

Ballroom Dancing - Judging Criteria

Ballroom dancing is judged on more than a dozen different points. Some of those are, Posture, Timing, Line, Hold, Poise, Togetherness, Presentation and Power just to name a few. With the number of dancers being evaluated judges rely heavily on the impression each couple makes in relation to the others. With experience the judges learn to do so quickly.

Posture: No matter how technically skilled you are, your ballroom dancing will never be graceful, elegant, or lend an air of confidence without the proper posture. Proper posture also improves balance, gives you more control and makes for a smoother dance. The old adage is "Persistent practice of postural principles promises perfection" gives you a clue to the importance of good posture in any ballroom dance.

Timing: Just as bad posture can blow you right out of the water, if your timing and the music's timing don't match - you lose. It won't matter how well you do anything else.

Line: The line refers to the line of your body from head to toe. The line can make or break any ballroom dance. Whether curved or straight, good lines will make you look graceful and elegant.

Hold: Dancing with arms, hands etc., in an incorrect position or breaking a hold at the wrong time will cost you points. Besides having your body parts in the right place you also need to keep your holds symmetrical to your partner. In some ballroom dances one of the worst things you can do is to break your hold.

Poise: In smooth dancing, the stretch of the woman's body upwards, outwards and leftwards into the man's right arm will achieve balance and connection with his frame, as well as to project outwards to the audience. Poise like posture and line has everything to do with the image you project as you move around the ballroom.

Togetherness: When your bodies are correctly melded together you will be able to dance in total synchronization with your partner and appear to lead and follow with no effort.

Presentation: The judges will be looking not only for how you appear to them but how well you sell yourselves to the audience. Are you enthusiastic, happy, confident? It has to show. Even in dances like the Tango and the Paso Doble where the expressions are more somber you still have to appear assured and confident.

Power: Energy is a wonderful thing and one of the most important things in dances like the Quick Step or the Jive however, if over-done it just becomes wild movements.

Judges, like dancers each have different styles and different ideas of the importance of various criteria. One judge may put a greater value on technique while another thinks musicality and expression are more important. This can cause a discrepancy between the scores of one couple coming from two judges. Keep in mind that the judges see you for only a brief time so whatever happens to catch their eye is going to weigh heavily on your final scores.