

## **“You be the *JUDGE...*”**

We are responsible for our actions, decisions, and finances. Entering the ballroom environment, we immerse ourselves in the glitz and glamour. We tend to lose focus on the framework required to support this activity. To improve my knowledge and dance performance of International Standard, I began to study the ISTD manual (Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing). It has forced me to take a serious look at the judge's role in ballroom dancing. Below are realities and questions from 29 years of participation and observation in the ballroom community.

### **Credentials/Certification Required:** *(based on organization or event director)*

ISTD – Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing

DVIDA – Dance Vision International Dance Association

AIDA – American International Dance Association

Arthur Murray Syllabus, Medalist System

Fred Astaire (FADS) American, International and Exhibition/Theater Arts

### **Cost for Judges:** *(based on local, regional, national or international event)*

Professional fee, reimbursement for travel (airline i.e. first class, overseas), food, hotel, miscellaneous expenses (car rental, tips, room service, etc.)

### **Scoring Influences:** *(information from judging professionals, competitive dance professionals, amateur dancers, studio directors, personal observation and experience)*

Familiar, frequent dancers on competition track or in sponsored organization

Family and friends

Dancers who pay judge and instructor for special coaching

Number of heats in competition (I.e. “Top Student Award” is often not the skill or talent but based on the number of heats danced and paid for)

### **Responsibility:** *(dancer needs to be aware and accountable for their events)*

Ask questions of your studio and instructor: Know where your registration fee is going, how is the money spent? Studio/event packages sometimes camouflage detailed expenses. Response to your questions is often general to avoid information about actual detailed costs. Your instructor is working as well as the judges. In addition to your own event registration, travel, hotel, food, and miscellaneous expenses, your cost also includes all of this for your instructor. If you sign up for event prep or special coaching, be aware that you are paying for your instructor's time as well as the special coach, who has a higher fee and expenses to cover.

### **Effective Placement:** *(make the most of your time on the floor)*

I was fortunate to have a high-level instructor who was also a judge (when not pro-am competing with me). As a master at floorcraft, he would move us around the floor 1) to keep us in the line of dance, 2) to allow us free movement depending on number and dance patterns of other couples, and most importantly, 3) to be sure each judge had an opportunity to see us.

**Think about it:**

1. The judges have designated spots around the ballroom floor.
2. They have only a few seconds to score each couple. (heats 1 ½ minutes each)
3. Ladies, dance dress needs to be customized to you in color, style and fit. Judges see multiple outfits in the course of a day. We want them to notice you!
4. They work from 7AM to 12 midnight and are on their feet; ladies usually in heels.
5. They rotate shifts to keep their minds alert and give their bodies a rest.
6. Respecting confidentiality of the judges and other dancers, keep your distance. Do not engage in conversation (no comments or questions) with them until after the competition.

**Scrutineers - Our Silent Partners:** Tabulation of Scores, heat by heat

1. They have to be in sync with the competition schedule heat by heat for several days.
2. They have to maintain focus on computers and be disciplined to timely collect score sheets.
3. If questions/concerns, they have to find the Lead Judge then refocus to enter and score data.
4. If offered support, they train “runners” and keep schedules or handle tasks themselves.

**Set your goals; Stay focused; Be responsible; Be alert; Keep priorities; and  
*\*\*Keep Dancing\*\****

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<i>Item</i>	<i>My Cost</i>	<i>Total</i>	<i>Due</i>
<i>Lessons (how many?) studio</i>			
<i>Special coaching (outside coach &amp; instructor)</i>			
<i>Dancewear (tux, gown, shoes, tie, jewelry, etc.)</i>			
<i>Hair &amp; Make-up</i>			
<i>Instructor's fee: Travel, Hotel, Food, Misc.</i>			
<i>Registration, Heats (# and cost of each)</i>			
<i>Challenges, Scholarships, Showdances</i>			
<i>My expenses: Travel, Hotel, Food, Misc.</i>			
<i>Grand Totals</i>			