



Rising Star Tour Rules (RST) 2026

The objective of the Rising Star Tour (RST) is to provide a platform for amateur dancers to grow and improve their swing dancing skills in the context of choreographed routines.

Rule changes effective February 4, 2026 are highlighted in yellow.

Dancer Eligibility

To participate in the 2025 Rising Star Tour, each dancer must:

1. Be at least 15 years old by the end of any qualifying event they compete in.
 2. Never have won the RST top point award in previous seasons.
 3. Never have placed top three (3) in Rising Star Classic or Showcase at “The Open” twice, when there have been at least ten (10) couples.
 4. Not have Champion points within the last ten (10) years.
 5. Retain eligibility separately for each role, leader/follower.
 6. Event directors can compete in the tour, but not at events they organize.
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RST Sportsmanship Expectations

Sportsmanship is a fundamental aspect of our competition. Competing for the RST prize fund is a privilege, not a right. The event director can flag unsportsmanlike behavior, which the RST Board will review at the next meeting. Consequences for violations may include, but are not limited to:

- Deduction of points.
 - Dropping in level in the overall standings.
 - Removal from the RST list.
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RST Referee System

1. If the referee determines a violation possibly occurred, a review panel (made of the chief judge and two other judges) will be assembled to review and determine the final judgement.
 2. The review panel will review the violation as necessary to determine if a violation occurred.
 3. At the conclusion, each panel member indicates “Pass” or “Fail” for each couple in question. There is no need for a unanimous decision, majority opinion rules.
 4. The couple receives an overall “Pass” or “Fail” based on the recorded results on a Panel Review Sheet.
 5. If a couple “Fails”, the panel determines if the violation was an “error” or “penalty”. An “error” signifies that the violation was not a deliberate action against the rules. The review panel has the authority to determine if a couple will receive no drop in placement, one drop in placement, or two drops in placement for each error identified. A “penalty” signifies that the violation was a deliberate action against the rules.
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RST Re-start Rule

Re-starts are allowed in the Rising Star division if something occurs during the performance that impacts the safety of the competitors. This includes:

1. **Technical problems:** Factors outside the dancers' control (e.g., ballroom lights go out, faulty flooring, music stops suddenly).
2. **Costume malfunctions:** Shoes break or become unfastened, costumes, and loose items could endanger dancers or expose inappropriate areas.

Procedure:

- The Chief Judge may stop the performance until rectified at the competition.
- Competitors can also voluntarily stop and request a restart before leaving the competition floor.
- The competitors must speak to the Chief Judge when the problem occurs.
- If Re-Start is allowed, Chief Judge will decide when competitors perform again based on the situation.

Judging: Judges will only judge the repeat performance. Prior performances do not influence rankings.

Points Allocation:

- **5 or more entries:** 1st/10, 2nd/9, 3rd/8, 4th/7, 5th/6.
 - **4 entries:** 1st/8, 2nd/7, 3rd/6, 4th/5.
 - **3 entries:** 1st/5, 2nd/4, 3rd/3.
 - **2 entries:** 1st/3, 2nd/2.
 - **1 entry:** 1st/2.
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General Rules

1. If any event rule conflicts with RST rules, the RST rules take precedence.
 2. A competitive couple must consist of a leader and a follower. They must remain in their respective roles throughout the entire routine, except for a one-time role switch that doesn't exceed eight beats.
 3. Costumes are allowed and highly encouraged.
 4. Competitors select their music.
 5. Performance time is a minimum of 2 minutes and a maximum of 3 minutes. The clock begins and judging starts at the first dance movement of the performance, with or without music.
 6. No props are allowed. A prop is defined as any article or object intentionally discarded, removed, taken away, or brought into a dance by a competitor. This includes, but not limited to, a hat that is thrown to the floor, a cane that is tossed away, or picking up an object from the floor
 7. **An event must conduct a contest, regardless of the number of entries, and award prize money and points.**
 8. For events with over 18 couples, a prelim is recommended, with 10-12 advancing to the final.
 9. Couples must use the same music submission for both prelim and final rounds.
 10. Individuals cannot compete twice within the same division.
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Division Rules

1. **Swing Content:** 70% swing content is required. It is at the Judge's discretion to determine that the swing content requirement has been met.
2. Separate entrances are permitted; couples must join within 32 beats of music.
3. Physical contact must be maintained except during spins, turns, short breakaways, and recoveries, with separations not exceeding 8 beats.
4. A maximum of seven (7) partner weight-support moves are permitted, with up to three (3) of the seven (7) available as optional lifts.
5. Both partners must keep at least one foot on the floor during weight-support moves; otherwise, it is considered a lift.

Exception: Rising Star Classic at The Open World Swing Dance Champions:

* Lifts are not allowed. Dancers must keep at least one (1) foot on the ground during weight support movements.

Rising Star Showcase at The Open World Swing Dance Champions:

* A minimum of three (3) lifts total are required, one of which must have the followers hips above the leader's physical waistline.

Routine Guidelines

Visit the [RST website](#) for guidance on creating a routine.

RST Event Prize Standards

1. **Minimum prize package:** Event pass and cash. Additional prizes may include products and services.
2. **Prize fund range:** Each couple must receive a cash prize ranging from \$100 to \$1,000. The minimum guaranteed payout per couple is the greater of \$100 or the total entry fees paid by the couple.
3. Award a minimum of **top three (3)** placements for 3-7 couples.
4. Award a minimum of **top five (5)** placements for 8+ couples.

End of Tour Prizes

The RST concludes at **The Open** in November. Points will be calculated from the first tour event up to and including The Open. Winners will be announced during The Open's awards ceremony.

1st Place:

- Partnership will receive coaching sessions from esteemed West Coast Swing coaches, these sessions aim to strengthen their partnership dynamics, and support their progress to higher routine divisions.
- RST Champion jackets.
- Event passport with passes to all RST events in their winning season for the following year.

2nd and 3rd Places:

- Same as above, excluding the RST Champion jackets.