimum of two years.

VI.B.2.c.(1).(d).(iii). (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

c. NATIONAL ADJUDICATOR CLASSIFICATION: Before a NDCA registered Adjudicator may judge any Closed or Open United States National Championship they must be certified by the NDCA as a National Adjudicator.

(1) To be a National Adjudicator a person must:

- (a) be a citizen or resident alien (Green Card Holder) of the U.S.A.
- (b) have been certified at the A+, B+, C+ and D+ classifications for a minimum of two years.
- (c) been retired as Competing Professionals for a period of one year. The period from the final day of the previous year's championship to the first day of the current year's championship is considered one year, provided the date formula is maintained.
- (d) have attained at least one of the following results as a professional competitor:
 - i) the final of one or more of the following United States National Closed Professional Championships: International Ballroom, International Latin, American Style Smooth or American Style Rhythm.
 - ii) the semi-final of one or more of the following United States Closed Professional Championships (provided a quarter-final was held) for at least two years: International Ballroom, International Latin, American Style Smooth or American Style Rhythm.
 - iii) a placement in the top two positions in the United States National Closed Professional Nine-dance or Ten-Dance Championships (provided a quarter-final was held).

VI.B.2.d. (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

WORLD CLASS ADJUDICATOR CLASSIFICATION: Must be a citizen or resident alien of the U.S.A. and by examination hold at least a Membership degree (or it's equivalent) in ~~that style~~ all four styles, and much have held these A+B+C+D+ credentials for a minimum of two years to be judged. Also the person must have attained (in at least one of the following professional championships):

IX.A.1.f. (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

~~Theatrical Ballroom~~ Theatre Arts Compulsory and Cabaret, and Exhibition Events.

(1) ~~Theatrical~~ Theatre Arts Compulsory events are those in which all couples dance at the same time to pre-selected music. Lifts are allowed for no more than 50% of the number of measures of music. The compulsory element is: performing recognizable ballroom dancing.

(2) Cabaret events are those in which couples select their own music and appear one at a time. Unrestricted, free form solo. Music selected by couple. Time allowed is 4 min 45 sec. to include entry/exit, both with/without music. Entry will commence when first member of the partnership steps on the floor. Exit will finish when last member steps off the floor. Use of props is not allowed, unless said prop is handled by one or both dancers at all times and is not left on the floor.

(3) ~~Exhibition events are those in which couples select their own music and perform one at a time. Time allowed is 4 minutes, to include entry and exit both with or without music. Entry will commence when first member of the partnership steps on the floor. Exit will finish when last member of the partnership steps off the floor. Three lift maximum, each lift not to exceed 15 seconds. The use of props is not allowed, unless said prop is handled by one or both dancers at all times and is not left on the floor.~~

X.A.1. (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

Age classifications, "a" through "e" as well as "g", will become effective on the individual's actual birthday. On a year where a competitor is going to move from one classification to the next they may make this change anytime during a 60-day period that begins 30 days prior to their birthday and ends 30 days following their birthday. For Multi-Day Competitions and/or Championships, if the 30-day mark occurs on a day after competitive events have begun for the Sanctioned event, then the 30-day rule will be extended to include the last day of the Sanctioned multi-day competition.

X.D.1.b.(2).(c). (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

Horsehair/Crinoline may be used only inside the hem of the skirt, but must be either clear or the same color as the skirt

X.D.1.b.(2).(e). (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

Length of skirt must not be shorter than 3 inches above the knee cap ~~and no longer than 3 inches below the knee cap~~

X.D.1.b.(4). (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

Sleeves

- (a) Long, short, elbow length, cap, puff, or sleeveless styles are allowed
- (b) Cannot be replaced by trimmings, frills, or edging on the shoulder line
- (c) No "finger loops" allowed
- (d) Piping is allowed provided it is no larger than 1/8 of an inch across
- (e) Top stitching is allowed
- (f) Bell sleeves are not allowed
- (g) Ruffles on the sleeve or at the end of the sleeve are not allowed

X.D.1.b.(5).(b). (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

No ~~metallic~~ or iridescent fabrics.

XI. (January 2026)

This rule was amended.

A. INTRODUCTION

1. TITLES: Showdance titles, which are solo performance ~~championships events~~, may be danced in ~~two~~ four divisions: Ballroom, Latin., Smooth, or Rhythm.

2. DANCES ALLOWED: In Ballroom Showdance ~~Championships~~, the dances shall be selected from the following: Waltz, Tango, Viennese Waltz, Foxtrot, Quickstep. In Latin Showdance ~~Championships~~ the dances shall be selected from the following: Cha-Cha, Samba, Rumba, Paso Doble, Jive. In Smooth Showdance, the dances shall be selected from the following: Waltz, Tango, Foxtrot, Viennese Waltz. In Rhythm Showdance the dances shall be selected from the following: Cha-Cha, American Rumba, Swing, Bolero, Mambo.

B. SHOWDANCE RULES: The following rules may be used by Competition Organizers who wish to use ~~an alternate~~ a different format other than WDC or USDC rules as noted in this rule book, rule III. D. 27.

1. Dances

In Ballroom Show Dance events the dances must be selected from one up to all of the five regular Ballroom dances, ~~and~~ in the Latin Show Dance events from one up to all of the five regular Latin dances. In Smooth Showdance events the dances must be selected from one up to all of the four regular Smooth dances. In the Rhythm Showdance events the dances must be selected from one up to all five regular Rhythm dances. It is the duty of the Adjudicators to assess the Character of each style as part of their assessment. Dancers must perform the same show and choreography throughout ~~the rehearsal and~~ the competition.

2. Time

The time of the show must be up to a maximum of 4 minutes. The time limit must not be exceeded under any circumstances. The time limit is to include walk on and exit from the floor. Exceeding the time limit leads to direct disqualification.

3. Lifts

Three lifts are permitted for the whole performance. These can be performed anywhere in the show.

4. Music

The invitation for a Show Dance Competition must advise the couples of possible sound carriers. The sound carriers for a Show Dance Competition will always be: a. Compact Disc, b. mp3 Player/ iPod/iPad, c. USB Audio media.

5. The Competition

Conditions including lighting must be the same for all couples throughout the show including entrance and exit. ~~Preceding every Show Dance Competition there must be an official rehearsal, where all the couples have a reasonable time to test their show. To attend the rehearsal is an obligation for all couples and the chairman of adjudicators.~~

6. Props

Props are permitted provided they are never discarded by the couple during the entrance, performance, and exit.

7. Order of Dancing

Order of dancing shall be drawn by ballot, at which all the competitors or chosen representatives have a right to be present.

8. Time between Rounds

There is to be a minimum of 30 minutes between each round of a Show Dance.

9. Marking system

The normal system of marking will be applied. (i.e. In the Final the adjudicators will place the couples in order of merit).

10. Chairman of Adjudicators

In all cases the decision of the Chairman of Adjudicators is final

11. Any violation of the allowed dances, time requirements, or other ShowDance rules will result in a penalty of loss of one position in the final placements at the discretion of the Chairman of Judges.

12. For U.S. and World Showdance Championship title events: Preceding every Show Dance Competition there must be an official rehearsal, where all the couples have a reasonable time to test their show on the floor intended for the actual competition. To attend the rehearsal is an obligation for all couples and the chairman of adjudicators. Dancers must perform the same show and choreography throughout the rehearsal and the competition.

Suggestion for Organizers: For competitions wishing to invite any/all solo competitors regardless of style or lift work; please label the event Cabaret/Showdance. Also, please include rules for said event on the entry form to limit confusion.