

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER JUDGE'S WORKSHOP REPORT

Let me begin with thanking everyone in helping with the August/September workshops. To the host clubs - River City, Ramblers and Christchurch, thank you. To the dancers, cooks and drivers – thank you. Finally, thank you to all judges for your continued commitment and dedication.

It is heartening to see that the overwhelming majority of judges are either extremely happy or content with their judging. This was one of the many pleasing results from the questionnaire that all judges were asked to complete at the workshops. This is a great place to be and we should be proud of what we have accomplished in recent years, and also what we continue to achieve in our workshops and on the dance floor.

Please find below a summary of notes from all 3 workshops including those issues that provoked some strong and heartfelt opinion. While it would be great for all of us to agree, I think the quality of debate is a sign of a healthy democracy. I hope that we will support the majority decision and continue to work in good faith and in the best interests of the dancers, supporters and our movement.

BREAKDOWN OF POINTS

A judge's sheet which breaks down the allocation of points for a particular category of Timing, Harmony or Variety was used to judge dancers. The value (or lack thereof) of using the sheet at Nationals was discussed and below is a summary of the comments:

Comments:

- I love it.
- It's great for Trainees
- Dancers will love it
- Makes judges more accountable
- It makes me (as an experienced and senior judge) ask myself questions, which must be a good thing
- You can better understand and appreciate the marks
- It takes more time – but happy if it gives a better result
- Judges can be too generous or too mean
- Extra work for judges – it makes me think a lot more
- We need practice
- We can start to over analyse
- It will take more time
- It's great for dancers
- It's easy, I like it
- Great for workshops as a training tool
- Could be good for assessments, but not for Nationals
- We lose the gut instinct feeling/factor

18 judges against, 19 judges in favour, 5 abstentions. **The breakdown sheet will be trialled at the 2014 Junior Nationals.**

UP CLOSE WITH BEST DRESSED

Judges officiating at Nationals are invited to inspect those couples/teams entering the Best Dressed Parade after they have been marshalled by the Floor Manager(s) and Head Judge in the marshalling area. The purpose is to allow judges to recognise and appreciate the finer detail of the outfits in a

friendly and respectful manner. The pros and cons of the Up & Close Parade were discussed and a summary of the comments are below:

Comments:

- Uncomfortable for me as a judge and competitors.
- I loved it.
- It was the worst possible judging experience ever.
- I felt embarrassed.
- As a dancer, I really appreciated judges taking the time to recognise the extra effort taken by competitors.
- Intimidating.
- Invading their space – NO
- I felt uncomfortable at first, but then found it very useful to get up and close
- Uncomfortable – doesn't work
- A great advantage to appreciate the detail
- We owe it to the competitors
- Great for picking up detail – dirty shoes etc
- More time the better

27 judges in favour of the Up Close Parade continuing. 14 against. 1 abstention. **The parade will continue and take place at the 2013 Senior Nationals.** It is important to note that the Best Dressed Parade is not compulsory and competitors are allowed to leave the marshalling area, if they wish, after the marshalling has been completed by the Floor Manager(s) and Head Judge.

DANCING & OFFICIATING

While the preference is for judges to make a decision to either judge or dance at a competition, we need to allow some flexibility for those areas that don't have many judges like the South Island. We don't wish to penalise those judges who are trying to complete their training and/or criteria and therefore it should be managed on a case by case basis with the Head Judge.

GLOVES & HATS

A reminder to all judges that if gloves or hats are worn during the Best Dressed parade, they must also be worn for dancing. Unlike boleros and ties - gloves and hats cannot be removed. A rule change will need to be made at the AGM if judges don't agree with this.

SHOES FOR BEST DRESSED

Judges look at the "complete look" from hair to shoes, back and front, of the couple/partnership when judging best dressed. The outfits including accessories and shoes need to compliment the overall look. Complimentary colours are important for the overall effect, and this also applies to shoes.

TEAM SONG

Songs for the team events are decided and issued by the Executive in advance to give teams the opportunity to suitably choreograph their routines to the song. It is completely up to the individual team on how they wish to construct and present their routine of moves.

We judge team events using the same judging guidelines and as always, Timing is the essential ingredient within the 3 categories along with a well-balanced routine. Please also note the following:

EXPRESSION: All body movements of the couple/partnership interpret the character of the music i.e. uses the beat, music breaks, pauses and accents in the dance. This involves clever use of timing by playing with and using the beat, holding the beat, and syncopation within moves. The entire body is used to express the rhythm and character of the dance.

While the odd play on the lyrics of the song may enhance the routine, we are more interested in the clever use of the music and Timing as is described above. We discourage teams from presenting a “novelty” type routine.

COMPETITOR NUMBERS

To avoid confusion, clubs are asked to use numbers starting from 11 for all competitions. It is very easy for mistakes to be made if using numbers from 1.

2014 WORKSHOPS

There will be no Feb/March regional workshops. However, a workshop will be held for judges officiating at Junior Nationals on the Friday afternoon, before the Nationals in Wanganui. This could also alleviate the need for a judge’s meeting in the evening. The National Workshop will be held on 28 June 2014, and the regional workshops will be held in August/September.

NATIONAL WORKSHOP

Judges are reminded to book their travel as soon as possible to take advantage of the cheaper airfares. Judges can submit an application for reimbursement at any time by sending a completed expense claim form to the Association Secretary. Wellington based judges and clubs are more than happy to billet judges attending workshop.

DE-BRIEF MEETINGS

De-brief meetings at competitions, (and after judging has finished), are important and valuable. Judges agree that if there is time, judges should meet to discuss the event.

THIRD SONG

The overwhelming majority of judges were in favour of the Third Song rule being repealed to provide clarity to competitors that there is no chance of them having to dance to a third song and to reinforce our judging beliefs that judges must make a decision. This will be presented to the Executive for their consideration.