

Competitive Dance - Overview

Competitive dance is a sport where dancers compete by performing dances in a number of permitted dance styles like tap, lyrical, jazz, acro, ballet, hip-hop, contemporary, modern etc. before a common group of judges. This is a very popular and widespread sport across the globe.



The competitors compete by dancing and performing the style of their choice before a common group of judges. These judges give them points which provides rank to an individual performer or a team.

A Brief History of Dance

The period of third millennia BC is the period when dancing became widely popular. At that time, dance was one of the integral part of religious ceremonies among Egyptians.

In many tomb paintings, it has been observed that Egyptian priests displayed musical instruments and dancers mimicked valuable events such as stories of gods and cosmic patterns of the movements of stars and sun. This tradition goes a long way to ancient Greece as they have dances in a very open platform (which led to the birth of the famous Greek theatre in 6th century BC).

As periods passed by, even other religion incorporated dance as an essential part in their ceremonies. For example, **Bharata Natyam** is the dance in Hinduism

which is still being performed today. Obviously, religious purpose was not the only reason for the

creation of the dances. Common people used dance for the purpose to celebrate, entertain, seduce, and to induce the mood of hyperactive excitement.

On the occasion of annual celebration to honor the Greek god of wine Dionysus and also Roman god Bacchus, people involved in dancing and drinking for numerous days. The 1400BC year old Egyptian painting displayed the group of skimpily dressed girls dancing among the wealthy male crowd, as several musicians played for them.

At the start of the Renaissance, **ballet** became one of the dance of the upper class society. There were no such hard proof of the European dances before the Renaissance period. There are only very few historical proofs of that period. The chain-shaped dance was the only dance which was found before renaissance. After the arrival of renaissance, many other music and dances were introduced.

How to Play Competitive Dance?

The dance which is performed by a group of dancers or a single dancer in a competition is called a **routine**. These routines are required to be entered into appropriate categories in every competition. The factors which determine the category that is entered with its appropriate routines are –

Dance Styles

Dance style has a large variation depending upon the type of area upon which it is going to be showcased like musical theatre, dance theatre, opera, etc. The basic types involve jazz, acro, contemporary, Hip-hop, lyrical, tap, pointe etc. Open dance category has further more classifications that are not mentioned above.



Number of Dancers

Depending upon the type of group performance, the number of dancers will vary. For example solo has single dancer, duo needs two, trio demands three and so on. Among the same group also there are numerous categories.

Average Age of Dancers

This depends on the competition. Typical age divisions are –

- Petite – 8 and under
- Junior – 9 to 11
- Teen – 12 to 14
- Senior – 15 to 18
- Adult – 19 and above

The Dance Music

It is obvious that for dance, song is necessary and these songs are commercial songs created by artists or the ones used in films or albums. Time limit is also there. So, songs are edited and cropped in a manner so that it will best fit into the performance of the dancers.

Quality of music is not a matter of concern over here as judgement will be done upon the dance performance only but songs are selected in such a manner that it fits well into dancer's age and character.

There are also some dance routines those don't demand necessity of music at all. For example, tap dancing. Here music is not played to highlight and judge the tap movement skill of the performer.

Competitive Dance - The Rules

There are certain set of rules that must be followed while performing dancing. However, rules are not same and may vary from competition to competition. Category wise rules are similar. Violation of any rule can lead to penalties and in extreme case; performer may be banned from the competition.

- One performer is allowed to make solo dance in more than one competitions.
- In one competition, the solo performer is not allowed to repeat the same style twice.
- Ballet routines should not contain acrobatic styles.
- In a competition, the performer is allowed to dance on two lyrical solos.
- As get up and costume also matter a lot, they should be strictly according to the age of dancer.
- While doing a prop, the feet of the performer should not go above six feet.

Size and style of a group matters a lot during a competition and that indeed decides the placement award. A group is allowed to do a face off against another group of same size. For example, a solo performer has to compete against a solo performer only, not against a duo or trio or a group.

Competitive Dance – Duration

The duration of an event is based on the number, types, and the dance routines that are programmed to compete. Apart from the time needed for dance performances extra time is allotted for judging, score arrangement and award ceremonies.

Sometimes there is a change in the final schedule of the event because of late entries and scratches. Therefore, competitors are informed about the final schedules prior to some days of the competition. It is on their part to make them self-presentable and ready during that short period of time.

It is general etiquette on the part of the dancers to be present at all the events associated with that competition such as award ceremony, last day ceremony etc. In dance schools, there is a certain time limit for the performer to be present on stage known as call time.

Competitive Dance – Videography and Photography

Choreography is an art that can be stolen very easily. A slight modification to the previous step can generate a new step. That is the reason most production houses prohibit the use of video camera for shooting the dance performance. Some hire professional video shooters to shoot and sell the copies to the internal teams of the production house only.

Photography is not as infringement type as that of videography but still audience are not allowed to take pictures inside the hall as this will allow other professional photographers to capture and sell the pictures outside.

Competitive Dance – Conventions

Conventions are nothing but some regional tutorials by the experts. Experts are the professional dancers who perform in film, events, stage shows and know very well about each convention of dance. They organise such events on weekends in some big auditorium or open field or stages where outside people can participate.



Dance schools also participate in such events to learn something extra from the experts. In big cities where lots of crowd can gather, these events take place. The aim is to make the passionate learners aware of the ABC of dance and to motivate them further in a proper path.

Competitive Dance - Judging

Typically, professional dancers are hired to judge a dance competition. They observe all the dancers keenly and sit in front of all the audience.

Each judge writes down the score sheet for each routine by awarding points for various categories such as techniques, facial expressions, costumes, choreography, and overall impression.



They may also write comments on their score sheets or in some cases, they even record audio comments for the dancers and their choreographers.

After recording audio comments, they are typically given to the dancers via CD or DVD media to allow review of the performance while listening to real-time judge commentary at the same time.

The Judging Process

The categories of adjudication vary from competition to competition, but commonly judged categories cover the aspects of showmanship technique which are execution of movements, proper form, and transition, costume, difficulty of the routine, music and choreography.

A judge can give marks out of 100. If a performer or a team gets 100, it is called the **perfect score**. Each judge gives their score and the total score is nothing but the addition of all the individual scores of judges.

Competitive Dance - Competitions

Regional Competitions

High-school auditoriums are the most preferred venue to host regional competitions as it includes a stage and appropriate space for judges and audience. The venues are not limited to high-school only. The venues are normally rented for the period ranging from one to four consecutive days, depending on the number of dancers planned to compete.

Competitions frequently start very early in the morning and last till late at night so as to reduce the rental cost and other expenses.



National Competitions

National competitions usually last for weeks and many competitors along with their coaches used to flood from all parts of the country. So, it is obvious that these take place in a big rented hall with well decorated lights and sound system. These competitions also include –

- A Dance-off or Dance-down
- Workshops and dance classes
- Choreographers for additional training

- Ending festival

Competitive Dance - Champions

Let us now take a look at some of the champions of Competitive Dance and their careers.

Nick Lazzarini



Nick Lazzarini is an American dancer who was the winner of the first season of So You Think You Can Dance reality show. The dance styles in which he is expert are hip-hop, jazz, ballet, lyrical, and modern dance.

He started dancing at the age of four and choreography at the age of 14. After winning the So You Think You Can Dance, he first appeared in cover page of Dance Spirit. In March 2006, he joined Evolution Dance Company as a founding member.

Salman Yusuff Khan



Salman Yusuff Khan belongs to Bangalore and is a choreographer, dancer, and actor. He also took part in reality shows like Jhalak Dikha Jaa and Dance India Dance.

From his childhood, he loved dancing and he learnt Salsa, Hip-hop, and other dance styles. After completing his education, he participated in Dance India Dance and also worked as a choreographer in Jhalak Dikha Jaa. He also won the sixth season of Jhalak Dikha Jaa with Drashti Dhami.

Joshua Allen



Joshua Allen belongs to United States and is a winner of the fourth season of So You Think You Can Dance reality show. In this show, he performed many forms of dances which include jazz, hip-hop, samba and many more.

He started his dance practice at the age of eight. He was influenced by Michael Jackson. After winning So You Can Think You Can Dance reality show, he participated in Step Up 3D. He also performed in a musical movie named Footloose.

Benjamin "Benji" Daniel Schwimmer



Benjamin Daniel Schwimmer is an American dancer who won the second season of So You Think You Can Dance reality show in 2006. He works for a non-profit organization named Dancers Everywhere Making a Needed Difference. He also writes songs for Pop-Rock Band and also work for it as a producer and vocalist. His father, mother, and sister are dancers and he also started competing at the age of five.

He and his cousin were the champions of US Open Showcase Swing. In 2006, he participated in Fox's New Year Eve Show. In 2007, he played the role of Candyman in the music video of Christina Aguilera. In 2008, he again became US and World Swing Champion. He was hired by Paula Abdul to choreograph her final performance.

Akai Osei



Akai Osei is a British dancer who was the winner of the first series of Got to Dance show. He got his dance inspiration from Michael Jackson. He appeared in the StreetDance 3D movie and its sequel StreetDance 2.

Along with this, he also participated in Pied Piper which was a hip-hop show organized by Boy Blue Entertainment. In 2010, he was casted in Into the Hoods and along with it he appeared in Blue Peter television programme. Besides all these, he appeared in many shows and movies.

Lauren Rose Froderman



Lauren Rose Froderman is a professional dancer from America. She had her high school education in 2010 from Greenway High School and graduated from Loyola Marymount University in 2015. She got her training from Donald Dadey.

She started dancing when she was three years old. Froderman is the winner of seventh season of So You Think You Can Dance show. She has the specialization in contemporary dance, hip-hop and jazz and along with it she also loves singing.

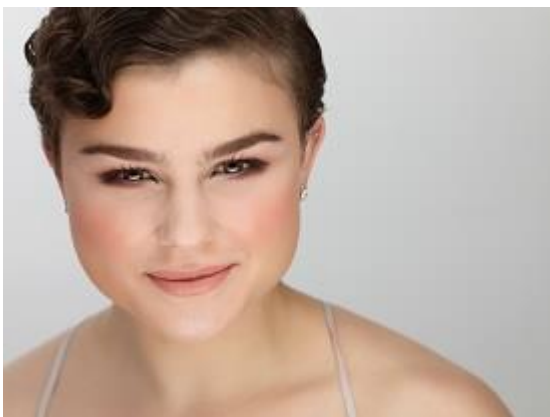
Jeanine Marie Mason



Jeanine Marie Mason is a dancer from America who won the fifth season of So You Think You Can Dance reality show. She is the youngest winner of the show. After winning the show, she started her career in acting. Her first show was Big Time Rush which was the Halloween episode Nickelodeon.

Besides this, she is also an actress and is popular for her role in Bunheads as a Cozette. Mason started dancing at the age of three and learnt many dance styles like jazz, acrobatics, hip-hop, and contemporary dance.

Melanie Moore



Melanie Moore is a professional dancer from America who won the eighth season of So You Think You Can Dance reality show. She was 19 years old when she participated in the show. Moore had her education from Lassiter High School.

She got her training from Rhythm Dance Center in Marietta for 12 years. She has appeared in All the Right Moves television show as a member of Shaping Sound Dance Company. She also participated in Glee which is a musical comedy drama of Fox. Currently she is playing the role of Chava in Fiddler of the Roof which is a musical theatre

Eliana Girard



Eliana Girard is a professional dancer from America who has won the ninth season of So You Think You Can Dance show. She has the specialization in contemporary ballet dance style. She started dancing at the age of three and started her career in dancing in 2009.

Since she had a passion for dancing so she left Dreyfoos High School and joined Joffrey Ballet School. After that she joined Alvin Alley School. Since 2013, she is designing a clothing line for Sugar and Bruno.