

Palm Springs Winter Break Choreography Contest Rules

The Palm Springs Winter Break Choreography Contest is designed to recognize dances that combine strong choreography, effective movement, and real-world appeal within the line dance community.

Please read these rules thoroughly. **Bold, purple font** indicates substantive changes from last year.

1. Eligibility

- a. Open to any choreographer.
- b. Entry must be original choreography (or original co-choreography).
- c. Each contestant is allowed to enter a maximum of three (3) dances in each division.
- d. Contestants who do not follow the published rules may be disqualified.
- e. Entries are to be emailed to PSWBcontest@gmail.com on or before September 30, 2026.
- f. Entry fees (\$10 per dance) are to be paid on or before September 30, 2026. Online (www.palmspringswinterbreak.com/shop), mailed in (see registration form on website), or Venmo (contact PSWBcontest@gmail.com for details) accepted.
- g. Entries are to include:
 - i. Contestant name, email address, and phone number
 - ii. One of the following statements, as applicable:
 - > If selected as Winner, I will accept compensation and understand this may disqualify me from competing in amateur contests run by certain organizations.
 - OR
 - > If selected as Winner, I will NOT accept compensation (monetary or otherwise).
 - iii. Indication of division being entered
 - iv. Demo Video link
 - v. Stepsheet (as attachment, not a link)
 - vi. Instructional Video link

2. Stepsheet Guidelines

- a. Stepsheets should be submitted in Word (.docx or .doc) or Google Docs format, on one page (if possible), with a minimum font size of 11.
- b. Level of dance must be consistent with the guidelines in Section 3, Level of Dance.
- c. Stepsheets must be clear, professional, and free of errors that impact readability or understanding.
- d. Stepsheets must have the dance name, song name and artist with notation of any special remix or version, count-in directions, and understandable, clear description of steps, as determined by the judge designated to evaluate stepsheets for this contest.

- e. Stepsheets are to match the Demo Video and Instructional Video presentations of the dance.

3. Level of Dance

- a. Determining factors such as music beats per minute (BPM) and direction of travel should be considered in setting the level of dance.
- b. Beginner/Improver Division
 - i. Beginner/Improver Division entries cannot have more than 64 counts.
 - ii. Beginner/Improver Division entries cannot be distinctly phrased (ABC); Beginner/Improver entries shall have a single sequence of choreography (line dance) that repeats through the song, not separate sequences (Part A, Part B) that change in their order of execution. The only exceptions are for a restart or minor tag/bonus, as follows:
 1. A restart that occurs once and does not require any modification of steps to be executed, is allowed.
 2. A tag that is 8 counts or less and occurs once, is allowed.
 3. Either of the above two exceptions are allowed, but not both within a single entry (i.e., a Beginner/Improver Division entry may have either a tag or a restart, not both).
 - iii. The following steps will exclude eligibility in the Beginner/Improver Division:
 1. Applejacks, Arabesque, Attitude, Boogie Walk, Camel Walk, Count “a”, Mashed Potatoes, Moon Walk, Roger Rabbit, Running Man
 2. Spins and turns:
 - a. Any spin on one foot turning greater than 1/2
 - b. Greater than 1/4 Turning Sailor Step
 - c. Greater than 1/4 Monterey Turn
 - d. Greater than 1/2 Triple-step (aka Shuffle) Turn
 - e. Greater than 1/2 Cross-Unwind
 - iv. The following steps are allowed in “Improver” level dances:
 1. Coaster Step, Développé, Gallop, Heel Jacks, Knee Pop, Lock Step, Mambo Step written in syncopated timing, Pony, Rondé, Sailor Step, Samba Step (Botafogo on ‘&’ timing, not ‘a’ timing), Scissor Step written in syncopated timing, Skate, Sugar Foot, Susie Q/Grind Walk, Swivet, Syncopated Switches, Twinkle, Vaudeville, Wizard Step
 2. Spins and turns:
 - a. Any spin on one foot turning greater than 1/4 but less 1/2
 - b. 1/4 Turning Sailor Step
 - c. 1/4 Monterey Turn
 - d. Progressive Turns
 - e. Greater than 1/4 Triple-step (aka Shuffle) Turn
 - f. Greater than 1/4 Turning Jazz Box
 - g. Greater than 1/4 Chase Turn
 - h. Greater than 1/4 Cross-Unwind

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- v. The steps explicitly listed in this Section 3, Level of Dance, are not exhaustive of all choreography combinations. For steps not listed, contestants are to use common practice and generally accepted understanding to determine appropriate dance level.

Note: The steps listed in Section 3, Level of Dance, are acceptable line dance terminology at this time. If clarification is necessary for understanding a step listed or determining level of dance, please email PSWBcontest@gmail.com.

4. Music

- a. Music must be readily available through legal sources in the United States.
- b. Music with foul language is NOT acceptable and will result in disqualification.

5. Judging

a. Stepsheets

- i. Stepsheets will be judged per Section 2, Stepsheets.
- ii. **The Demo Video link and the Instructional Video link will be used to confirm the accuracy of the stepsheet to the choreographed dance.**
- iii. Stepsheets will be judged as either Acceptable or Unacceptable.
- iv. If a stepsheet is deemed Unacceptable on or before September 25, 2026, the contestant will be notified immediately and given until the end of the entry period (September 30, 2026) to submit a revised stepsheet.
- v. If a stepsheet is deemed Unacceptable after September 25, 2026, the contestant will be notified immediately and given five (5) calendar days to submit a revised stepsheet.
- vi. Only entries with Acceptable stepsheet determinations will advance to the next stage in judging: Dance Entries.

b. Dance Entries

- i. Dance entries will be judged in the following categories:

1. CONTENT & MUSICALITY

- a. **Evaluation of the choreography's design, structure, and relationship to the music.**
- b. **This includes the selection and combination of steps, originality, phrasing, and how effectively the movement reflects the rhythm, accents, and overall feel of the track.**
- c. **This category focuses on how well the dance is constructed and how effectively it interprets the music, independent of how easy it is to learn or how broadly it may appeal.**
- d. **15 points possible**

2. FLOOR FILLER POTENTIAL

- a. Evaluation of the dance's likelihood to be widely taught, remembered, and repeatedly danced in a social line dance setting.
- b. This includes memorability, clarity of structure, ease of retention for the intended level, and the presence of distinctive elements that encourage dancers to return to the dance.
- c. "Floor Filler Potential" does not require high-energy or novelty-driven choreography, but rather reflects how effectively the dance engages dancers and sustains participation across repeated dances.
- d. 10 points possible

3. FLOW & FLOORCRAFT

- a. Evaluation of how the dance moves and transitions across the floor.
- b. This includes the smoothness of step transitions, balance and variety of directional movement, spatial awareness, and how naturally the dance progresses from wall to wall.
- c. For this contest, Flow & Floorcraft includes how effectively the dance utilizes space on the dance floor, not just how individual steps connect.
- d. 10 points possible

- ii. The top scoring entry for each division (scores in above categories added together; total 35 points possible) will win that division.

- 1. In the event of a tie, the tie-break winner will be the entry with the highest points in the **CONTENT & MUSICALITY** category of judging.
- 2. If the tie persists, the tie-break winner will be the entry with the highest points in the **FLOOR FILLER POTENTIAL** category of judging.
- 3. If the tie still persists, the tie-break winner will be the entry with the highest points in the **FLOW & FLOORCRAFT** category of judging.
- 4. A panel of judges, composed of an odd number, will learn the dance entries, watch the Demo Videos, and score the entries.

- iii. Instructional Videos

- 1. **Instructional Videos are not scored and are used solely for learning and verification purposes.**

6. Video Guidelines

- a. Demo Video
 - i. Contestant must perform dance in submitted video link.
 - ii. Other dancers are encouraged, but not required, to be in the video.

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- iii. Keep video angles to mimic what one person would view during an in-person demo (for example, no moving drone shots or switching between people or points of view that cannot be done naturally by the normal human eye). Following typical in-person and online line dance demos, it is recommended the contestant face the camera to start the demo.
 - iv. Video is to show full contestant (head to toe) at all times.
 - v. With respect to time length:
 - 1. If the dance does not have a tag, restart, or phrasing, then the video is to show at least four walls, from the beginning of the music track.
 - 2. If the dance has a tag(s) or restart(s), then the video is to show through all tags or restarts but no less than four complete walls, from the beginning of the music track.
 - 3. If the dance is phrased, then the video is to show through the final phrase change.
 - vi. Acrobatic moves are not allowed at any time. These movements include:
 - 1. Any move where both legs are above the waist height of the contestant.
 - 2. Any move where the contestant's weight is on one or both hands.
 - 3. Any move where a contestant sits or lies on the floor. (This includes splits.)
 - vii. Proper execution is important, makes it easier for judges to evaluate the dance.
 - viii. Vulgar or crude movements are not allowed. Movements beyond the point of flirtation, humor, or comedy will result in dance being penalized.
- b. Instructional Video
- i. Contestant is encouraged to include instruction by counts and by call (words).
 - ii. Contestant is encouraged to face away from the camera to mimic typical in-person teaching for line dance.
 - iii. Instructional video is for the submitted choreography.

7. Understanding

- a. Winners will be announced in December 2026.
- b. Contestant will indicate, during contest entry, if the contestant will or will not accept compensation if selected as a Winner.
 - i. If compensation is accepted, as indicated during contest entry, each Winner will be awarded:
 - 1. a free weekend pass to PSWB 2027,
 - 2. a free weekend pass to PSWB 2028,
 - 3. a customized PSWB Winner t-shirt or jacket (winner preference)
 - ii. **Winners who decline compensation will still be recognized as division winners but will not receive listed prizes.**

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- c. If a winner cannot attend and has indicated during contest entry that compensation will be accepted, then the free weekend pass to PSWB 2027 can be transferred to another person.
- d. Winner is responsible for his/her own travel and any and all other expenses.
- e. All decisions of the Judges and Event Director are considered final.
- f. In the instance an entry is disqualified, no refunds will be issued.
- g. By entering, contestants grant permission for entered stepsheets and video links to be posted on the PalmSpringsWinterBreak.com website after winners are announced in December 2026.
- h. Contestants will privately receive their individual scoring results after winners are announced.

8. Questions

All questions are to be submitted in writing to PSWBcontest@gmail.com. Questions and answers will be posted publicly, without identifying the submitter, for all potential contestants to view on the website (www.PalmSpringsWinterBreak.com).