

# POINTS-BASED LEVELING!



Elite Dance Cup uses a points-based leveling system that considers not only years of experience but also places greater emphasis on technical skill execution and overall performance quality. This system is designed to better reflect the abilities of today's dancers and ensure fairness and consistency across all entries and levels of adjudication and judging.

## POINT VALUES BY DANCER LEVEL

| DANCER LEVEL                        | PREMIER LEVEL  | ENCORE LEVEL    | ELITE LEVEL     |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| <i>Point Value<br/>(per dancer)</i> | <i>1 point</i> | <i>2 points</i> | <i>3 points</i> |

### Mixed Levels Point System

When a routine includes dancers from multiple levels, Elite Dance Cup uses a point-based system to fairly determine the appropriate competition level for each routine. This ensures fairness and consistency across all levels and entries.

#### How It Works

1. **Software will assign** each dancer their point value based on their level.
2. **Multiply** the number of dancers at each level by the point value.
3. **Add** the totals by level.
4. **Software will place** the routine in the level with the highest total point contribution.

**Tie Rule:** If two levels contribute the same total points, the routine will automatically be placed in the higher level.

## EXAMPLES:

### Example 1

**Routine with 8 dancers:**

| DANCERS LEVEL | # of DANCERS     | POINTS PER DANCER         | TOTAL POINTS     |
|---------------|------------------|---------------------------|------------------|
| <i>ENCORE</i> | <i>4 dancers</i> | <i>2 point per dancer</i> | <i>8 points</i>  |
| <i>ELITE</i>  | <i>4 dancers</i> | <i>3 point per dancer</i> | <i>12 points</i> |

**RESULTS:** Elite level dancer have higher contribution — routine is placed in the **Elite** Level

### Example 2

**Routine with 6 dancers:**

| DANCERS LEVEL  | # of DANCERS     | POINTS PER DANCER         | TOTAL POINTS    |
|----------------|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------|
| <i>PREMIER</i> | <i>4 dancers</i> | <i>1 point per dancer</i> | <i>4 points</i> |
| <i>ENCORE</i>  | <i>2 dancers</i> | <i>2 point per dancer</i> | <i>4 points</i> |

**RESULTS:** Tied at 4 points each — routine is placed in the **Encore** Level (higher level)

### Final Placement Rule

The routine's **competition level** is determined by the level with the **greatest point contribution**.

**Elite Level** dancers are not allowed to compete in the Premier Level.

# COMPETITION LEVELS!



Please level your dancers according to the skill-based guidelines and chart provided.  
*Need help registering an Inspire Level dancer(s) please contact Elite Dance Cup.*

***Elite Dance Cup office staff & or on-site judges will promote any dancer and or routine that is not leveled correctly.***

## COMPETITION LEVEL GUIDELINES

| COMPETITION LEVELS                                                  | PREMIER LEVEL                                                                                                                                                      | ENCORE LEVEL                                                                                                                                     | ELITE LEVEL                                                                                                              | INSPIRE LEVEL                                                                                                     |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                                     | <i>For the dancer who is new to competition and have limited training experience. This level focuses on building confidence and showcasing fundamental skills.</i> | <i>For the dancer with moderate experience, providing a bridge between Premier and Elite levels to support continued growth and development.</i> | <i>For the advanced dancer with extensive experience, showcasing the highest level of technical skills and artistry.</i> | <i>Designed to celebrate dancers with a special need and have exceptional mental and/or physical disabilities</i> |
| <b>COMPETITION EXPERIENCE</b><br><i>(per individual competitor)</i> | Minimal Experience<br>3 years or less                                                                                                                              | Limited Experience<br>4 to 6 years                                                                                                               | Significant Experience<br>7 or more years                                                                                |                                                                                                                   |
| <b>NUMBER OF ROUTINES</b><br><i>(per individual competitor)</i>     | 4 or Less<br>1 solo allowed                                                                                                                                        | 5 to 9<br>2 solos including<br>Title Solo                                                                                                        | 10 or More<br>3 solos including<br>Title Solo                                                                            |                                                                                                                   |

- ◆ If registered in the INSPIRE Level, all solos must compete in the INSPIRE Level. An INSPIRE Duo/Trio or Group performance must have at least one performer registered as INSPIRE in order to compete as an INSPIRE Level routine(s).
- ◆ INSPIRE dancers may perform in the Premier and Encore Levels as well as Production. An INSPIRE dancer(s) will not affect the leveling of any other routine(s).
- ◆ Dancers may compete in the Premier Level for a maximum of three competition seasons. After three seasons, they must advance to the next competitive level and are no longer eligible to compete in the Premier Level.

# SKILL LEVEL GUIDELINES!



These guidelines provide a framework to help assess appropriate skill levels for dancers, promoting fair placement and competitive balance. While choreographers are free to include any skills that best highlight their dancers, the quality of skill execution will be the key factor in confirming whether a routine fits the dancer's registered level. If judges find the execution surpasses the intended level, the routine may be moved up to the next level to maintain fairness.

No written guideline can include every skill or choreography variation. Judges will evaluate routines based on the overall technical difficulty, execution, and performance quality to determine whether a routine is appropriately placed within its registered level.

If the division at the promoted level has not yet been adjudicated, the routine's scores will be considered for eligibility in the Overall High Point Awards within promoted division. However, if the division's adjudication and awards have already been completed, the routine will be ineligible for Overall High Point Awards and will be Adjudicated Only. Once a dancer or routine is promoted to a higher level during a Regional Competition, they must continue to compete at that higher level for the remainder of the season, including National Finals.

***All level promotion decisions made by the judging panel are final and may not be challenged or contested.***

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# SKILL LEVEL GUIDELINES!

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## PREMIER LEVEL

### **Ideal For**

Premier Level is designed for dancers who are new to competition and are developing a strong technical foundation. This level focuses on building proper technique, confidence, musicality, flexibility, and performance quality.

### **Dance Technique:**

- ◆ Single pirouettes in any turn position on one supporting leg.
- ◆ No leg hold turns.
- ◆ Basic leaps, jumps, and transitions.
- ◆ No aerials or advanced acrobatic skills.
- ◆ Simple choreography with limited directional and formation changes.

### **Flexibility:**

- ◆ Basic flexibility and body control.
- ◆ Leg extensions and stretches appropriate to beginning dancers.

### **Tap:**

- ◆ Demonstrates fundamental tap vocabulary with clear timing and sound quality.
- ◆ Simple combinations and rhythm patterns.
- ◆ Limited syncopation.

## ENCORE LEVEL

### **Ideal For**

Encore Level is intended for dancers with a solid technical foundation who are developing consistency, strength, and more advanced skills while continuing to refine execution and artistry.

### **Dance Technique:**

- ◆ Up to three pirouettes in any turn position on one supporting leg.
- ◆ Maximum of five consecutive turn sequences in any combination.
- ◆ One leg hold turn permitted.
- ◆ Intermediate leaps and turns.
- ◆ Side aerials permitted and limited use of advanced acrobatic skills.
- ◆ Moderate choreography with increasing complexity in transitions and formations.

### **Flexibility:**

- ◆ Strong flexibility and extensions.
- ◆ Oversplits are not permitted.

### **Tap:**

- ◆ Demonstrates intermediate tap vocabulary with clarity, musicality, and consistent rhythm.
- ◆ Includes pullbacks, wings, cramp roll turns, maxi turns, and progressive combinations.

## ELITE LEVEL

### **Ideal For**

Elite Level is intended for highly trained dancers who consistently demonstrate advanced technical ability, artistry, and performance quality.

### **Dance Technique:**

- ◆ No limitations on turns or turn combinations.
- ◆ Advanced leg hold turns.
- ◆ Advanced leaps and extensions.
- ◆ Advanced tumbling and acrobatic skills.
- ◆ Complex choreography with intricate formations, directional changes, and musical phrasing.

### **Flexibility:**

- ◆ Advanced flexibility with strong control and extension.

### **Tap:**

- ◆ Demonstrates advanced tap technique with complex rhythms, musicality, dynamic phrasing, intricate footwork, and artistic expression.

**SEE SKILL SET CHART FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION!**

# Skills/Variations

Premier    Encore    Elite

## Flexibility

### Beginner flexibility (beginner leg extensions and high kicks)

- ◆ Dancers in this level are building proper body control/flexibility

### Intermediate flexibility (leg extensions, needles, scorpions, etc.)

- ◆ Dancers in the level have solid body control and are developing their flexibility strength

### Advanced Leaps and Jumps (Oversplits, Ambidexterity, Contortion, etc.)

- ◆ Dancers are highly trained and have consistent body control and flexibility

## Leaps/Jumps

### Beginner Leaps and Jumps (grand jete, sauté, échappé, etc.)

### Intermediate Leaps and Jumps (second leap, calypso, fire birds, etc.)

### Advanced Leaps and Jumps (switch leaps/tilts, 540, etc)

## Leg Hold Turns

### Single leg hold turn

### Double (2) or more leg hold turn

## Pirouettes – Turns executed in standard pirouette positions on one supported leg

### All Variations of a single pirouette

### All Variations of a double and/or triple pirouettes

### All Variations of a 4 or more pirouettes

## Turn Sequences: Combinations of turn elements performed consecutively on the same supporting leg.

### Five (5) consecutive rotations

- ◆ Fouetté and á la secondés turn combinations

### Six (6) or more consecutive rotations

- ◆ Fouetté and á la secondés turn combinations
- ◆ Turn Floats/ Box Turns/ Spot Changing Turns

## Acro/Tumbling

### Stands (Chin, Chest, Handstand, etc.

### Cartwheels, Walkovers (front and back limbers, valdez,etc.)

### Headsprings (Front & Back)

### Handsprings

### Side Aerials

### Front Aerials

### Back tucks & Layouts

## Choreography

### Simple Transitions & Formations

### Moderate Transitions & Formations

### Directional Changes & Complex Formations

These guidelines provide a framework to help assess appropriate skill levels for dancers, promoting fair placement and competitive balance. While choreographers are free to include any skills that best highlight their dancers, the quality of skill execution will be the key factor in confirming whether a routine fits the dancer's registered level. If judges find the execution surpasses the intended level, the routine may be moved up to the next level to maintain fairness. No written guidelines can include every skill or choreography variation. Judges will evaluate routines based on the overall technical difficulty, execution, and performance quality to determine whether a routine is appropriately placed within its registered level.

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# LEVEL RESTRICTIONS!

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Please review the level restrictions below before determining the level placement per dancer.  
Need help registering an Inspire Level dancer(s) please contact Elite Dance Cup.

**Elite Dance Cup office staff & or on-site judges will move any dancer and or routine that is not leveled correctly.**

| COMPETITION LEVELS        | PREMIER LEVEL                                 | ENCORE LEVEL                                                 | ELITE LEVEL                                                                 | INSPIRE LEVEL                        |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <i>General Categories</i> | <i>all general categories</i>                 | <i>all general categories</i>                                | <i>all general categories except productions</i>                            | <i>all general categories</i>        |
| <i>Age Categories</i>     | <i>all age categories</i>                     | <i>all age categories</i>                                    | <i>junior, pre-teen, teen &amp; senior</i>                                  | <i>12 &amp; under, 13 &amp; over</i> |
| <i>Solo</i>               | <i>12 &amp; under only<br/>1 solo allowed</i> | <i>all age categories<br/>2 solos including a Title Solo</i> | <i>junior, pre-teen, teen &amp; senior<br/>3 solos including Title Solo</i> | <i>12 &amp; under, 13 &amp; over</i> |
| <i>Duo/Trio</i>           | <i>12 &amp; under only</i>                    | <i>all age categories</i>                                    | <i>junior, pre-teen, teen &amp; senior</i>                                  | <i>12 &amp; under, 13 &amp; over</i> |
| <i>Cash Awards</i>        | <i>N/A</i>                                    | <i>Gift Certificates</i>                                     | <i>Cash Awards or Gift Certificates</i>                                     | <i>N/A</i>                           |
| <i>Title Solo</i>         | <i>N/A</i>                                    | <i>all age categories</i>                                    | <i>junior, pre-teen, teen &amp; senior</i>                                  | <i>N/A</i>                           |

# AGE CATEGORIES!



Elite Dance Cup has five age categories. Enter each students date of birth once and allow our online system to track year to year for you!

| Petite | Junior | Pre-teen | Teen    | Senior  | Adult |
|--------|--------|----------|---------|---------|-------|
| 4 - 7  | 8 - 10 | 11 - 12  | 13 - 15 | 16 - 20 | 21 +  |

- ♦ Calculate a dancer's age as of January 1st 2026. For routines with more than one dancer, determine age by adding the ages of all dancers (as of January 1st 2026) and divide by the number of dancers in the routine. If the average of the ages ends in .5 or more, round up to the next whole number.
- ♦ Elite Dance Cup has implemented the bump rule. A performer is only allowed to dance one (1) level down from their age category no matter what the average age calculates. Example, if a performer is 17 years of age performing in a group that the average age calculates to age 10 Junior, the routine would be bumped to Teen. This rule does not apply to the Production Category.
- ♦ **At Nationals, Dancers must compete in the same age category, performance category, and general category as the routine qualified at the regional event.**
- ♦ Competitors may be required to show proof of age in the form of a birth certificate in the event of a protest regarding age occurs.

# GENERAL CATEGORIES!



General categories are determined by the number of dancers in a routine and have set time limits as shown below.

|                                 |                                                                       |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Solo (1 dancer)                 | up to 2 minutes 45 seconds (Extended time up to 3 minutes 15 seconds) |
| Title Solo (1 dancer)           | up to 3 minutes (Extended time up to 3 minutes 30 seconds)            |
| Duo/Trio (2 or 3 dancers)       | up to 3 minutes (Extended time up to 3 minutes 30 seconds)            |
| Small Group (4 to 9 dancers)    | up to 3 minutes (Extended time up to 5 minutes)                       |
| Large Group (10 to 15 dancers)  | up to 3 minutes (Extended time up to 5 minutes)                       |
| Line (16 or more dancers)       | up to 4 minutes (Extended time up to 6 minutes)                       |
| Production (15 or more dancers) | 4 to 8 minutes (Extended time up to 10 minutes)                       |

- ♦ A production consists of multiple entrances and exits, crossovers, and individual group choreography to create multiple focus points. Props or set pieces do not necessarily create a production. **All productions, regardless of performance category or age division, compete against one another for Overall High Score. All productions will be scored at the Encore Competition Level.**
- ♦ **The Title Category is a separate category and will be separate from the solo category for overall high score awards.**
- ♦ There will be a **3-point deduction** for every 15 seconds or portion thereof in excess of time limits.
- ♦ Solos and Duo/Trios are not permitted extended performance time.
- ♦ General Category placement of a routine is determined by the # of dancers who actually perform at the competition, regardless of the number of dancers who were originally registered. In the event the award session has completed for the change made to routine, said routine will be adjudicated only.

# PERFORMANCE CATEGORIES!

| Performance Categories    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Acrobatic/Gymnastic       | <i>Controlled acrobatic or gymnastic movements involving flexibility and balance. Routine must include 50% dance technique, choreography, and fluid moves. If the routine requires the use of mats, that studio must provide the mats, as well as set-up and breakdown with-in the prop set-up time requirements.</i> |
| Ballet                    | <i>Dancers wear ballet, or combination of ballet and pointe shoes while executing ballet technique; classical, neo-classical or contemporary.</i>                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Clogging                  | <i>Dancers wear clogging shoes executing clogging technique including, either traditional or contemporary.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Contemporary              | <i>Dancers execute modern, jazz and ballet technique, beyond the standard jazz vocabulary.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Hip Hop                   | <i>Dancers replicate a style of street dance with movements including, but not limited to, the fundamentals of popping, locking and freezing.</i>                                                                                                                                                                     |
| Jazz                      | <i>Dancers must execute stylized characteristics of American jazz dance technique.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Lyrical                   | <i>Dancers interpret the lyrics, mood or intent of a song with or without lyrics using a combination of ballet, jazz and/or modern technique demonstrating balance, flexibility, and control.</i>                                                                                                                     |
| Modern/Abstract           | <i>Dancers demonstrates balance, extensions, isolations, and control based on such principles as space, force, weight and time. Must be in the contemporary modern style.</i>                                                                                                                                         |
| Musical Theatre/Character | <i>A routine that portrays an easily recognizable character throughout using any style of dance. May be from a play, movie, television show, musical or portraying a stereotype.</i>                                                                                                                                  |
| Open                      | <i>A combination of any two or more dance styles, or a routine that does not fit any other performance category.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| Pointe                    | <i>Dancers wear pointe shoes and execute pointe technique in the classical, neo-classical, modern, contemporary, and/or character style.</i>                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Tap                       | <i>Dancers wear tap shoes and execute tap technique. May be performed with or without music accompaniment. Tap sounds may not be recorded.</i>                                                                                                                                                                        |

- ◆ For safety measures, a competitor may not stand or be physically lifted higher than eight feet above the stage floor. Though 8-foot height is only a benchmark, Elite Dance Cup reserves the right to disqualify any routine that is deemed unsafe.
- ◆ Acrobatic/Gymnastic Passes – Acrobatic/Gymnastic, Open, Character and Contemporary may include more than 3 acrobatic/gymnastic movements. All other subjects are limited to 3 acrobatic/gymnastic movements or passes. General lifts are permitted and do not count as a movement or pass. Non-compliance to the acrobatic/gymnastic rule results in a **3 point deduction**.
- ◆ The exact same combination of dancers may not compete more than once in the same age category, general category and performance category.