
DANCING WITH WOLVES:

DANCESPORT AT NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY



COMPETITOR HANDBOOK

This handbook is a compilation of our club's information as well as information from other club and organization web pages and publications.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Being a Part of the Team.....	3
Tips for Becoming a Successful Dancer.....	5
Competition Packing List.....	7
Everything you Need to Know about Competitions.....	8
What to Wear When Competing.....	13

BEING A PART OF THE TEAM

Team Member Responsibilities

- Attend practices (1 or more per week @ 1-2 hours each)
- Attend group classes with visiting instructors
- Pay dues
- Help others on the team
- Promote a healthy social atmosphere
- Promote ballroom dancing to other students and the community
- Take initiative and do “your share” in the club (volunteering, teaching, etc.)

Benefits and Dues (subject to change)

- Paying dues gives you access to Carmichael Gym dance studio for practice during club reservation times (floor fees at other studios are typically \$15/hour)
- Due to club sports regulations, only NCSU students, faculty, and staff may join the team
- Team member competition fees *may* be paid by club*
- Due levels:
 1. Newcomer Group Lessons (\$30 per semester**)
 - May attend Newcomer Lessons taught once per week by advanced team members
 2. Bronze Group Lessons (\$35 per semester**)
 - May attend Newcomer Lessons taught once per week by advanced team members
 - May attend Bronze Lessons taught once per week by advanced team members
 3. Advanced Member Dues (\$35 per semester**)
 - May attend Newcomer Lessons taught once per week by advanced team members
 - May attend Bronze Lessons taught once per week by advanced team members
- Additional group lessons from visiting professional dancers are offered by the team. Some are paid for by the team and others are paid for by the students. A student will have to pay \$10 at most for these lessons.

*In order to receive any club subsidy for competition expenses, members must attend a minimum of 4 practices in the month prior to a competition.

** All dues are nonrefundable

Member Expense Estimates

- Group lessons (included in dues)
- Private lessons (optional, \$25-85 per hour which can be split with your partner)
- Collegiate competitions (optional, usually travel expenses only)
- USA Dance competitions (optional, usually travel and lodging expenses only)

Competition Financing

Competitive Ballroom Dance is not cheap. One of the goals of our club is to provide a low cost alternative to traditional studios and franchises that are often out of the question on a college student's budget. In order to ease the financial burden of competing, the club will pay the registration fees associated with competing and may pay a portion of the travel and lodging expenses. This amount will be a flat rate for all participating team members. The remaining cost must be paid by the member. The club is funded by team member dues and money from NC State Club Sports. If you are aware of any possible sponsorship opportunities, please pass this information on to the club treasurer. The club will also run fundraisers throughout the year.

Local and Visiting Coaches

1. Wayne and Marie Crowder. Eden, NC (~1.5 hrs away)
 - 4 time US Amateur Latin Champions, representatives to World Championships, IDSF certified
 - Available for privates and semi-privates (2-4 couples) in both Latin and Standard
 - E-mail: mrcrowder@earthlink.net
2. Jonathan Medlin and Malin Allert
3. Dennis Porch and Mary Lou Herndon
4. Aksel Davis and Jennifer Edwards

TIPS FOR BECOMING A SUCCESSFUL DANCER

Purchasing Proper Dance Shoes

The right dance shoes are the most important piece of equipment that a dancer can have. Both ladies and gentlemen should seriously consider purchasing a pair of dance shoes if they take their dancing seriously. Since shoes are expensive (~\$100), it is important to purchase the correct shoes. You will spend hours at a time in these shoes so a proper fit is essential. Trying the shoes on prior to purchasing them is *highly* encouraged. Local dance stores in the area include Relevé and Footlights. Vendors at competitions also sell shoes. Local dance studios *might* have shoes to purchase. We recommend that you ask a more experienced team member for advice before purchasing shoes. For more information about purchasing shoes see:

<http://www.dancingwithwolves.org/docs/Dance%20Shoes%20for%20Dummies.pdf>.

Keeping a Dance Notebook

One of the most useful tools is a ballroom notebook. This can be a small spiral bound notebook or even a three-ring binder where you keep notes about group lessons, private lessons, and competitions. You should learn a few things from each of these activities, and these are the kind of things that you better write down so you don't forget them. Different people use their notebooks in different ways. Some keep a notebook and pen with them at all times and write things down as they happen and some wait until after a lesson or comp to write down what they wanted to retain from that activity. Either is acceptable, but neither is totally unacceptable.

Even if you don't ever go back and look through your notebook, it is important that you make yourself rethink what you've learned so that it sticks.

Getting the Most from Group Lessons

The most important, and obvious, fact about taking group lessons is that you will be taking this lesson with a group of people. It is important to be mindful of others in the class. This means paying attention to the instructor. Listen to what is said so that you things do not have to be repeated over and over wasting valuable time. Also, share the instructor with everyone in the class. Don't hog the instructors time with specifics that would be more appropriate for a private lesson. The instructor has quite a task when teaching a group lesson. Instead of worrying about just one couple like in private lessons, the instructor has to worry about several couples and several different levels of dancers. It is important that you do not add to the pressure of this type of lesson by trying to direct the instructor in the direction that you think the class should go. The instructors know better than you do – let them do their job.

Getting the Most from Private Lessons

Monitor the progress, but do not direct the process. Your regular coach knows your dancing.

They know your strengths and weaknesses, and have put a strategy into action that will bring out your potential. Oftentimes, students will approach a lesson with a specific agenda. However, that agenda is usually not where the real problem exists. It is important to remember that your coach is the professional, and that they know better than you do (assuming you have chosen a coach that is well qualified).

When you approach a lesson, be sure to update your coach on how much you've been able to practice and any problems or questions that may have arisen since your last lesson. When you

tell your coach about problems, make sure you are very broad. Most likely, they will have an idea of what you're talking about. Do not go into any details unless your coach asks for more information. Oftentimes, if you come into a lesson with specific goals, the lesson will be wasted. The problem that you see in yourself might not be the problem at all; in fact, it either isn't the problem at all or you have other more pressing problems. Trust that your coach knows what is best for you. If the problem you have in mind is really an issue, then undoubtedly, your coach will notice it. Using their experience, their information, and their knowledge of your dancing, your coach will try to formulate the best possible lesson for you, and slowly mold you into the best dancer that they can make you.

If you have a lesson with a visiting coach or professional with whom you do not take lessons regularly, the approach is slightly different. Prior to the lesson, ask your regular coach if there are any particular areas that you should suggest for the coming lesson; however, remember to be broad and trust that the professional knows what he or she is doing. In these kinds of lessons, be aware that you are asking this coach to take a look at your dancing "snap shot" and make comments. That coach is going to comment on the problems that stand out at that point in time. More often than not, this will not be the same material that you are working on with your regular coach. Most likely, this will be a subject area that you and your coach will be approaching sometime in the future. In your next lesson with your regular coach, discuss the lesson you had with the other coach. This information is helpful to check your progress and review the process.

Getting the Most from your Practice Time

Different people practice different ways. There is no one way that you should practice. What works best for you won't necessarily work well for another couple. BUT, one thing is for sure – practice often!

Practice is the most important aspect of your dancing. This is the time when concepts become muscle memory. Each practice, you should go over what you covered in your last lesson. Take a look in your notebook and try to go over key points again. After completing a thorough review, take the time to write down any questions about the last lesson or about dancing in general that you would like to have addressed in your next lesson. Also, no practice is complete without practicing the foundations that allow you to move on to more difficult material. When you're with your partner, you should try to perfect that connection. When you are practicing alone (which everyone should do), you should spend an extensive amount of time working on individual technique; try to have your part as good as you can make it before putting it together with your partner. This will ensure that your practice time together is not wasted. Next, you should not try to work on all of the dances in one practice session (except for special circumstances such as endurance training). Unless you have the patience to practice for more than 5 hours straight, this just isn't possible. I'd say work on two dances as a general rule of thumb, and practice them thoroughly. It's not good enough to get it right once, you have to get it right several times in a row without hesitation for your practice to have a significant impact.

COMPETITION PACKING LIST

Travel Items

- Comfortable travel clothes
- Winter coats and other cold weather apparel (as needed)
- Toiletries
- Shower towel
- Sleeping clothes
- Sleeping supplies (if we are being housed by students in dorms at comp)
- NC State apparel (if we plan on being tourists)
- Cash
- Checkbook
- Credit card
- ID
- Plane tickets (if we're flying)
- Camera
- House/car keys
- Rain coat or umbrella
- Swimsuit (if we stay in a hotel)

Competition Items

- Rolling bag to carry everything around
- USA Dance membership card
- Pen (for marking program)
- Snacks
- Water bottle
- (Gentlemen) Suit for at the competition site when you're not competing
- (Ladies) Dress or a skirt outfit that will be appropriate
- Dance shoes
- (Gentlemen) Small towel (to wipe the sweat away during the comp)
- (Ladies) Jewelry
- Makeup
- Hair Products/Accessories
- Clothes for warming up
- Competition costumes (Latin & Standard)
- (Gentlemen) Black socks!!!
- Safety pins
- Sewing kit
- Tylenol, Motrin, or other painkiller (in case of a headache)
- Tissues
- Small snack (in case there is no lunch break)

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COMPETITIONS

Termonology

- DanceSport – the officially recognized name for competitive ballroom dancing.
- USA Dance – the governing body for ballroom dance in the United States. It is recognized by the International Olympic Committee as the governing body for competitive ballroom dance(DanceSport) in the United States.
- YCN – Youth & College Network, a division of USA Dance.

There are two styles of ballroom dancing:

- International Style – The style of ballroom dancing that is practiced throughout the world. This is the type of dancing that you see on TV and the style that world renowned ballroom dancers practice. It is also the style of dancing that we teach on our team.
- American Style – A styling of ballroom dance that is danced predominantly in the US. There are several stylistic and technical differences from the international styling. For instance, in American Smooth, partners are not required to maintain a continuous body contact. You will see this style of dancing often at social dances as it is the style that studios teach to most of their students.

There are four categories of dancing:

- International Standard – Waltz, Tango, Viennese Waltz, Foxtrot, Quickstep
 - International Latin – Cha Cha, Samba, Paso Doble, Rumba, Jive
 - American Smooth – Waltz, Foxtrot, Tango, Viennese Waltz
 - American Rhythm – Cha Cha, Mambo, Bolero, Rumba, East Coast Swing
- * In a competition, it is common to combine several dances within a category into one event.

There are two ways to progress through levels in DanceSport:

1. Syllabus Approach:

Bronze Syllabus > Silver Syllabus > Gold Syllabus > Pre-Championship > Championship

2. Open Approach:

Novice > Pre-Championship > Championship

Your progression through each of the levels is determined by proficiency points. While moving to a higher proficiency classification is possible without “pointing out” of your current classification, staying in a proficiency classification that you have “pointed out” of is not allowed. For more information on proficiency points see page 41 of the USA Dance Rulebook at <http://www.dancingwithwolves.org/docs/USA%20Dance%20Rulebook.pdf>.

Here at NC State, we believe the syllabus approach provides a much stronger base and is therefore the method to which we teach. However, it is not uncommon to switch over to the Open approach after completion of the Gold syllabus level.

In collegiate competitive dancing there are a few additions:

1. Levels:

- Newcomer > Bronze syllabus > Silver syllabus > Gold syllabus > Open
- The Newcomer level is for dancers that have started dancing within the past 6 months of the competition. Ideally, these dancers will dance from the first six steps of the bronze syllabus; however, dancing from the full Bronze syllabus will not be penalized.
- The Open level is a combination of Novice, Pre-Championship, and Championship levels. This is typically done due to the amount of participation at the higher levels of dancing at collegiate competitions. At larger collegiate competitions, it is common to keep the Novice, Pre-Championship, and Championship classifications.

2. Fun Dances:

- To lighten the atmosphere at collegiate comps, fun dances are usually scheduled throughout the day. Fun dances include (but not limited to) Hustle, West Coast Swing, Salsa, Lindy Hop, Polka, three person Cha Cha, reverse role Rumba, Paso Doble, and Polkadoble.

Controlled Chaos: What to expect when you arrive at a competition

- Most competitions are scheduled to begin around 8:30 or 9:00am.
- Hurry up and wait. It's better to be there too early than to miss the event you've been working towards for the past few months.
- Competition schedules rarely hold to form, often running hours behind schedule. A tentative schedule will either be distributed or posted. Make sure you are in costume and ready to dance at least 30 minutes before your event is scheduled.
- Always keep an eye on the on-deck area and pay attention to announcements made by the MC.
- Once there, check in and make sure you are registered correctly.
- Try to sit with the rest of your teammates. We will usually take over a section of the spectator section. From there, those not dancing sit and cheer for those that are.
- Oftentimes there isn't a very long lunch break (or none at all), so be prepared with a small snack just in case.
- Overall, the day is extremely tiring and VERY long, so get lots of rest the night before.

On-Deck Area

This is the area where you will line up to enter the floor for an event. It is also where callbacks will be posted. You should check in with the deck captain before your event so that they know that you are there. When lining up to enter the floor, couples are generally arranged according to couple numbers with the man escorting the lady onto the floor on her left side. You will leave the floor at a designated exit that is typically *not* the on-deck area.

Narrowing the Field of Competitors: Heats, Rounds, and Finals

- At the beginning of the comp, each leader will be given a number to pin on his back. This number is used to identify the couple in each event that they dance in. Ask more experienced team mates for advice on the best way to pin the number on.
- Ballroom comps are arranged like track meets. Events are first divided into heats which are based on style, category, and level.
- A tentative schedule will also be distributed. It is very important to know when your events are scheduled. You must be at the competition site, ready to dance 30 minutes to 1 hour before your event is scheduled.
- Each round dances for 90-120 seconds (based on the number of competitors on the floor) per dance in the round.
- During preliminary rounds, judges are asked to return a given amount of couples for the next round (usually marking about half of the couples to continue to the next round).
- After the judges have made their marks, they are run to the scrutineering table where marks are tallied and call-backs are determined.
- While call-backs are being determined for your round, other rounds are danced. These may be heats from your same event or different events.
- Once call-backs are determined, they are usually posted so that competitors can get ready before the event is called again. In the case that call-backs are not posted, the MC will announce the call-backs the next time the event will be on the floor. It is very important that you are ready in the on-deck area *with* your partner if you might be called back for an event. It is very important to always be paying attention.
- This process continues until the field of competitors has been narrowed to 6 (or 7) couples. At this point, judges will place couples from 1st to 6th (or 1st to 7th). Individual judges marks are analyzed by the scrutineers and the results are announced at a later time.

What Judges Want

We win or lose based on what they see, so we better know what they're looking for. Below is a summary of criteria that judges look at when deciding the results of a competition.

Who is the least offensive? At the bronze level (and even beyond), dancers are, in general, not very good. Therefore, the winner is the LEAST offensive of all of the dancers on the floor. Of course, there are exceptions where the dancers are judged on what they do well, but these instances are rare. Hopefully, you will be part of one of those rare couples.

Timing. No amount of dance proficiency can make up for being off time. **THE MUSIC IS BOSS.** If you are ON time in a bronze level competition, you will very likely be called back for the second round.

Presentation. This includes the basic technical aspects of standing up straight, using the proper hold, and maintaining a calm frame. It also includes performance aspects such as audience appeal, energy, and the image of enjoyment. Presentation is what makes dance worth watching.

Technique. This consists of proper footwork, body and leg action. This is the foundation of any good dancer.

Togetherness. A leader and follower should dance together effortlessly in complete synchronization with each other. Ballroom dancing is characterized by two people dancing together as one; successful couples demonstrate this fundamental aspect of ballroom dance.

Floor craft. This is not only avoiding bumping into other couples, but also the ability to improvise beyond a practiced routine demonstrating the couple's command over their choreography.

WHAT TO WEAR WHEN COMPETING

(Gentlemen) Dressing for Success: Dress Code for Competition

1. When not competing (strict):
 - Suit and tie (think eveningwear i.e. no khakis or novelty ties)
 - OR team warm-ups
 - Try to coordinate with your partner if possible

2. Standard competition (general):
 - Black dress pants
 - White dress shirt
 - Solid tie – black or dark color
 - Black button-up sweater vest or black cardigan

3. Latin competition (general):
 - Fitted black pants preferably with a flared or boot cut bottom
 - Fitted long sleeve black shirt

See the official USA Dance dress code for specifics about costuming in sanctioned competitions at <http://www.dancingwithwolves.org/docs/USA%20Dance%20Dresscode.pdf>.

(Gentlemen) Tanning, Hair, & Makeup

Yes guys, you should wear makeup. To be successful in competitive dancing, your dancing has to look good, and you have to look good. To be truthful, what you wear and what you look like play almost as large a role as how well you dance. The good news is that learning how to dance is the hard part; getting the look down is actually pretty easy. If you wear what was described previously and do the following with your makeup and hair, you'll already have almost half of what it takes to win!

1. Tanning

- Do not be excessively pale
- We do not recommend natural tanning because of the health risks
- Use fake-n-bake to get your tan (we recommend banana boat's sunless tanner)
- Start sunless tanner about a week prior to competition
- Don't overdo the tan... keep your skin color in the realm of possibility
- Rub product in evenly
- Do not use sunless tanner on your face, go up to top of neck
- You only have to tan on areas that will not be covered by your costume (this usually means just hands and neck for gentlemen)

2. Hair

- Do hair before makeup
- Neat and well groomed
- Clean neck line that is above your collar
- Doesn't move – use lots of gel and hair spray
- For Latin, black hair is usually the best color
- You can either use temporary hair dye or a temporary colored hair spray

3. Makeup

- Make sure your eyebrows are neat and well groomed (this means plucking... eep!)
When plucking your eyebrows or having someone else pluck them, clean up the natural shape of your eyebrows. This means removing all the stray hairs in between your eyebrows as well as above and below. **DO NOT** shape your eyebrows like the ladies do... you'll look really weird.
- Choose a foundation and powder to match your skin when you're tan
- Apply foundation evenly including the ears, behind ears, and neck blending the sunless tan into the face makeup
- Apply blush to cheeks and temples as needed
- Set the foundation with powder using a **BIG** brush (don't forget your ears). Make sure you don't forget this step; it'll keep you from looking really sweaty.
- Put a dab of a natural shade of lipstick onto your lip and blend this in to the rest of the lip. This will cover up the blue color that'll show up in your lips if you get tired or forget to breathe when you're dancing (yes, it happens).
- Apply thin amount of eyeliner to bottom eyelid as needed

(Ladies) Dressing for Success: Dress Code for Competition

1. When not competing (strict):
 - Appropriate Skirt or Dress
 - Wrap or coat... ballrooms can be chilly!
 - Try to coordinate with your partner if possible

2. Standard competition (general):
 - Long, full dress or skirt that falls between calves and tops of ankles
 - Skirt should be full enough so that your partner can easily step between your legs
 - Wear something that flows so that you look like you're floating while you're dancing

3. Latin competition (general):
 - Short to knee length skirt or cocktail dress that allows movement when dancing
 - Preferable if skirt has movement to accentuate the sensual hip movements of Latin dancing
 - Sleeveless top to keep long arm lines
 - Dance briefs (think: Will I be a butt-cheek girl when I wear this? Does anything move that I don't want to move?)

See the official USA Dance dress code for specifics about costuming in sanctioned competitions at <http://www.dancingwithwolves.org/docs/USA%20Dance%20Dresscode.pdf>.

(Ladies) Tanning, Hair, & Makeup

1. Tanning

- Do not be excessively pale... especially in Latin when you show lots of skin
- We do not recommend natural tanning because of the health risks
- Use fake-n-bake to get your tan (we recommend banana boat's sunless tanner)
- Don't overdo the tan... keep your skin color in the realm of possibility
- Start sunless tanner about a week prior to competition
- Rub product in evenly
- Do not use sunless tanner on your face, go up to top of neck

2. Hair

- Do hair before makeup
- Consider one of the three ballroom colors – bleach blonde, bright red, or jet black
 - *You can get temporary hair color sprays rather than dying
 - *Hair sprays won't give you the bleach blonde look
- Pulled back tightly out of face into a bun
 - *Fake hair pieces that look like buns make this much easier
- Doesn't move – that means lots of gel and hair spray

3. Makeup

- Make sure your eyebrows are neat and well groomed (this means plucking).
- Choose a foundation and powder to match your skin when you're tan
- Apply foundation evenly including the ears, behind ears, and neck blending the sunless tan into the face makeup
- Apply a white highlighting eye shadow to eyelid up to the eyebrow
- Apply purple eye shadow starting from about the middle of the eye outward going about half as high as the white eye shadow
- Apply eyeliner to bottom lid starting directly below where purple eye shadow starts continuing outward to slightly beyond eye (making an extension like an eyelash). This eyeliner should be applied under eyelashes rather than above eyelashes (which is the typical way of applying eyeliner).
- Apply a lot of blush to cheeks and also some to other parts of face for color
- Apply powder all over with a BIG brush (don't forget your ears)
- Apply lipstick to entire lip including corners. Shape the lipstick at middle of top edge of lips by "sshh-ing then sliding finger downward." Lipstick should be brighter for Latin and more natural for Standard.
- Apply fake eyelashes after all makeup has been done. Trim fake eyelashes so that they are slightly narrower than the actual width of your eyelashes. Also make sure there are no sharp ends on the eyelashes. This will keep the edges of your eyes from becoming irritated. Be sure to roll the fake eyelash around your finger so that the eyelash will more easily accommodate the natural curve of your eye. To apply, use white eyelash glue (this will turn clear when it dries). Position the eyelash from inside by leaving a small gap between inside edge of eye and where you position the eyelash.