



DANCE TEAMS OF MASSACHUSETTS

NEW CATEGORIES, RULE UPDATE, SCORESHEET
BREAKDOWN, JUDGING ETHICS, SCORING SYSTEM,

2020-2021 SEASON



NEW Dance Competition Categories

- **Jazz:** This is the most broad category offered in a dance team competition. Teams can perform classic jazz, contemporary, "lyrical" style, or a combination of these styles within a routine. Regardless of the jazz style chosen, judges look for creativity, musicality, technical ability, and use of team strengths.
- **Pom:** This style continues to evolve adding multiple genres packed within a high-energy routine. It can include a mix of cheer motions, technical elements, hip hop tricks, and power moves. Judges look for these elements along with a visually appealing, powerful, and well executed routine. *Note: Poms must be held 85% of the routine when competing Pom.*
- **Hip Hop:** Routine can encompass street-style movement with an emphasis on style, creativity, originality, control, and body isolations. Judges should look for strength, power and authentic styles of movement, while routine maintains style and flow

Competition Category Entry and Participant Rules

Teams can compete in two of the three offered categories. (Hip-hop, Jazz, and Pom.) Number of dancers can vary as long as **50% of the competition roster** is represented in both categories.

Example: There are 16 dancers on the competition roster. 12 of them will be competing Jazz and 14 will be competing pom. **8 of the dancers** must be in both dances.

Minimum number of participants competing: 6

*Competition Alternates must be added to roster as part of the number accounted for.

Competition Routine Rules

TUMBLING AND TRICKS EXECUTED BY INDIVIDUALS

*Note: The following are lists of commonly known dance skills. This does not mean that they are required for your routine, nor does this list encompass all skills that are legal/illegal.

- **ALLOWED:** Side Aerial Cartwheels Front/Back Walkovers, **Front Handsprings** Round Off, **Branny**, Stalls/Freezes, **Side Somi**, Head spins, Forward Rolls, Windmills, Backward Rolls, Kip Ups, Cartwheels, Shoulder Rolls, Headstands, Headsprings (with hands), Handstands, Backbends
- **NOT ALLOWED:** Front Tucks, Back Handsprings, Front Aerials, No handed headsprings, Dive Rolls, Toe Pitch Back Tucks, Layouts, Shushunova,

WEIGHT BEARING SKILLS

- WEIGHT BEARING SKILLS Hip over-head rotation skills with hand support are not allowed while holding poms in the supporting hand. (Exception: forward rolls and backward rolls are allowed). The use of hands-free poms for hip over-head skills is allowed. *Details about Hands-Free Poms section will be discussed in a later slide*

Additional Skill Rules and Details

1. Airborne skills without hand support are not allowed. (Exception: Headsprings with hand support, aerial cartwheels, and side somis not connected to any tumbling skill are allowed).
2. If a team chooses to use hands free poms for aerial cartwheels and/or side somis, and later touches down, the poms **MUST** be flipped off of the hand, or a penalty will be assessed. Simply wearing the hands-free poms for the aerial cartwheel and/or side somi does not make it legal if they are not used correctly.
3. If a team chooses to use non-hands-free poms for aerial cartwheels and/or side somis, they **MUST** be moved to one hand. If a dancer later touches down with the hand that holds both poms, a penalty will be assessed. There are no exceptions to this rule.
4. Tumbling skills with hip over-head rotation is limited to 3 connected skills. (Example: 3 consecutive headsprings are allowed; 4 are not allowed).
5. Simultaneous tumbling over or under another dancer that includes hip over-head rotation by both dancers is not allowed.
6. Choreographed drops to the knee, thigh, back, front, head, shoulder, or seat onto the performing surface are not allowed unless the dancer first bears weight on the hand(s) or foot/feet.

7. Landing in a push-up position onto the performance surface from a jump in which the legs are in front of the body and swing behind are not allowed. All variations of a shushunova are not allowed.

8. Airborne skills without hip over-head rotation may not jump from a standing or squatting position backwards onto the neck, head, back, shoulders, and/or hands. Any kip up motion must initiate from the back/shoulder area touching the ground. (NOTE: This rule refers specifically and only to the “rubber band” /” bronco” kip up skill, as well as any skill jumping backwards into a headstand/handstand stall).

Dance Lifts and Partnering

1. The Executing Dancer must receive support from a Supporting Dancer who is in direct contact with the performance surface through the entire skill. (Exception: Kick Line Leaps).
2. Elevators, thigh stands, shoulder sits, and chair sits are allowed.
3. The following cheer-based stunts are not allowed:
 - a. Extended cheer stunts (the lifted dancer is extended in an upright position over the base(s) who maintain fully extended arms and have the lifted dancers' feet in hands)
 - b. Pyramids and basket tosses
4. Swinging in and out of lifts and tricks is allowed in the prone and/or supine positions; swinging forwards, backwards, or making a complete circular rotation will not be allowed if the Executing Dancer is in a prone position (body facing the ground).
5. Hip over-head rotation of the Executing Dancer(s) may occur if a Supporting Dancer maintains contact until the Executing Dancer returns to the performance surface or is returning to the upright position.
6. Vertical Inversions are allowed if:
 - a. The Supporting Dancer(s) maintain contact until the Executing Dancer returns to the performance surface or returns to the upright position.
 - b. When the height of the Executing Dancers shoulders exceeds shoulder level of the Supporting dancer, there is at least one additional dancer to spot who does not bear weight.

Release Moves

1. An Executing Dancer may jump, leap, step, or push off a Supporting Dancer if:
 - a. The highest point of the released skill does not elevate the Executing Dancer's feet above head level of the Supporting Dancer.
 - i. Exception: toe touches off a dancers back/leap frog jumps will be allowed
 - b. The Executing Dancer may not pass through the prone or inverted position after the release.
 - c. Toe pitch back tucks are not allowed.
2. A Supporting Dancer may release/toss an Executing Dancer if:
 - a. The highest point of the release/toss does not elevate the Executing Dancer's hips above head level of the Supporting Dancer.
 - b. The Executing Dancer is not supine or inverted when released.
 - c. The Executing Dancer does not pass through a prone or inverted position after release.
 - d. Toe Pitch back tucks are not allowed.

Hands Free Poms

- The use of hands-free poms will be allowed. Hands-free poms are defined as poms with a **strap across the palm of the hand**, making them easily transferrable to place a clean hand on the ground for skills, tricks, etc. A hair tie, rubber band, plastic holes for fingers, or tying pom strings/pieces together will not be counted as a handsfree pom. Proper hands free poms shown below:



Video Taping Policy

Dancers, spectators, and coaches are not allowed to film other teams at any competition. If caught, it will result in disqualification of team in which the videographer is affiliated with. Reporting of video tapping should be brought to competition director.

Additional Rules and Regulations

For more information regarding general MSSAA rules, please refer to NFHS handbook and MSSAA online resources.

DANCE TEAM SCORESHEET BREAKDOWN

TEAM: _____ DIVISION: _____
 NAME OF JUDGE: _____ DATE: _____

EXECUTION	MAX	SCORE	COMMENTS
EXECUTION OF MOVEMENT Proper control, placement and completion of movement/motions while staying true to style. Quality & strength of movement	10		
*EXECUTION OF SKILLS Proper execution of technical skills	10		
SYNCHRONIZATION/UNIFORMITY Consistent unison and timing by the team. Uniformity of team movement within choreography and skills	10		
SPACING Consistent and even positioning of dances throughout all formations and transitions	10		
COMMUNICATION/PROJECTION Ability to connect with the audience throughout the performance. Includes: projection, genuine expression, emotion, energy and entertainment value	10		
CHOREOGRAPHY	MAX	SCORE	COMMENTS
CREATIVITY/MUSICALITY Originality of routine. New concepts/movement, levels/group work, visual effects and variety that compliments the intricacy of the music	10		
ROUTINE STAGING Use of varied formations & creative ways to move from one formation to another to allow for quick & seamless transitions. Adequate use of the performance floor	10		
COMPLEXITY OF MOVEMENT Level of difficulty implemented through movement such as, but not limited to weight changes, varied intricate movement, tempo changes, etc.	10		
DIFFICULTY OF SKILLS Level of difficulty implemented through technical skills and/or tricks	10		
OVERALL EFFECT	MAX	SCORE	COMMENTS
*OVERALL IMPRESSION Appropriateness of the music, costume and choreography. Impact of performance to create a lasting impression	10		
TOTAL POINTS	100		

Tabulator #1 _____ Tabulator #2 _____

* Add for Tie Break of Score (total of 20 points) June 2017

EXECUTION PORTION OF THE SCORESHEET

THE TOP 5 SUBCATEGORIES ON THE SCORESHEET ARE JUDGED ON "HOW"
THINGS ARE BEING DONE.

Judges are asked to consider the follow questions:

HOW IS THE TECHNIQUE OF THE PIROUETTE?

HOW CLEAN IS THE TEAM AS A WHOLE?

IS THE TEAM'S SPACING BEING EXECUTED?

ARE THE DANCERS SHOWING GENUINE EXPRESSION?

ARE THE DANCERS ATTACKING MOVEMENT TO THEIR FULLEST?

EXECUTION OF MOVEMENT

(BREAKDOWN FOR EACH GENRE)

Execution of Movement is the assessment of how well each dancer is moving. Specifically in terms of control, placement, and completion. Proper execution of the style in question is taken into account here as well.

Jazz: Posture and alignment are key when assessing jazz style movement. We are also looking for strength of movement, with flow and connectivity.

Pom: Posture, alignment, and staying grounded are important when assessing pom movement. We are looking for strength of movement in a hard-hitting and controlled way. Pom motions should stick and not bounce. Motions should also remain in front of the body, without hyperextension, with the exception of slight variations in choreographic style.

Hip Hop: Body control, alignment, energy, and staying grounded are important points to look for while assessing hip hop movement.

EXECUTION OF SKILL

(BREAKDOWN FOR EACH GENRE)

Execution of Skill focuses on how the team executes technical skills.

Jazz: Technical skills may include, but are not limited to elements such as turns, leaps, jumps, kicks, acrobatic skills, and lifts.

Pom: Technical skills may include, but are not limited to elements such as turns, leaps, jumps, kicks, acrobatic skills, power moves, and lifts.

Hip Hop: Technical skills/elements may include but are not limited to tricks, stalls/freezes, acrobatic skills, jumps, and floor work.

SYNCHRONIZATION/UNIFORMITY

(FOR ALL GENRES)

Synchronization/Uniformity looks at the **entire team's ability** to stay in sync and uniform while performing a routine.

It is important to understand the difference between this section and “execution of movement” section of the scoresheet.

In execution of movement, points are awarded for how the movement is being executed. For Synchronization/Uniformity, we are looking for how well the team moves as a whole and if they are moving “as one.” This can also include timing of skills and tricks.

We are not looking at the quality of movement here, we are looking for **PRECISION**.

SPACING

(FOR ALL GENRES)

Points for spacing are awarded for keeping consistent and even spacing throughout a routine. We also look for maintaining even spacing during transitions, and formations.

(This subcategory should not be confused with staging which is how well the stage is being used.)

COMMUNICATION/PROJECTION

This is the ability of the team to truly relay their message to the audience in a genuine and authentic way.

Judges should look for commitment to the intended emotion, and how it is displayed to the audience through the entire performance. Judges should also look at the **entire team's commitment** while judging this subcategory.

CHOREOGRAPHY PORTION OF THE SCORESHEET

THE BOTTOM 4 SUBCATEGORIES ON THE SCORESHEET ARE JUDGED ON "WHAT" IS IN
THE ROUTINE.

Judges consider questions like:

DOES THE ROUTINE HAVE GROUP WORK?

DOES THE ROUTINE SUPPORT THE DYNAMICS OF CHOSEN MUSIC?

HOW WELL IS THE STAGE BEING USED?

IS THE MOVEMENT DYNAMIC AND ORIGINAL?

CREATIVITY/MUSICALITY

(FOR ALL GENRES)

In terms of **creativity**, judges should look for original choreography that is new and innovative. We are looking for utilization of movement, group work, and levels that will add to the creative visuals throughout the routine.

Musicality is using the intricacies of the music through movement ensuring that the choreography compliments the music and enhances the routine.

STAGING

(FOR ALL GENRES)

The staging of a routine refers to what formations are being done, not how they are being done.

A variety of formations should be utilized and routine should use the entire performance surface instead of being confined to one formation or section of the floor.

A large part of the success of staging is having quick and seamless transitions to and from the variety of formations.

The best transitions are the ones that allow choreography to continue and not stop or affect the flow of the routine.

COMPLEXITY OF MOVEMENT

(For all Genres)

Complexity of Movement is specifically judging the intricacy and variety of movement choreographed in a routine.

Utilizing weight changes, tempo changes, and a variety of movement quality that will increase the level of difficulty in the movement.

Judges ask yourself,

How complex/difficult is movement within the style/styles choreographed in this routine?

Note for Hip Hop: This subcategory is not judging how many styles are represented in choreography but rather how complex each style is within the routine. Points will be awarded under overall impression for showcasing multiple styles of hip hop.

DIFFICULTY OF SKILLS

(BREAKDOWN FOR EACH GENRE)

This is the subcategory where judges award points for how difficulty skills and/or elements are implemented throughout the routine. It is important to note that points awarded here are for **what is being done** in the choreography **not the execution** of the skill element.

Jazz: Difficulty in skills can include (but are not limited to) turns, kicks, leaps, jumps, acrobatic skills, and lifts/partner work.

Pom: Difficulty in skills can include (but are not limited to) leaps, turns, kicks, jumps, acrobatic skills, lifts, and hip hop power moves (tricks).

Hip Hop: Difficulty in skills can include (but are not limited to) tricks, acrobatic skills, stalls, freezes, and floor work. Some common skills judged in this section are: kip-ups, and head springs

OVERALL IMPRESSION

Judges are asked to consider the following questions when scoring this subcategory.

Did this team leave a lasting impression?

Was the costuming and music appropriate?

Was the choreography and routine as a whole impressive?

Please note that dance is subject to opinion and not fully “right or wrong.” As dance is progressive and creative, this category is based on your opinion and will most likely vary between judges.

Also note, judges take into consideration other scores throughout the scoresheet to judge this subcategory. They consider the “overall package” of the routine.

JUDGING ETHICS

Through the use of a numerical system ranging from 4 to 10, judges are asked to accurately assess what a team is accomplishing and how it is being accomplished. With comments and feedback being accurate and directly reflecting scores given.

Judges are trained to score a routine they are watching in real time, not to compare a routine from previous/different competitions, and/or be influenced by school name, and familiarity/connection to a program.

Judges are expected to be present, consistent, and specific when adjudicating, trying to offer objective feedback, leaving subjective opinion out as much as possible.

Judges aim to HELP teams improve by giving useful, specific feedback, separating execution and choreography, and making sure comments support scores, recognizing areas of improvement and success.

Additional considerations include:

- Scores should match comments.
- Comments should be specific
- Judge in real time! Meaning, judge what you are seeing in front of you!
- Consider having a note pad to take initial notes to then synthesize them for the scoresheet. This will allow you to collect your thoughts and judge accurately.
- If you write the same comment on your note pad multiple times, it should definitely reflect the numeral score.
- Be sure to watch the routine as a whole not just one dancer! This will also help your accuracy.
- Know the score sheet in it's entirety. Judge based on the specific scoresheet, not personal preference.
- Practice judging by watching a video online and filling out scoresheet.

SCORING SYSTEM

Judging is based on the specific numerical system and points awarded to each specific subcategory. Judges know that individual subcategory scores should reflect this. This means subcategories vary in point range and the entire scoresheet should **not** be in one range.

Example 1: A team performs a triple pirouette, a team turn sequence, and a team leap sequence. During these elements, some dancers fall out of the skills, posture and alignment need improvement, and timing is slightly off.

This team should be rewarded points in the “difficulty of skills” category but should have points deducted in the “execution of skills” category.

Example 2: A team executes spacing and hits every formation equally from side to side and front to back however, the routine mainly stays in the center of the floor and only changes formation 3 times.

The team should be rewarded points in the “spacing” subcategory because they executed the formations of the routines but should be deducted points in the “staging” category due to the lack of use of space due to the choreography.

SCORING RANGES

Dance is subject to opinion and with the encouragement of consistency between judges, below is a scoring range that judges consider when adjudicating the subcategories. Note that judges consider these ranges **PER SUBCATEGORY** and a range is not chosen for the entire scoresheet.

Although there is the option to give a score between 1-4, judges are encouraged not to give below a 4, for the simple fact that dancers are performing a routine from beginning to end.

**Please note that decimals will be used more frequently during competitions to ensure accurate score differences.*

Ranges

1-4 range (Below Average) Team had difficulty fulfilling the criteria in a specific category. Area of focus is not being met to a satisfactory degree. **(Under 50% of the routine)**

5-7 range (Average) Specific criteria in the category was achieved and demonstrated **50% to 80%** of the time.

8-10 range (Above Average) Specific criteria in the category was demonstrated and achieved **between 80% to 100%** of the time.

**Decimals will be used to better assess subcategories.*

THANK YOU!

For any additional questions or concerns, please contact:

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Resources

- www.uda.varsity.com
- Pepco Poms (hands free poms)
- <https://www.usasf.net/>
- <https://www.nfhs.org/activities-sports/spirit/>
- MSSAA Dance/Cheer
http://www.mssaa.org/contentm/easy_pages/view.php?sid=35&page_id=11