

JUDGE'S SOAPBOX

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What I like to see, and hate to see, on the competition dance floor.

Posture- The **first** thing that strikes me when I look at a competitive couple is their posture. They've got to have good posture, good presentation, good poise. **Second**, what they do with that posture is important to me, whether they maintain it as they move, that applies no matter what style they are dancing.

Connection - I want to see a connection between the couple, not just a guy dancing totally on his own and the girl moving totally on her own in a pre-choreographed routine. By connection I don't just mean just physically, there has to be an emotional connection as well. You don't necessarily have to be physically in contact you can work off each other visually, but the communication between the couple has to be seen to be strong.

Choreography - What I don't like to see is when the choreography is too complex for the ability of the student or Professional. I think couples would find they got consistently better results if they performed a level of dancing that was appropriate for their skill level. If the material is too advanced for them and they can not execute it proficiently, in my eyes they will not do as well as a couple competently dancing more basic material .

Preparedness

- I don't like to see unprepared couples whether it be a Professional or an Amateur.
- I don't like to see sloppy footwork, especially in the smooth or the standard.
- I don't like to see a poor frame.
- I **do** want to see the use of the arms be reflected as a result of something that has happened in the body.

Costuming - Good costuming is a must because it is part of the presentation. I like to see the costuming appropriate to the persons physique and age. For example, I hate to see a junior or a young person wearing too revealing an outfit or an older lady showing more of her body than is in good taste. If the costumes are somewhat revealing that is okay as long as you have the body for it and as long as it is in good taste. I would rather have elegant rather than revealing any day of the week and I feel that 99% of the judges (and for that matter the spectators) would agree with me.

Technique or Feeling - If the couple that is feeling the music are somewhat technically proficient and present themselves well, sometimes I will overlook some of the smaller technical mistakes. I prefer that to a couple that is very technically effective but slightly robotic. To me the emotional content is a huge part of the performance, having said that, of course, the best presentation and communication of one's feeling for the dance occurs through utilizing good technique.

Dancing for the Audience or Self - I think the competitive couples should definitely dance for the audience and for themselves as opposed to for the judges. Of course if they totally dance to themselves they can get lost and if they dance totally to the audience they can lose themselves, so it should be a combination of both. I think the

the ones that tries to beat the other dancers on the floor, they will be the ones that focus on trying to dance their material to the best of their abilities. That way they don't put themselves under the pressure of having to beat everybody else and they also don't give themselves an excuse for not performing up to their potential.

The Smooth Style - To me the problem in Smooth is that often the couples who are very good in closed position don't take advantage of the opportunities inherent in open position when they open up, they don't take the extra stretch they don't hit their lines, and yet often the couples who are great in their execution of open material appear weak posturally when they get into closed position. I would like to see a couple with strength in both open and closed position, and since both require much the same qualities, good use of feet, good posture, good partnering skills, appropriate sway etc. They should not be as rare a creature as they sometimes appear.

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