2025-2026
COLLEGE CLASSIC RULES AND REGULATIONS

Thank you for your interest in DTU's College Classic National Championship. This set of rules and regulations will assist you in preparation for your 2025-2026 competition season. The rules and regulations will apply to all College teams and mascots. Please read thoroughly. Rules and Regulations are subject to change. For any questions or concerns, contact The College Classic at info@thecollegeclassic.com. Substantive changes to the rules and regulations from the 2024-2025 season are printed in red. We look forward to seeing you at one or more of our competitions this year!

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SECTION I: GENERAL RULES

HOW TO HANDLE PROCEDURAL QUESTIONS

1. RULES & PROCEDURES – The coach or advisor of a competing team or mascot should contact us regarding any questions or concerns pertaining to the rules and regulations.

2. PERFORMANCE – Should there be questions regarding the team's or mascot's performance, the coach or advisor of the team or mascot should contact us to discuss any concerns.

DISQUALIFICATION

Teams that do not abide by the Rules and Regulations are subject to disqualification from the event. A disqualified team or mascot will automatically forfeit its rights to any prizes or awards presented at the event.

We reserve the right to disallow any team, mascot, coach, dancer, cheerleader, spectator or other person from attending any of our or our affiliates' competitions, for any reason, in our sole and final discretion.

GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES

1. Teams and mascots should have an emergency plan in the event of an injury.

2. Coaches have the responsibility of recognizing the abilities of their performer(s), and should make sure the presented routine does not exceed that person's/team's capabilities or include elements that create a safety risk for their team or mascot regardless of whether the element is not specifically listed as a safety risk in the routine guidelines below.

3. Technical skills should not be executed without an advisor/coach present. Performers should always practice in an area suitable for their safety. Performers should not perform technical skills on:

    1. Concrete, asphalt, or any other hard or uncovered surface
    2. Wet surfaces
    3. Uneven surfaces
    4. Surfaces with obstructions

4. Appropriate warm-up and stretching should be implemented by the performer(s) both before and after a performance.

5. All College Classic events will be run in accordance with applicable laws and regulations regarding health and safety, and coaches, teams and spectators will be expected to fully comply with such laws and regulations, as well as any more restrictive health and safety rules put in place for such events from time to time.

6. Additional safety guidelines applicable to dance and cheer teams can be found in SECTIONS III and IV.

SECTION II: JUDGING

JUDGING PROTOCOL

Dance Team Union appoints judges based upon a host of factors, including their relevant experience and feedback received throughout the year judging at our regional competitions. The appointed judges will be evaluating each performance based upon a scoring system as specified in the applicable score sheet. The total score from each judge will be combined with scores from the other judges and averaged, generating the team's or mascot's overall score.

EVALUATION PROCESS

Each judge will evaluate performances using an individual score sheet designated to the performing team or mascot. The judge will be responsible for providing a thorough evaluation and sufficient feedback for each competing team or mascot. Score sheets will be released to each individual team or mascot after each competition or competition round, and detailed score rankings will be available for teams and mascots to review after the competition.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF JUDGING AND EVALUATION POLICIES

Each judge will be evaluated after the College Classic based upon, among other things, input from competing teams and mascots. Each judge's responsibility is to make fair decisions based solely upon the score sheet, using his/her knowledge of dance/cheer/mascot (as applicable) and training as a professional judge. Each participating team and mascot acknowledges that the decisions of the judges are final. However, because the integrity, transparency and professionalism of our judging process is key to our competition philosophy, we encourage each team to bring any judging issues to our attention either through our formal post-competition evaluation process or by other means. Just as our judges' frank evaluation of your routines will help your team or mascot to improve, your frank evaluation of our judges and judging process will help us and our judges to improve as well.

SECTION III: DANCE TEAMS

Part 1: Entry Guidelines and Awards

ENTRY GUIDELINES

1. College/university teams may compete in the following styles: Pom, Jazz, Hip Hop and Team Performance. At any event, we may choose to combine categories or add additional categories in order to increase competitiveness or for any other reason at its discretion. Teams may not enter the same routine in more than one style at the same competition.

2. At The College Classic National Championship, we will have Spirit Showdown divisions. Regional or virtual competitions may have Spirit Showdown divisions at our discretion. If we do not have a Spirit Showdown division at a Regional or virtual competition, then college/university teams at that event may compete their Spirit Showdown routine in the Open division.

3. The same program at the same college or university may not enter multiple routines in the same division of the same style (e.g., two teams from the same program entered in Division II Jazz) when all of the dancers in both routines are the same. If a program wishes to enter multiple routines in the same division of the same style and all dancers are <u>not</u> the same in each routine, then the program must designate different team names (e.g. Alaska State University Blue Team and Alaska State University Gold Team), and the following shall apply:

    a. If there are one or more overlapping dancers in the routines, then only the highest scoring routine will advance to finals and receive a placement in the final awards.

    b. If there are no overlapping dancers in the routines, then all routines are eligible to advance to finals and receive a placement in the final awards.

    If there are multiple programs from the same college or university competing in a division (for example, an official athletic team and a club team), the limitations above will apply to each program separately.

4. The following team size guidelines will apply:

    a. Team size will be determined as of the registration date.

    b. At least 5 dancers must be registered to perform in each team routine. A team will still be allowed to compete if they drop to fewer than five dancers at performance time but at least five dancers must be registered and paid for in order for the routine to compete.

    c. Teams may use a different number of dancers in each routine subject to the minimums above required to be registered.

ELIGIBLE TEAMS

1. REGIONAL COMPETITIONS AND COLLEGE CLASSIC: College teams may compete at all Dance Team Union regional competitions, in addition to The College Classic.

2. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

    a. Each team must be an official dance team at the team's college/university either under athletics or as a club sport or fine arts program, and DTU reserves the right to require verification from the college/university indicating the team is an official team as part of the registration process. Regardless of the character of the team's designation at the university (athletics, club sport, fine arts), the team will be grouped for competition with other teams in accordance with the Competition Divisions section below. Multiple teams from the same college/university may compete in the same event and in the same division as each other, as long as they are both recognized as official dance teams at such college/university.

    b. Teams from outside the United States may compete in regional or virtual competitions or the College Classic in the division at or above the division they would compete if their team was from the United States (as determined by The College Classic based on available data, in The College Classic's sole discretion).

    c. An All-Star team for which all performing dancers are from the same school (or from the same cooperative school or group of schools if not disallowed by their state) may choose to compete in a school division for any category it enters.

ELIGIBLE INDIVIDUALS

Any performer who is eligible to be a member of their team based on their college's or university's eligibility rules may perform at The College Classic or any Dance Team Union regional or virtual championship. We reserve the right to require documentation at any time in order to confirm, in our sole discretion, whether an individual is eligible to compete.

COMPETITION DIVISIONS

1. Teams may be grouped within each style into divisions based upon their NCAA, NAIA or similar sporting affiliation or division (provided, however, that all teams from NCAA Division I FBS schools participating in the Big Ten, Big 12, ACC, SEC and Pac 12 for the 2024-25 football season will be considered Division 1A and all other Division I schools will be considered Division I).
2. A team will not be considered to be within a division until its athletics programs are eligible to win national championships in that division (i.e., if a school moves from NCAA Division II to Division I, it will remain in Division II for our purposes during any waiting period for championship eligibility).
3. Any split between divisions will be determined by DTU based upon the number of entries received for each competition. In addition, DTU may choose to combine styles or add additional categories in order to increase competitiveness in DTU's sole discretion.

4. Any team may elect to "compete up" – that is, compete in a division for teams of larger school sizes in accordance with the above guidelines. Teams may not elect to "compete down" with teams of smaller school sizes.

COMBINING DIVISIONS

At The College Classic National Championship, DTU may combine any division that contains four or fewer entries (for dance teams) or three or fewer entries (for cheer or mascot) with either (i) an adjacent classification or (ii) a different style of dance, each in DTU's sole discretion. This may result in divisions that include multiple school sizes in a single style (e.g. Division 1/1A Team Performance) or multiple styles in one or more divisions competing in an Open division. No single team divisions will be permitted at The College Classic National Championship unless DTU determines in its sole discretion that there is a division that cannot reasonably be combined with any other division.

REGIONALS AWARDS

1. Trophies will be awarded to at least the top 50% of teams in each division for each style.

2. Additional specialty awards may be awarded at our discretion.

COLLEGE CLASSIC ADVANCEMENT AND AWARDS

1. The following rules will apply to advancing teams from preliminaries at The College Classic National Championship:

    a. Including teams advancing from any Semifinal pursuant to the next sentence, at least 50% of teams that compete in the preliminary round (up to a maximum of 20 finalist teams, unless otherwise approved by DTU in its sole discretion) will ultimately advance to finals.

    b. DTU will determine whether or not to hold a Semifinal for a division at The College Classic in its sole discretion based on the number of teams in the division and other scheduling factors.

    c. For divisions with a Semifinal round:

        i. Participating in the Semifinal benefits each team by giving it an additional round of feedback from DTU judges, and has no negative effect on the team's opportunity to win a national championship. Scores from the preliminary and Semifinal rounds do not carry over to finals. Although DTU <u>may</u> decide, in its sole discretion, to advance one or more teams from a preliminary round or group directly to finals, **most teams competing in the preliminary round will be invited to dance again in the Semifinal round**.

        ii. **There is no specific qualifying score or placement in a preliminary round or group that guarantees advancing directly to finals. The only team guaranteed**

to advance directly to finals in a specific division is the first place team in the preliminary round in that division.

iii. Where there are multiple preliminary groups in a division at The College Classic (for example, Division I Jazz A and Division I Jazz B), DTU will look at each preliminary group independently when deciding whether to advance any team or teams directly to finals. DTU will not compare scores or placements across different preliminary groups when making this decision, as factors such as different judging panels or performance orders may impact the scoring of a preliminary group.

iv. Teams may opt out of competing in the Semifinal by notice to DTU given in accordance with instructions provided by DTU prior to The College Classic.

v. The highest scoring team(s) in each Semifinal will advance to finals. The total number of teams advancing to finals from a Semifinal will be determined by DTU in its sole discretion, but at a minimum enough teams will advance to finals so that the total number of teams competing in finals meets the requirements of Section 1(a) above.

2. Finalists in categories with 6 or more finalists will compete figure skating-style (in sub-groupings with lowest scores competing first, based upon their scores from the previous round, but within each sub-grouping, teams will draw for random order). Finalists in categories with 5 or fewer finalists will compete in reverse order of their preliminary scores.

3. All finalists will receive trophies. In addition, all The College Classic National Champions will receive banners, jackets or fleeces, and rings. In recognition of the tremendous success of each champion, no Grand Champion award(s) will be given at The College Classic.

4. DTU aims to use a mixture in finals of (i) judges who have seen the finalist routines in a prior round, and (ii) judges who are seeing the finalist routines for the first time. This approach attempts to balance teams' interest in showing improvement from round to round, and teams' interest in having new judges take a "fresh look" at their routine in finals. However, given the complexity of the nationals schedule, judge availability and the unpredictable nature of preliminary and semifinal results, DTU cannot and does not guarantee that any finals judges will have judged one or more finalist teams in an earlier round.

THE DANCE BATTLE ROUND AT THE COLLEGE CLASSIC

The College Classic will hold a Dance Battle Round at the National Championship. The primary purpose of the Battle Round is to promote a fun, supportive environment for selected teams in various styles of dance to showcase their routines for each other and the viewing audience. The College Classic will conduct the Battle Round in accordance with the following guidelines:

1. Within the Dance Battle Round:

    a. Individual Dance Battles will be divided by dance style.

b. The total number of Dance Battles and groupings of styles will be announced by The College Classic prior to the National Championship.

2. No scoring or critiques will be done by judges in the Battle Round. Judges will view all routines in each Battle, collaborate and announce a Battle champion shortly after the conclusion of the applicable Battle. Each dance judge will be asked to vote for a winner based on overall performance quality, showmanship, and best representation of the style(s) presented. Battle champions will receive a Battle Cup (and bragging rights until next year's National Championship!).

3. In the interest of allowing teams to see and cheer on all other participating teams, **no dance team may perform more than once in the Dance Battle Round**.

4. The College Classic may invite teams to participate in a Battle Round beginning after the conclusion of all preliminary routines for teams eligible for that Battle Round, and invitations may continue to be issued throughout finals for that group of teams. For example, if preliminaries for all Jazz divisions eligible for the Jazz Battle conclude Saturday at 5:00 pm, and the Dance Battle Round is scheduled to begin Sunday at 7:00 pm, then The College Classic may issue Jazz Battle invitations at any time between those times, based on either preliminary or finals performance, in The College Classic's sole discretion.

5. Preliminary round scores and finals performance quality will be a factor in determining Battle Round invitees; however, these will not be the only determining factors. The College Classic may also consider factors such as entertainment value, showmanship, creativity, appropriateness for a "battle" atmosphere, and/or judge recommendations in issuing invitations. No team is guaranteed to participate in the Battle Round by virtue of having the highest score in preliminaries, and a team with a lower score may be invited to the Battle Round if it meets one or more criteria set forth above.

6. A schedule for each Battle within the Dance Battle Round will be published in advance of the National Championship with start times for each Battle category; however, a specific performance time for each participating team will not be published in advance.

7. **Battle Round invitations and results are completely independent of the official results of The College Classic National Championship. Battle Round results are based solely on the team's performance in the Battle Round, in accordance with the Battle judging criteria set forth above. National Champion results are based solely on the team's performance in Finals for its style and division, in accordance with the score sheet for such division.**

Part 2: Dance Routine Guidelines

GENERAL SAFETY

The coach of a team is responsible for monitoring the safety of each element of a dance and determining that it is safe to perform. The character of the skills being performed, as well as the skill level of the dancers performing those skills, should be considered by the coach in making this determination. All of the skills listed below as well as any other movement should be evaluated for safety by the advisor/coach prior to competition.

TECHNICAL CONSULTANT

At The College Classic, a technical consultant will be available during practice and official warm-ups to assist coaches with any questions or issues they have regarding the safety of their routines. During the season, teams may request the assistance of a technical consultant. If a coach/advisor is unsure of the safety of a skill, he or she can submit a video of the activity in question to info@danceteamunion.com. If a team has received approval for a track from another competition, they may rely on that approval for safety consideration purposes.

TUMBLING AND TRICKS

1. Front/back aerials and aerial cartwheels, as well as movements where all weight is borne on the dancer's hands and/or head, such as headsprings, should not be executed with poms in both hands that are not hands-free poms.

2. Drops directly to the knee, thigh, back, front, head, shoulder, head, neck or seat onto the performing surface are generally considered to be unsafe. In order to address the safety issue, the dancer should first bear weight on the hand(s) or foot/feet.

3. Landing in a push-up position onto the performance surface from a jump in which the legs are in front of the body and swing behind are generally not considered to be safe.

4. Dancers should not land directly on the head/neck at any time from an airborne skill. Any kip up motion should also initiate from the back/shoulder area touching the ground.

LIFTS AND PARTNERING

1. The Executing Dancer should be supported from a Supporting Dancer who is in direct contact with the floor throughout the entire skill. (Exception: Kick Line Leaps).

2. Hip over-head rotation of the Executing Dancer(s) is generally not considered to be a safety issue, as long as the Executing Dancer is returned to the performance floor on his/her feet or hands with support from the Supporting Dancer(s).

3. Simultaneous over or under another dancer that includes hip-over-head rotation by both dancers is generally not considered to be safe.

4. Drops to the knee, thigh, back, front, head, shoulder, or seat onto the performing surface are generally considered to be unsafe. In order to address the safety issue, the dancer should first bear weight on the hand(s) or foot/feet.

RELEASE MOVES

1. It is generally not considered to be unsafe for an Executing Dancer to jump, leap, step, or push off a Supporting Dancer, and a Supporting Dancer may generally release/toss an Executing Dancer without creating a safety issue.

2. "Basket tosses" are not considered to be safe for dance teams. However, a dancer may be safely released and caught in a dance lift with his/her head above his/her feet.

COMPETITION ROUTINE GUIDELINES

1. Teams may make substitutions in the event of injury. Substitute participants must be listed on the team's participant roster in the team's registration form.

2. Any equipment or items that may damage the performance floor are prohibited. Floor markers (including, without limitation, tape, rope, or cones) are not permitted at The College Classic but are permitted at Regional Competitions so long as there is nothing affixed to the actual performance floor (e.g., taping the floor for the purpose of marking is prohibited) and so long as use of floor markers by a team does not delay the competition beyond the published scheduled performance time(s) for the team.

3. **There is no minimum or maximum time limit for any routine; however, a team must notify us upon registering and no later than two weeks before the competition if any routine is longer than 2 minutes 30 seconds, for scheduling purposes.**

4. A responsible adult must be present to assist in the start and finish of the routine music. **IT IS RECOMMENDED TO UPLOAD YOUR MUSIC TO THE REGISTRATION SOFTWARE BY ONE WEEK PRIOR TO COMPETITION.**

JEWELRY

Jewelry will be allowed for dance team members, so long as it is not considered hazardous to the safety of the performers. We reserve the right to require a team to remove any jewelry it deems hazardous at any point during the competition.

PROPS AND BACKDROPS

1. Props are permitted in any dance category as long as they are wearable, handheld, or freestanding and can be taken off or released safely (as determined by DTU).

2. No dry ice, confetti, glass, canned smoke, water or other liquid, flammable material or other similar loose material that may obstruct the judges' view or affect the condition of the performance floor may be used.

3. No prop may be tossed off the performance floor or used in any way that risks damage to or obstruction of any persons or property in the vicinity of the performance floor (including, without limitation, the ceiling, a performance backdrop or any lighting on the front of the floor).

4. For any questions or concerns regarding prop choice, please send a photo of the prop to DTU prior to the competition.

5. Backdrops **may** be permitted, but only with prior written approval of DTU. DTU reserves the right to disapprove a backdrop for any reason in its sole discretion, including (without limitation) if DTU believes the backdrop may damage the floor, damage or obstruct any part of the practice or

performance area, or disrupt the flow of the event (including any excessive time moving the backdrop on and off the practice or performance floor).

6. Poms are not considered "props" for the purpose of the remainder of this section, and may be used only in the Pom, Team Performance and Spirit Showdown categories.

AUDIENCE INVOLVEMENT

Crowd appeal is an important element of any dance team performance; however, teams will be judged based only on performance elements taking place on the competition floor. Involvement of non-regular members of a dance team ("Other Participants") in the performance of the routine is allowed in the Spirit Showdown divisions only, subject to the following restrictions:

1. Only registered and paid individuals may be on the official performance floor
2. Any Other Participants must be located in the Fan Zone and stay in the Fan Zone for the entire performance
3. The involvement of Other Participants is subject to all of the rules and regulations set forth herein for competing dancers, including the safety guidelines.

SECTION V: PROTOCOL IN UNFORESEEN CIRCUMSTANCES

1. In the event of an unforeseen interruption of performance (i.e. production equipment malfunction that directly affects the team's or mascot's performance, music malfunction, or other potential factors), the team or mascot will be presented the option to perform again.

2. Should the affected team or mascot choose to perform again, the initial performance scores will be replaced with an entirely new score from the judges based only upon the second performance.

3. Should a team's or mascot's routine be interrupted due to an unforeseen malfunction of the team's or mascot's performance equipment, the team or mascot will not be presented the option to perform again within the performance round.

4. In the event of injury, a team's or mascot's performance may be stopped by the officials, the coach or advisor of the performer(s), or the injured individual.

5. At our discretion, the competing team or mascot may be presented the option to perform the routine again at a later time. The time of performance will be determined by us.

6. Should the injured performer express an interest in performing again, the following protocols will be followed:

    a. Approval must be granted by the medical professionals on site, as well as the parents of the performer and the coach or advisor of the team or mascot.

    b. If the injured participant does not receive approval from the medical professionals on site, the signature of a parent or legal guardian on a separate medical waiver will be required in order for the participant to return to the competition. If the medical professionals suspect a concussion/head injury, the participant would then require clearance from a licensed medical professional with training in head-related injuries.

SECTION VI: MUSIC

OUR POLICY

Our camps and competitions comply with all applicable laws. We will obtain the music license(s) we need as hosts in order to present our camps and competitions.

Our music policy for teams and performers attending our camps and competitions is straightforward: you may perform to **any** music that complies with the law. The law permits you to use original songs, "cover" songs or so-called "exclusive" songs (generally new songs by "unknown" music artists) under various circumstances depending upon your team's specific use. You should always legally purchase your music, and then you should obtain any necessary permission(s) for your music based on your own consideration of applicable law.

We note that a recent case, *Tresona Multimedia v. Burbank High School Vocal Music Association* (decided March 24, 2020), ruled that the use of a song as part of a show choir's music mix for educational purposes (not for commercial profit) was fair use and did not require any permission by, or license fee to, the song's license holder. The court also required the licensor to pay all of the show choir's legal fees incurred in defending the suit. Although every team and music mix is different, teams should read about this case as part of educating itself about music use law, given that many teams use music similarly to the show choir and may decide they have a strong fair use argument. A link to the case is here:
https://cdn.ca9.uscourts.gov/datastore/opinions/2020/03/24/17-56006.pdf

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do you have a list of "preferred" music vendors whose songs are definitely acceptable at your competitions?

No. We do not promote a "preferred" list of music vendors because we believe teams should have maximum creative freedom. Although we respect the rights of vendors that sell and/or mix covers of popular songs (and you are welcome to use those songs at our competitions, subject to our music policy), we believe encouraging or "preferring" that teams use covers instead of original songs takes profits away from record labels and original music artists. Generally, a competition company that "prefers" cover music vendors simply "prefers" them because the "preferred" cover music vendors have agreed to insure the competition company (not your team) against legal liability.

Creative freedom is a foundation of the spirit industry and The College Classic. We believe that a rule that encourages teams to use the music they want, while still honoring the legal rights of copyright holders, is most appropriate for our industry and our company. Thus, we repeat our general rule: you may perform to **any** music that complies with the law.

Why not just give us a list of music, vendors and edits that are definitely okay or not okay?

Our simple rule that you may perform to **any** music that complies with the law, without detailing specific songs, vendors or edits that are definitely okay, is best for your team because:

1. *Our approach permits maximum creativity.* Creating a "short list" of permissible songs, vendors or edits necessarily excludes other songs, vendors or edits that may be perfectly legal based on your individual circumstances.

2. *Our approach allows you to control your team's destiny.* You can and should educate yourself about copyright law and make your own determination. No one knows your team, your situation or your music needs better than you.

3. *Our approach does not give you a false sense of security.* No competition company (including us) can provide you with legal advice or guarantee that your specific music mix is legally acceptable, given how many millions of possible variations of songs and types of edits you might use. A competition company might adopt a policy that certain specific music and/or a certain type of edit is permitted (or not) at its competitions, but that does not mean that (a) teams following that policy are complying with the law, or (b) teams NOT following that policy (or companies that choose to adopt a different policy) are "illegal." **Competition rules are just competition rules - they are not the same as the law. Educate yourself about the rights of copyright holders and make informed music choices for your team.**

What will you require for compliance?

We will simply require you to confirm within the online registration process for our camps and competitions that you have read and understand all of our rules and regulations (including our music policy) and agree to comply with them.. You should also have information about your music available in case a copyright holder has any questions about it.

RESOURCES FOR YOUR TEAM

For a richer understanding of the music permissions universe and how to protect your team's copyrightable work (including your choreography and the right to broadcast your team's performances), take a look at the FAQ published by the National Dance Coaches Association (NDCA), found here:

https://www.facebook.com/notes/national-dance-coachesassociation/ndca-faq-copyright-and-dance-teams/274095962980858.
This FAQ may also help you evaluate whether you may or may not need specific music permissions.