

Competition Survival Guide

Mostly stolen from USC Dancesport Team

Okay, for you first timers and 2nd/3rd/4th timers to competitions, here's a little survival guide on what to expect at your first competition, how to prepare, and what to do.

What do I wear?!?

Guys:

Shoes:

Your dance shoes if you have them... with black socks-no white socks! If you don't have dance shoes, wear nice dress shoes.

Pants:

Same pants for both Latin and Smooth. Black pants.

Latin Top:

Think club gear. Anything is fine, just not baggy. Tight fitting preferred.

Smooth:

Think formal. Long sleeve collared shirt works.

Ladies:

Shoes:

Dance shoes, or if you don't have them, some heel with a heel strap that is comfortable and you can dance in

Latin:

Club gear, something that you would wear to a club. Short skirts work, but not too short! You don't want it riding up. Dresses are a good option, but not to the floor, leave that for smooth. Pants sometimes work, but not always.

Smooth:

Long flowing dress that lets you move, pants are a no-no.

Hair:

Up or back in a low ponytail. SOMETHING OUT OF YOUR FACE! You don't want your hair covering your face and you want the judges to see your smiles, after all, you are performing (plus you don't want to knock your partner out with hair flying everywhere)! Make sure your hair looks neat.

When you guys are getting ready for the comp, do everything and anything to make yourself look very presentable! It's all about looking your best!

What do I do when I get there?!?

Okay, before you do anything, guys and girls must check in and get your tickets/hand stamped/whatever. Typically comps will have a heat sheet ready for you which tells you:

-Your heat number and APPROXIMATE time of the heat

-What dances you are doing and with who

Guys, you will also be getting a number to put on the back of your shirt. This is how judges will identify you.

Pay attention to what heat they are on, you don't want to be unprepared. Anticipate how much time you need to get ready and how fast (or slow) they are moving along with the heats. BE PREPARED!

ACK!!! My event's up!!! What do I do!?!?

Okay... your event has been called up... first and foremost... DO NOT PANIC!!!

Before your event is called (probably get there 1 or 2 events prior), you should head over to the on deck area, which is usually in one of the corners of the dance floor.

You will check in with the on deck captain and he will line you and your partner up in a line according to your number.

You'll wait there until your event is called. Depending on how many couples are in the heat, the on deck captain will call out your number as the announce calls couples onto the floor for your event. When you're number is called, head out onto the floor and pick a spot on the floor, standing in front of your partner, waiting for the music to start. If you are doing smooth, make sure you are facing line of dance (counter-clockwise).

When you head out onto the floor, PRESENT YOURSELF!!! Walk out on the floor with confidence, like you are going to tear up the floor and win!!! And of course, good posture always helps. Guys, walk on the left side of the lady, and lead her out onto the floor.

AHH!!! I'm supposed to dance now?!?

Okay, now is the time to show your stuff and **have fun!!!**

The announcer will typically say:

“And event number blah... the *insert dance here*.... Music please...”

So when the music goes on, take dance position, but don't start immediately. Take some time and listen to the music to start on time. When you're ready, GO FOR IT! And DO NOT STOP until the music stops. You will dance on the floor for about a minute and a half typically.

Top ten things to try and remember while dancing:

- 10. STAY ON TIME!!!!
- 9. Do NOT look down!!!

Looking down usually means you don't know what your doing and doesn't show confidence.

- 8. STAY ON TIME!!!!
- 7. ACT CONFIDENTLY!!
If you mess up, ACT like you meant to do it! Act like you know what you are doing, even if you don't. If you mess up, do the basic a couple times until you get back in the zone! Chances are the judge didn't catch it.
- 6. STAY ON TIME!!!
- 5. Floor craft
As much as we want to win... we are not allowed to take out other couples on the dance floor...So try not to run into any other couple on the floor.
- 4. STAY ON TIME!!!
- 3. Have Fun!!!!
Dancing is meant to be fun!!! Enjoy yourself out on the floor, show off, have fun!!!
- 2. STAY ON TIME!!!
- **1. STAY ON TIME and HAVE FUN!!!!**

Okay... it's all over!!!

Alright, you've made it through your first event!!! Don't go rushing off the floor quite yet!!!

The music will fade out, and the announce will typically say "Thank you dancers..."

Also, take note whether the event was a prelim, quarter, or semi-final round, especially if there are numerous couples. You might be called back. So listen to the announcer when they do call backs for your heat. When that happens, drop what you are doing and head back to the floor.

So before you leave the floor, present yourself and take a bow, and walk CONFIDENTLY off the floor.

So now you are all done with that event.... Take a rest, do whatever, and get ready for your next dance!!!

AWARD TIME!!!

When the awards session comes around, all the couples who were in the finals are called back to the floor, and the announcers announce your placing.

If you didn't make finals, don't feel so down. You got on the dance floor and gave it your best. Just getting out on the floor and dancing in front of people you don't know takes a lot of courage as it is!!!

When it is all said and danced... Relax... you are done competing... But don't head home quite yet, cheer on the rest of your teammates from the sidelines! Scream out their name/number and congratulate them when they are done! We're a team, we support and cheer each other on. Our team has a reputation for being the loudest and most spirited... we have to keep that reputation alive! (i.e. Stick around for the team match at the end of the evening.... You never know what's going to happen! *Oh the crazyness...*)

So hope this guide was somewhat helpful! Good luck out there on the dance floor!