

NCHC Rules & Guidelines (Revised 9/2025)

SANCTIONED CATEGORIES

CONTEMPORARY CATEGORIES

1. Line
2. Formations Line
3. Small Team
4. Exhibition
5. Show Team
6. Precision (4 or More Couple)
7. Hoedown (4 or More Couple)
8. Traditional Line
9. Acapella Team
10. Formations Traditional Line
11. Short Team
1. Contemporary Duo/Duet
2. Traditional Duo/Duet
3. Show Duo/Duet
4. Short Duo/Duet
1. Female Freestyle Individual
2. Male Freestyle Individual
3. Traditional Individual
4. Acapella Individual

TRADITIONAL (APPALACHIAN) CATEGORIES

1. 6 or 8 Couple Precision Team
2. 4 Couple Precision Team
3. So. Appalachian Trad. Team (6 or 8 Couple)
4. Running Set Hoedown Team (4 Couple)
5. Running Set Precision Team (4 Couple)
6. Smooth Mtn Sq. Dance Team (6 or 8 Couple)
7. Country Hoedown Team (4 Couple)

SKILL LEVELS

1. Different levels of competition may or may not be offered at every event.
2. **Novice Level Teams (Name Change):** (This level is designed for true beginner dancers to gain experience in competition. Dancers should have less than 2 years of clogging experience. Use of Basic Clogging Steps and Workshop style routines are encouraged but not limited to the dancer's level. Must wear clogging shoes. Coordinated outfits where appropriate are encouraged. This is a non-sanctioned, non-qualified level for USA National Championships. Knowledge of the rules is expected. This level will provide a learning opportunity for teams that are new to competition.
Amateur Level: Contestants with less competition experience. Amateur Level Teams must NOT consist of more than 25% of Masters Level Dancers. An amateur team may compete in this level for 3 competition years.
Masters Level: Contestants with extensive competition experience.
2. An Amateur Level dancer may dance in the master's Level category, but a Masters Level may NOT dance in an Amateur Level category. A Recreational Dancer may dance in in both Recreational and Amateur levels.
3. If 3 levels are offered, ALL levels are sanctioned.

GENERAL INFORMATION

1. AGE DIVISIONS - Can be subdivided at event's discretion

Age Divisions changed to more closely match other organizations.

Tiny Tot	Average Age	6 & Under		Senior	Average Age	16 to 19
Pee Wee	Average Age	7 to 9		Young Adult	Average Age	20 to 29
Elementary	Average Age	10 to 12		Adult	Average Age	30 to 50
Junior	Average Age	13 to 15		Senior Adult	Average Age	51 & Over

To determine average age — total the ages of all dancers performing in that particular routine, then divide that number by the total number of dancers. If average age ends in a decimal (15.8 for example) then you **drop** the decimal, (the age is 15). The age division you would then dance in would be Junior.

2. A dancer can dance only once per age division in a category.
3. 5 Judges are required. Highest and lowest scores will be dropped and the 3 middle scores averaged on Team and Duo/Duet categories. Judges will not be allowed to disqualify themselves or give an entry a zero score. If this occurs, then the entire category will be considered NON-Sanctioned, eliminating qualification for the USA Clogging Championships for category participants. If there is a tie, a dance-off will be at the discretion of the event director.
4. The same 5 judges must judge the dance category. You may not use different judges for different age divisions within the same dance category. Different judges may be used for different dance categories.
5. Scores must be made available to the team directors upon request.

6. The 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place winners in each age division of each Team & Duo category will receive an invitation to the USA Clogging Championships to be held on Labor Day Weekend. Entries competing in the USA Clogging Championships must have at least 51% of the dancers who originally qualified. Individual categories at the USA National Championships are open invitation to individuals.
7. The calendar will run August 1st to July 31st.
8. NCHC will receive detailed tally sheets with scores for contestants who danced in a sanction category within two weeks following the event.
9. A Rules Official, in attendance at qualifying events, has the final ruling concerning adherence to sanction category guidelines.
10. Future competition locations falling within 100 miles of competitions already sanctioned must be at least 4 weeks apart. Decision on sanctioning future competitions not meeting the above guidelines will be at the discretion of the Executive Committee of the NCHC.
11. The Executive Committee of the NCHC can only make exceptions to these rules.

TIME LIMITS & PENALTIES

1. **Time Limits:**
No Minimum time requirement.
 Maximum of 3 Minutes for Contemporary Duo/Duet, Traditional Duo/Duet, Show Duo/Duet, and Acapella Team
 Maximum of 4 Minutes for Line Team, Formations Line Team, Traditional Line Team, Small Team and Exhibition Team
 Maximum of 5 Minutes for Show Team, Precision Team (4 or More Couple), and Hoedown Team (4 or More Couple)
 Maximum of 8 Minutes for all Traditional (Appalachian) Categories.
Penalty: 1 Point deducted from the overall score for every 15 seconds or portion thereof exceeding the time limit.
Hoedown (Freestyle) Categories: Timing to begin with the last dancer dancing on stage, and end when the first dancer stops dancing.
Precision Categories: Timing to begin with the first dancer dancing on stage and end when the last dancer stops dancing.
2. **Points Deductions:** Teams/Duets will be assessed points off for rule infractions for flagrant abuse of competition rules. These points are deducted from the overall score.
3. Deductions only to the category of dance in which the infraction occurs; the entry may dance in other categories and receive points.
4. The Rules Official is responsible for determining point deductions only in Sanctioned Categories.
5. Any entry having points deducted will be notified immediately following the dance and prior to the awarding of trophies. If they are not notified of the infraction then no points will be deducted.
6. A point deduction will result if improper number of dancers is used.

CATEGORY GUIDELINES

CONTEMPORARY CATEGORIES

Line

Dancers: Minimum of 5 dancers - any combination of male and/or female.
Figures: No Figures.
Steps: **Choreography** is for one person, but danced by many, no progressive step changes and/or hand changes are allowed. Any type of steps.
Movement: All dancers must face same direction at same time. All lines must move in the same direction at the same time. Dance must start, remain and end in set line(s). No dancing on or off stage. No dancing as couples; no individual freestyle dancing. No trading, twisting, passing through, bending, rotating, interacting of lines. No stage movement that appears to be a show or stage production oriented. No body contact. No contracting or expanding of lines.
Music: Any type of music.
Time Limit: 4 minutes

Formations Line Team (Open Line)

Dancers: Minimum of 5 dancers - any combination of male and/or female.
Steps: Any type of steps.
Movement: Dance must start and end in set line(s). No clogging on or off stage. No dancing as couples; no individual freestyle dancing. Trading, twisting, passing through, bending, rotating, making V's, forming columns, interaction of lines allowed. No body contact.
Music: Any type of music.
Time Limit: 4 minutes

Small Team

Dancers: Minimum of 3 dancers, but no more than 8 dancers - any combination of male and/or female.
Figures: Any type of formations. You may not re-dance this routine in another dance category. This dance may be a line, show, formations, circles, etc.
Steps: This is a precision dance. Progressive step changes and/or hand changes are allowed.
Music: Any type of music.
Time Limit: 4 minutes

Exhibition Team

Dancers: Minimum of 5 dancers - any combination of male and/or female.
Figures: This dance should contain a variety of dance styles, line, show, line formations, circles and couple turns. You may not re-dance this routine in another dance category.
Steps: Any type of steps. Progressive step changes and/or hand changes are allowed.
Movement: Any type of choreography. Movements may bend, rotate, pass through, split, trade breakup, reform, make V's, and include figures, circles or columns. Dance lifts, pull throughs, splits, tosses and leaps will be allowed.
Music: Any type of music that would be appropriate to the type of exhibition dance being performed.
Time Limit: 4 minutes

Show

Dancers: Minimum of three (3) dancers - any number of males and females.
Steps: Stage choreography will be expected. No restrictions on figures or use of hand contact.
Movement: Heavy emphasis on "Showmanship" and creativity. Should use creative opening and closing. This is a CLOGGING, not a place for "novelty" amateur acts, nor a place for Line Dances done in show costumes. Use of hand and simple stage props are allowed. Dance lifts, pull throughs, splits, tosses and leaps allowed.
Music: Music, choreography and costumes should carry out theme. Any type of music.
Time Limit: 5 minutes

Precision (4 or More Couple)

Dancers: Minimum of 8 Dancers - Any combination of males and/or females. May dance with a hole if necessary.
Figures: Couple orientated dance. A variety of figures and formations recommended.
Steps: Dancers must be in step with each other at all times. A progressive step change allowed.
Movement: This dance is intended to be performed as couples while doing figures and formations.
Music: Country, bluegrass, western or hoedown music with or without vocals. Music break allowed.
Time Limit: 5 minutes

Hoedown (4 or More Couple)

Changes: Restriction on gymnastics lifted. Restrictions on costuming lifted.
Dancers: Minimum of 4 Couples - Any combination of males and/or females. May dance with a hole if necessary.
Figures: Couple orientated dance. A variety of figures and formations recommended
Steps: Hoedown and freestyle steps while performing dance. Dancers must not start simultaneously. No dancer intentionally in step with any other dancer.
Movement: This dance is intended to be performed as couples while doing figures and formations.
Music: Country, bluegrass, western or hoedown music with or without vocals. Music break allowed
Time Limit: 5 minutes

Traditional Line

Dancers: Minimum of 5 dancers - any combination of male and/or female.
Steps: Footwork must be traditional style steps - drag slide clogging. Line dance is a category whose choreography is for one person, but danced by many, no progressive step changes.
Movement: No hand or head choreography. All dancers must face the same direction at the same time. No dancing as couples; no individual freestyle dancing. No trading, twisting, passing through, bending, rotating, making V's, forming columns or interaction of lines. No body contact. No moves that appear to be show or stage production oriented. NO dance lifts, pull throughs, splits, tosses, leaps, cartwheels, or flips. May clog on and off stage now.
Music: Traditional, Country, Bluegrass, Western or Hoedown Music, with or without vocals.
Time Limit: 4 minutes

Acapella Team

Dancers: Minimum of 5 dancers - any combination of male and/or female. See Penalties #6.
Steps: Any type of steps allowed.
Music: No music allowed.
Judging: Judges face away from stage. Emphasis is on clarity, sound and intricacy of performance.
Time Limit: 3 minutes

Formations Traditional Line

Dancers: Minimum of five (5) dancers.
Movement: Dance must be performed in some form of line at all times. Dance may bend, rotate, pass through, expand, and contract formations. Dancers must use entire stage showing the ability to move as a unit. Choreographed arm and head movements are NOT allowed.
Steps: Progressive dance steps are allowed. Footwork must be traditional styled clogging steps; i.e. drag-slide (No modern clogging steps, i.e. double doubles). It will be at the judge's discretion to determine the authenticity of traditional footwork.
Interaction: No dancer may have body contact with any other dancer at any time.
Music: Traditional country, bluegrass, hoedown or folk music, with or without vocals, is required. It will be at the judge's discretion to determine the authenticity of traditional music.
Time Limit: 3 minutes

Short Team

Dancers: Minimum of five (5) dancers
Movement: Any type of formations maybe used, lines , moving lines, couple interaction and figures all allowed – No Acrobatics
Steps: Precision footwork - progressive step changes allowed
Interaction: Heavy emphasis on creativity and originality to music
Music: Will dance to music provided by NCHC – all teams will dance to the same music and speed – 8 beat intro and 64 beats of music.

Contemporary Duo/Duet

Dancers: 1 Couple – male/male, female/female, or male/female.
Interaction: Dance as couple with maximum variety of interaction (applies to male/male as well as female/female duos). This is not a two-person line dance.
Steps: Dancers in step with each other at all times. A progressive step change will be allowed. Freestyling will NOT be allowed.
Movement: Use the whole stage. Do not separate from partner and dance across the stage from each other for long periods.
Music: Any type of music.
Time Limit: 3 minutes

Traditional Duo/Duet

Dancers: 1 Couple – male/male, female/female or male/female.
Interaction: Dance as couple with maximum variety of interaction (applies to male/male as well as female/female duos). This is not a two-person line dance.
Steps: Dancers in step with each other at all times. A progressive step change will be allowed. Freestyling will NOT be allowed.
Movement: Use the whole stage. Do not separate from partner and dance across the stage from each other for long periods.
Music: Traditional country, bluegrass, western or hoedown music with or without vocals.
Time Limit: 3 minutes

Show Duo/Duet

Dancers: 1 Couple – male/male, female/female, or male/female.
Costumes: Should match the theme of the dance.
Interaction: Some hand or body contact required.
Movement: Use the whole stage. Dance lifts, pull throughs, splits, tosses and leaps will be allowed.
Music: Music, choreography and costumes should carry out theme. Any type of music.
Time Limit: 3 minutes

Short Duo/Duet

Dancers: 1 Couple – male/male, female/female, or male/female.
Costumes: No requirement
Interaction: Dance as couple with maximum variety of interaction
Steps: Dancers in step with each other at all times. A progressive step change will be allowed.
Movement: Couples line up like individual freestyle to do a short (32-48 count) routine as couples. Format includes a warm up, short Rise & Shine, and go-for-it as couples.
Music: Music provided by the event.

Individual Freestyle (Female/Male)

Dancers: 1 Dancer
Costumes: No requirement
Steps: Any type of steps.
Movement: Individuals will line up, dance a warm up, short solo (24 to 40 count), and go for it with music.
Music: Music is provided by the event.

Traditional Individual

Dancers: 1 Dancer
Costumes: No requirement
Steps: Steps must be traditional flatfoot drag/slide steps.
Movement: Individuals will line up, dance a warm up, short solo (24 to 40 count), and go for it with music.
Music: Music is provided by the event.

Individual Acapella

Dancers: 1 Dancer
Costumes: No requirement
Steps: Any type of steps allowed
Movement: Individuals will dance a short solo (15 to 20 seconds) without music one at a time. Judges face away from dancers.

TRADITIONAL APPALACHIAN CATEGORIES

In all the traditional categories, 2 rules were eliminated in each one. Teams may now dance with a hole if necessary. There are no outfit restrictions at all on these categories. This will hopefully create more entries for the competitions. Absolutely no rules were changed that altered the form of the dance.

6 or 8 Couple Precision Team (Either 6 or 8 - Not Both)

Dancers: 6 or 8 Couples- Any combination of males and/or females.
Figures: Minimum of 2 different big circle figures and a minimum of 4 different circle-4 figures. (Small) with progression between each. Corner-partner swing required after each circle-4 figure. Counter clockwise movement in progression. NO dance lifts, pull throughs, splits, tosses, leaps, cartwheels or flips. A Basket of Flowers is allowed.
Steps: Dancers in step with each other at all times while performing traditional mountain figures. A progressive step change is allowed. Traditional drag slide steps are encouraged.
Movement: Couples CANNOT progress across the center of the set. However, the center of the set may be used in a big circle figure. No Couple may progress outside the set.
Music: Traditional style of music without vocals. Music break allowed.
Callers: Figures may be called from the set, but are not required. If they are called, they must be from within the set.
Time Limit: 8 minutes

4-Couple Precision Team

Dancers: 4-Couples. Any combination of males and/or females.
Figures: Minimum of 2 big circle figures. Minimum of 4 different circle-4 figures (small) with progression between each. Corner-partner swing required after each circle-4 figure. Other figures may be used in this category along with the required. NO dance lifts, pull throughs, splits, tosses, leaps, cartwheels or flips. A Basket of Flowers is allowed.
Steps: Dancers must be in step with each other at all times. A progressive step change allowed. Traditional

drag slide steps are encouraged.

Movement: Counter-clockwise movement in dance progression. No Couple may progress outside the set.

Music: Traditional style music without vocals. Music break allowed.

Callers: Figures may be called from the set, but are not required. If they are called, they must be from within the set

Time Limit: 8 minutes

Southern Appalachian Traditional Team (Either 6 or 8 - Not Both)

Dancers: 6 or 8 Couples - Any combination of males and/or females.

Figures: Minimum of 2 big circle figures. Minimum of 4 different circle-4 figures (small) with progression between each. Corner-partner swing required after each circle-4 figure. NO dance lifts, pull throughs, splits, tosses, leaps, cartwheels or flips. A Basket of Flowers is allowed.

Steps: Southern Appalachian steps while performing traditional mountain figures. Team should strive for Rhythmic Southern Appalachian Sound. Dancers must not start simultaneously. No dancer intentionally in step with any other dancer. Speed should complement the grace and beauty of the dance.

Movement: Progression must be on the inside of the set in a counter-clockwise direction. Couples may not progress across the center of the set. Center of the set may be used in big circle figures.

Music: Traditional style music without vocals. If live band is provided, team must dance to it.

Callers: Figures MUST be called and heard from within the set.

Time Limit: 8 minutes

Running Set Hoedown Team

Dancers: 4-Couples. Any combination of males and/or females.

Figures: English quadrille formation with 1 active couple (traveling). 4 different visiting couple figures, each led by 1 active couple. 1 opening figure, 1 closing figure, with all couples active (i.e., weave the basket) 3 connecting figures with all couples active (also called break figures). A break figure occurs at the end of the progression by the active couple when they return to their home position in the circle. NO dance lifts, pull throughs, splits, tosses, leaps, cartwheels or flips. A Basket of Flowers is allowed.

Steps: Southern Appalachian steps while performing traditional mountain figures. Team should strive for Rhythmic Southern Appalachian Sound. No dancer intentionally in step with any other dancer. Speed should complement the grace and beauty of the dance.

Movement: Progression must be inside of the set in a counter-clockwise direction. Dancers must not start simultaneously.

Music: Traditional style music without vocals. If live band is provided, team must dance to it.

Callers: Figures MUST be called and heard from within the set.

Time Limit: 8 minutes

Running Set Precision Team

Dancers: 4-Couples. Any combination of males and/or females.

Figures: English quadrille formation with 1 active couple (traveling). 4 different visiting couple figures, each led by 1 active couple. 1 opening figure, 1 closing figure, with all couples active (i.e., weave the basket) 3 connecting figures with all couples active (also called break figures). A break figure occurs at the end of the progression by the active couple when they return to their home position in the circle. NO dance lifts, pull throughs, splits, tosses, leaps, cartwheels or flips.

Steps: Running Step (performed using a soaring, graceful run with the ball of the foot bearing the dancer's weight) while performing traditional mountain figures.. This is a precision dance. All active dancers in step with each other at all times. Some type of rhythmic movement by the inactive couples is required and must be done together in time with the music and should not detract from the active couples. They may pat their foot and clap hands to enforce the rhythm of the music ("patting") or they may continue a less aggressive running step.

Movement: Progression must be inside of the set in a counter-clockwise direction. Dancers must start together. At no time should active dancers stop dancing.

Music: Traditional style music without vocals. If live band is provided, team must dance to it.

Callers: Figures MUST be called and heard from within the set.

Time Limit: 8 minutes

Smooth Mountain Square Dance Team (Either 6 or 8 - Not Both)

Dancers: 6 or 8 Couples Any combination of male and/or female.

Figures: Minimum of 2 big circle figures. Minimum of 4 different circle-4 figures (small) with progression between

each. Corner-partner swing required after each circle-4 figure. NO dance lifts, pull throughs, splits, tosses, leaps, cartwheels or flips. A Basket of Flowers is allowed.

Steps: Gliding step on ball of the foot, (weight on ball of foot, with no heavy heel sound) while performing traditional mountain figures. This is a precision dance. All dancers in step with each other at all times.

Movement: Counter-clockwise movement in dance progression. Couples may not progress across the center of the set. Center of the set may used in big circle figures.

Music: Traditional style music without vocals. If live band is provided, team must dance to it.

Callers: Figures MUST be called and heard from within the set.

Time Limit: 8 minutes

Country Hoedown Team

Dancers: 4 Couples. **Any** combination of males and/or females.

Figures: Minimum of 2 big circle figures. Minimum of 4 different circle-4 figures (small) with progression between each. Corner-partner swing required after each circle-4 figure. NO dance lifts, pull throughs, splits, tosses, leaps, cartwheels or flips. A Basket of Flowers is allowed.

Steps: Southern Appalachian steps while performing traditional mountain figures. Team should strive for Rhythmic Southern Appalachian Sound. Dancers must not start simultaneously. No dancer intentionally in step with any other dancer. Speed should complement the grace and beauty of the dance.

Movement: Quadrille - (4 Couple square) formation with 1 or 2 active couples traveling. All couples must become the active couple sometime during the dance. Inactive couples **MUST HOLD HOME** position. Progression must be on the inside of the set in a counter-clockwise direction. Couples must square set prior to doing first figure (Identify "HOME" position prior to doing any figure or formation by swinging your partner). Dancers must not start simultaneously.

Music: Traditional style music without vocals. If live band is provided, team must dance to it.

Callers: Figures MUST be called and heard from within the set.

Time Limit: 8 minutes