

2026-27 Dance

Dance Teams

Dance teams are divided into two distinct groups for governance, season and competition purposes. 1) Winter season competitive and performance dance teams must follow all IHSA and NFHS Spirit rules and regulations. 2) Marching band auxiliaries (Color Guards) are governed by marching band regulations.

Purpose

The primary role of dance teams is to provide entertainment at halftimes of athletic contests and perform at school/community events. Dance teams should work to enhance the educational objectives of the total interscholastic program.

Classification — based on grades 9-12

6A	1,400 and over	4A	699-and under
5A	1,399-700		

Eligibility

1. **Competitive Dance:** Members of dance teams that compete are subject to IHSA eligibility rules 8-1 through 8-15, except Rule 8-4, Amateur Status, Rule 8-5, Awards, and Rule 8-11, Outside Competition. Non-traditional students must comply with Rule 8-16.
2. **Performance Dance:** Members of dance teams that do not compete must be regularly enrolled students of the school at the time of participation. Non traditional students must comply with Rule 8-16.
3. **All** dance participants must have a physical examination on file with the school prior to the first team practice of the season. (See IHSA Rule 13–Physical Exams)
4. **All dance teams:** Tryouts/auditions are not allowed prior to the third Monday in April the spring proceeding the school year.

Governance

1. NFHS Spirit Safety Rules must be followed during any competitive or non-competitive dance activity, including practices, performances, and competitions.
2. IHSA rules and regulations must be followed at all Idaho dance competitions.

Contact Limitations

Dance teams must comply with IHSA Rule 17-1-3 (summer programs) and 17-2-4 (no-contact period).

Competitive Season

The dance competitive season begins November 1 and ends with the completion of the state tournament. Any competition after the state tournament requires permission of the principal or superintendent and the IHSA. No school or individual shall participate in more than four (4) competitions during the season. JV and varsity divisions are considered separate competitions. Exceptions: a district-qualifying competition and the state championships do not count towards the allowed number of competitions.

General Competition Rules

1. Official IHSA score sheets must be used.
2. Two certified technical judges are required.

3. Sweepstakes awards and/or event finals are not permitted.
4. Tournaments may elect to declare overall team champions by classification. Procedure: Combine the cumulative ordinal score of each school's top three team events. If tied, use raw score totals. If still tied, use execution score totals.
5. Contiguous classifications may be combined at the tournament manager's discretion if fewer than three schools enter a division. Combining schools that are not in contiguous classifications requires approval from those schools.
6. High school dance teams (9-12) shall not compete with or against non-high school teams (i.e. 8th graders, studios).
7. Teams shall not significantly change choreography or music for any routine between district and state without written permission of the IHSA.
8. Teams are required to upload proof of appropriate music copyright licensure on the NFHS database for all competitive routines prior to the first competition. Non-compliance will result in the team being ineligible for competition.
9. No high school team may participate as "exhibition only" at any competition unless they are the host school of the competition.

Scoring

The ordinal (ranking) system of scoring shall be used.

1. Each routine judge's raw score is ranked (1-2-3, etc.) after first deducting any penalties from technical score sheets.
2. If a judge's adjusted scores are tied, first add then divide the total of the tied scores' ordinal placements. Both teams will receive the same ordinal rank.
3. Ordinal ranks are added together - lowest score wins.
4. Placement ties shall be broken by first using raw score totals and then, if still tied, execution scores.

Required Divisions of Competition

The following events must be offered at all in-state competitions:

Dance Time limit: 2-3 minutes. Routine emphasis: technique, style, interpretation. **Not permitted:** storylines, character development, costume changes, hand props, stage props, or backdrops.

Military Time limit: 2-3 minutes. Routine emphasis is on precision, maneuvering, and formations. **Not permitted:** storylines, character development, costume changes, hand props, stage props, or backdrops.

Hip Hop Time limit: 2-3 minutes. Routine emphasis: synchronization, technique, style, musicality. All aspects of the routine, including music, choreography, costuming and concept must be appropriate for public performance at the high school level. **Permitted:** hand props. **Not permitted:** stage props or backdrops.

Pom Time limit: 2-3 minutes. Poms must be used for at least 75% of routine length and include all performing team members. Routine shall use traditional pom choreography with emphasis on synchronization, visual effects and clean/precise motions. Visual effects include level changes, group work, opposing motions, formation changes, etc. **Not permitted:** storylines, character development, costume changes, hand props other than poms, stage props or backdrops.

Specialty Divisions

Specialty divisions may be offered at all invitational competitions. Tournaments should specify, in the initial invitation, which specialty divisions will be offered and provide guidelines for those events. Specialty divisions:

1. May include events such as Solo, Prop, Kick, Lyrical, etc.
2. May be offered as “open” classifications.
3. Must follow all NFHS and IHSA general rules.

Point of Emphasis: Competitions that offer individual skills/tricks contests must follow all Idaho guidelines and NFHS safety rules. If participants perform illegal actions, they will be immediately disqualified and the competition may be referred to their District Board of Control for further fines or sanctions.

Specialty Division Guidelines

The following specialty division guidelines are provided to ensure consistency from competition to competition:

1. Solo: a) Time limits 1:30-2:00; b) A maximum of two airborne tumbling elements or passes; c) hand props/stage props permitted but not encouraged.
2. Kick: a) Time limit: 2-3 minutes. Kicks must be performed for at least 75% of routine length and include all performing team members. b) Routine emphasis is on technique, style, variety of kicks, presentation; c) Permitted: hand props. Not Permitted: stage props or backdrops.
3. Prop: a) Props must be used for at least 80% of routine length and include all performing team members; b) Poms may not be used as the primary prop; c) Routine emphasis is on skill and creativity in utilization and manipulation of props and staging. Permitted: stage props as bases only. Not permitted: backdrops, poms as the primary prop.
4. Small Dance division shall use the same guidelines and requirements as the required Dance division.
5. Team Divisions: Time limits 2-3 minutes.
6. Team Sizes: Small Dance – maximum of 9, all others – no set number defined.
7. Score Sheets: a) Solo, kick, prop, lyrical shall use designated IHSA score sheets; b) Others: use appropriate IHSA score sheets with adjustments as necessary but maintain categories and point values.

Definitions

Performance Area	The area within the side and end boundary lines of a basketball court. Also called “the floor”.
Backdrops	Stationary objects located <u>behind</u> performance area used for visual enhancement only. Backdrop limitations: Maximum of two, not to exceed 8’ high or combined length of 20’.
Hand Props	Items manipulated on or off the performance area for the purpose of routine enhancement. <i>Note: Costumes are considered hand props if they are taken off and manipulated by the performer or if they are manipulated for an extensive portion of the routine.</i>
Kick	The rhythmic opening and closing of the leg to at least 45 degrees.

Stage Props Objects located within the performance area used for visual enhancement, as bases, or in other ways such as entrances/exits.

Character Development Creating a specific character where performers “act out” behaviors of that character within the choreography. Personality and intent of the character will be evident.

Storyline Conveying a specific message, idea, or event with choreography. The routine progresses through various stages within the story.

Timing Regulations

1. **Entrance/exit timing** includes setting hand props (if allowable) as well as getting the team to ready position and also off the floor (with or without music). Timing begins when the first person/prop initiates the entrance and ends when the last person/prop leaves the performance area.
Entrance/Exit time limits: one minute combined time
2. **Routine timing** begins with the first beat of the music or when performance begins if music has not started. Timing ends with the last beat of the music or when the final position is hit if music has already stopped. Routine timing does not include entrances or exits unless exit is part of routine and no end pose is hit.
3. **Grace periods** A five second grace period is allowed. Timing penalties will not be assessed if a team is in violation due to circumstances beyond its control. Exception: variations in speed of music systems.

Penalties for Rules Violations

Penalties will be assessed by technical judges and deducted from each routine judge’s raw score prior to tabulation of scores.

Prop Coverings / Inspection / Storage

1. All props and shoes will be inspected by tournament personnel. Any prop or shoe that does not meet the following criteria will not be allowed on the floor:
Hand props: Any hard or sharp edges, ends or points that will intentionally hit or rest on the floor must have sufficient protective covering.
Shoes: Must have non-marking soles.
2. If inadequately covered props cause damage to a gym floor, the routine may be disqualified and the offending school may be required to pay damages to the host school.

Dress Standard

Idaho dance teams are expected to wear costumes that are appropriate for participation at the high school level.

1. Bare skin or nude-colored coverings shall not be part of the costume from below the armpits in the front, nor from below the waist in the back. If colored, sheer material is used, it must not appear as bare skin from a distance.
2. When the participant is standing at attention and throughout the majority of the routine, no part of the buttocks, breasts, pelvis/groin, or midriff shall be visible. Note: If the base of

the costume is a leotard, it is highly recommended that the participant(s) wear tights.

3. Footwear must comply with NFHS rules.
4. Footwear must have non-marking soles.

Appropriateness of Content

Idaho dance teams are expected to perform routines that are appropriate for participation at the high school level. This includes music selection, choreography, costuming, and concepts.

1. Music shall not contain inappropriate or vulgar language.
2. Choreography shall not contain any movement of a sexual nature.
3. Ideas/concepts of routines shall be appropriate for the school environment.
4. Plagiarizing choreography or routine concepts/ideas is a violation of the coaches Code of Ethics.

Coach/Advisor

1. Dance head coaches/advisors must be certified to teach in Idaho or have completed the NFHS Fundamentals of Coaching course as outlined in Rule 3-1.
2. All coaches/advisors must complete a first aid and CPR course from a school district recognized provider, as outlined in Rule 3-2.
3. All coaches/advisors are strongly encouraged to complete the USA Safety Certification course and to attend available professional education training in both spirit program administration and technical development.
4. All coaches (includes head coaches, directors, assistant coaches, and volunteers of all IHSAA activities) are required to complete the St. Luke's online Concussion Course, the NFHS online Sudden Cardiac Arrest course and the NFHS online Coaching Mental Wellness course upon hiring and on even numbered years prior to the first day of practice. IHSAA Statewide Review dates: 2026-27, 2028-29, etc.
5. All head coaches must take the NFHS online Understanding Music Copyright course upon hiring.

Rules Clinics / Technical Judge Training

1. Coaches must participate in an online rules clinic or attend a rules clinic in his/her district. District Boards of Control may fine schools whose coaches do not meet this requirement.
2. Technical judges must be certified by a regional technical coordinator.
3. Regional technical coordinators will assign technical judges at all competitions held in their region.
4. Routine judges will be trained prior to the State Championships.