

**REPORT FROM NATIONAL JUDGES WORKSHOP**  
**25 February 2012, Brentwood Hotel**

Thank you to all judges who contributed to a constructive and thought provoking workshop. As per the request from judges, the day was spent discussing and working through our guidelines. Thank you to Jan Morgan & Trish Haswell for their work as group facilitators, and also to Trish for organising the dancers. The feedback from judges was positive and encouraging with the overall feeling that the national workshop should be a regular event.

**GIVING FEEDBACK**

All judges should feel encouraged to give feedback in response to queries from competitors/coaches/supporters. Judges should always act in a professional manner and be as sensitive as possible when giving their opinion. Judges should also report any untoward behaviour to the Head Judge.

**JUDGING GUIDELINES**

Judges are happy with the guidelines and don't see any need for change. The focus is now on the interpretation of the guidelines. How do judges interpret Timing, Harmony & Variety? What do judges look for when judging the 3 categories?

**TIMING**

- Timing is A-One for all 3 categories
- Interpretation/Expression of music
- Consistent movement in time with the music and each other
- Consistent tempo with music
- Ownership of the music/dance
- Depth of expression – Feel it from the heart
- Confidence/Skill – Play with music

**HARMONY**

- Timing is A-One for all 3 categories
- Working Together: Not as robots but as a unit
- Flow – no breaks in the dance/dancers work together in unison
- Confidence
- Enjoyment – dancers enjoy the performance together
- Complimentary to each other

**VARIETY**

- Timing is A-One for all 3 categories
- Well balanced routine: a diverse range of moves that flow into each other and cover all heights: low/floor moves/shadows, medium & high
- Creativity: The diverse range of moves need to be creative to sustain interest
- Mastery: The competence of the dancers to execute the moves well
- X-Factor: The spine tingling feeling

## **BREAKING THE FLOW**

Our Timing guidelines ask dancers to interpret the character of the music i.e. use the beat, music breaks, pauses & accents in the dance. It talks about clever use of Timing. But it also says that all body movements must be consistent with the tempo and rhythm of the song. The question was asked – how do we judge a move that is slowed down in a fast song, or vice versa, a move that is fastened up in a slow song? (Essentially the tempo of the dance has changed by virtue of a move being slowed down or fastened up). After much discussion it was agreed that this was an issue about flow. Judges should ask themselves – has the move(s) broken the flow of the dance? If so, then judges wouldn't award points.

## **JUDGES FORUM FOR COMPETITORS**

A suggestion was made to hold a forum after or before a Nationals to answer any questions/queries of competitors. Judges were initially sceptical about this given the events of the past when upset/disappointed competitors have accosted/abused judges. The general feeling however is that our movement has moved on from those days and that we should be accessible to dancers. The HJ said that on a practical level, you can't hold a forum at the Nationals – the weekend is already busy and we should also allow the HJ, other judges and competitors to peruse the judging sheets before any comment is made.

Follow up note: At the Executive meeting on Sunday it was agreed that the Head Judge would hold an open forum at the end of the regional judge's workshops for dancers/coaches to ask questions or seek clarification. It was felt that this was the best opportunity for dancers to hear from the Head Judge and other senior judges outside of a competition. The purpose of the one hour forum would be to engage in a positive, open and constructive dialogue, with the aim of helping dancers understand our judging guidelines.

## **REGULAR NATIONAL WORKSHOPS**

Head Judge: What do judges think about having a national workshop every year, or once every two years? Could the Association look at ways of helping clubs, help judges to attend? How would clubs feel about paying a levy/being part of a scheme to help with the cost of the workshop? Judges need to speak to their AGM delegates about this as it will be raised at the AGM during General Business.

## **HEAD JUDGE**

I announced that I would be standing down as Head Judge at the forthcoming AGM. I will start in a new role at TVNZ early next month which means that I cannot continue to give the HJ position my full commitment. I am sad because I have immensely enjoyed the role and I do believe that we are all in a good place. I cannot express how important the Head Judge role is. It's your voice on the Executive and it leads and shapes the way that we judge at our local, regional and national competitions. Please take the time to think about the role and who you think may be a good Head Judge. I offer the new Head Judge my time and any assistance that he or she may require.

I look forward to seeing you at the Junior Nationals, AGM or somewhere in the near future.

All the best,

Shane Taurima  
NZARRA Head Judge