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2026 Rules and Regulations

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2026 Rules and Regulations

These rules go into effect for our 2026 Season.

Registration

Visit our website for easy online registration. Complete the registration steps and mail your deposit to guarantee your reservation.

Entries are accepted on a first come basis and are limited by time restrictions per location.

Full payment must be received at least 45 days prior to the event.
All entries must register through a studio.

Please email or call our office with any questions or concerns.

By registering with Backstage Competition LCC you are agreeing to have read all our rules and regulations. It is the responsibility of studio directors to share all rules, regulations and expectations with their dancers and families.

Divisions / Time Limits

Extended time can be purchased for entries that exceed the time limit

Divisions	Number of Performers	Time Limits
Solo	1	2:45
Duo/Trio	2-3	2:45
Small Group	4-9	3:00
Large Group	10-19	4:00
Line	20+	4:30
Production	15+	8:00

Age Division

Our Registration system will place each entry in one of the following age groups based on the average age of all competitors in the routine. The average age will be calculated from the dancers age as of January 1. Our registration system automatically performs this calculation to determine the correct age group placement. Proof of age may be requested on-site at an event if deemed necessary.

Any routine including a teacher is not eligible for overall awards. A teacher is someone who choreographs or teaches and is 20+ years of age or older.

Any entry containing a dancer that is 20+ years in age will automatically compete no lower than the senior age division, regardless of the average age of the entry

Age Group	Ages
Mini	6 & Under
Petite	7-8
Junior	9-10
Pre-Teen	11-12
Teen	13-14
Elite Teen	15-16
Senior	17-19
Adult	20+



Performance Categories

Acro- Routine combining the artistry of dance technique along with the athleticism of acrobatic skills. Choreography must contain 50% dance technique.

Ballet- Routine consisting of classical Ballet movement and technique.

Ballroom- Routine in which dancers perform a variety of ballroom dance styles, such as Waltz, Tango, Foxtrot, Viennese Waltz, Quickstep, Cha Cha, Rumba, Paso Doble, Jive, ect. Emphasis is placed on technique, partnering skills, and musicality.

Baton- Routine in which the dancer demonstrates a variety of twirling technique, such as fingerwork, rolls, and/or a variety of tosses and catches, that is coordinated with dance movements.

Character- Routine in which the dancers must portray an easily recognizable character or storyline. Does not need to come from a Musical or have Musical Theatre technique or choreography.

Clogging- Routine in which dancers perform percussive dance movements, primarily with the feet, to create rhythmic patterns and sounds. Clogging has its own unique rhythms and vocabulary, differentiating it from Tap dance or Irish Step.

Contemporary - Routine influenced by multiple styles of dance including Jazz, Modern, and Lyrical. The movement is expressive, gestural, and unique in its dynamics.

Folk/Ethnic- Routine incorporating one or more ethnic styles of dance.

Hip Hop- Routine consisting of mostly Hip Hop or Street Style moves characterized by bounces, rocks, krumping, popping, locking, breaking, etc. This style places emphasis on rhythmic isolation and strong musicality.

Improv- Routine consisting of completely improvised choreography. Any style of improv is welcome in this category. Studios must provide their own music.

Jazz- Routine consisting of Jazz technique in which the movements traditionally mimic the sounds, rhythms, and syncopations of the music.

Lyrical- Routine that places an emphasis on expression and connection to the lyrics of a song

Modern- Routine Consisting of codified styles of modern dance technique, such as Graham, Taylor, Cunningham, Limon, Dunham, Duncan, Horton and etc.



Musical Theater - Routine choreographed to a song from a Broadway or movie musical using song, dialogue, and/or dance. This form of dance strongly focuses on elements of performance quality, such as connecting with the audience, facial expressions, and/or storytelling.

Open - Routine consisting of multiple or unspecified styles of dance.

Pointe - Routine containing Pointe technique. At least 50% of the performers must be en pointe. This category is only available in the advanced level. Dancers performing en pointe, even if in another category as Open, will be moved to the advanced level.

Pom/Drill- Routine consisting of Pom Squad/Drill Team dance technique, with an emphasis on precision, clean technique, and sharpness that incorporates elements of Jazz and Hip Hop.

Song and Dance- Routine consisting of singing and any style of dance. Music may only have backup Voices. Performance will use the boundary microphones or one handheld microphone provided by the competition.

Street Jazz- A Routine containing a hybrid of Jazz technique with Hip Hop influences. Seamlessly blends commercial dance with traditional dance techniques.

Student Choreography- Routine choreography by students with minimal assistance from an instructor.

Tap - Routine consisting of Tap technique. No pre-recorded Tap sounds are allowed. Use of pre-recorded Tap sounds will result in a red card and 2 - point deduction. Tap shoes must be worn.

Vocal - Any type of vocal performance using one handheld microphone provided by the competition. Backup vocals are permitted. Vocal routines will be eligible for adjudication only. Vocal solos are not counted towards a dancer's level.

Please note in all dance categories, except acro-dance and open, a limit of 3 overhead passes will be allowed.



Performance Levels / Routine Placement

At Backstage, in order to run a fair competition for all, we utilize three different performance levels for dancers. These include beginner, intermediate, and advanced categories.

Directors should use their own discretion to determine the individual level of each dancer. At registration, Directors will select a level for each dancer that will carry through with them in each of their routines. The level in which they are placed will follow them into every routine they compete in.

Level Advancements

When all three judges agree that a routine can compete at a higher level, that routine will be bumped up. Directors will be informed of any level advancements prior to the routine's award ceremony.

Solo's- Dancers must compete in the level they are registered. Soloists may not compete against themselves in the same performance category.

Duo/Trio and All Groups- At Backstage we will be using a point system to determine the specific level of a routine.

- Beginner dancers are 1 point each
- Intermediate dancers are 2 points each
- Advanced dancers are 3 points each

For example, if a routine has 5 Beginner dancers and 3 Intermediate dancers. The following equation would apply to determine the level. 5 Beginner dancers = 5 points, 3 Intermediate dancers = 6 points. Since 6 is greater than 5 the routine will be placed in the Intermediate level.

Beginner VIP

Dancers that have little competition experience, study up to 3 hours per week and are beginning to demonstrate an understanding of dance technique qualify as beginners. Beginner dancers may compete only 1 solo with a maximum of 7 routines.

Intermediate VIP

Dancers that have moderate competition experience, study approximately 5 hours or less per week and demonstrate a solid understanding of dance technique qualify as intermediate.

Advanced VIP

Dancers that have extensive competition experience, study more than 5 hours per week and demonstrate a strong understanding of dance technique qualify as advanced.

Special VIP

This unique category is dedicated to dancers with special needs, different abilities, or physical challenges. It celebrates their love of dance and provides a platform for them to shine. Dancers in this level will be critiqued within their abilities and are eligible for Special Judge Awards, Spotlight Awards and High Score Awards.



Judging / Scoring

Every performance is critiqued by a panel of 3 judges.
All judges' decisions are final.

Judges will use a point system allowing them to score a maximum of 100 points each.

Judges will take into consideration choreography, technique, stage presence, rhythm & unison.

All entries will receive a score of a VIP Platinum, High Platinum, Platinum, High Gold or Gold.

Performers who exit the stage prior to the end of their performance are eligible to perform again for adjudication only.

All score sheets and audio/video critiques will be uploaded to the studio directors registration site after each event.

Adjudication	Score
VIP High Platinum	298 - 300
High Platinum	293 - 297.9
Platinum	282 - 292.9
High Gold	271 - 281.9
Gold	260 - 270.9

High Score

Entries must compete before their award ceremony to be eligible for High Scores.

Overall high scores for Solo, Duo/Trio, Groups and Lines/Productions will be recognized in the Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced performance levels.

Top 10 will be awarded a placement based on the total number of entries in the age category, division and level.

1st Place in performance category will be awarded.



Awards / Special Awards

All dancers in a group line or production will each receive a pin displaying their adjudicated award.

A beautiful plaque displaying all group routines will be awarded to the studio.
Scholarships will be awarded based on judge discretion, that may include partial or full scholarship to future competitions, training programs or classes.

Special Judge Awards, Standing Ovation Award, Studio Spotlight, Stage Door, Choreography Awards and VIP Awards will be given at the discretion of the judges.

The following titles are considered the Backstage VIP Awards. All group routines are eligible for VIP awards.

Outstanding Costume
Outstanding Use of Prop
Outstanding Music Selection
Outstanding Stage Presence
Outstanding Storyteller
Outstanding Creativity
Backstage Award

Studio Credit Award

Studio Credit and trophy will be awarded to the Highest Scoring Routine in the divisions listed below, in all performance levels (Beginner, Intermediate, Advanced) when there are 10+ routines

Division	Amount
Solo	\$50
Duo/Trio	\$75
Small/Large Group	\$100
Line/Production	\$150



Backstage Regional Challenges

Ultimate Challenge: Judges will identify one small group, large group, and one line or production at each Regional competition that they feel is the most entertaining. The winning routine has nothing to do with score and is based on entertainment value only! All winning routines in each category will be awarded a 6- foot trophy and be invited to bring their winning routine for FREE to re-compete at our National finals and compete against other ultimate challenge winners for the title of National ultimate challenge winner.

Solo/Duo/Trio Call Back Challenge: The Judges can choose to invite solos, duos and or trios in both the intermediate and advanced levels to re-perform their routines for FREE in our Solo/Duo/Trio Callback Challenge at Nationals. They will compete against all other call back winners from regionals. This challenge winner is selected based on how captivating the judges felt the performance was.

Backstage Future VIP's Challenge: This challenge is for all 9 & Under Beginner and Intermediate groups. Judges are looking for simple clean beginner technique along with outstanding stage presence. All winning routines are invited to re-compete their routine for FREE at our National finals against all other Regional winners.

Elite High Platinum Challenge: Advanced group routines who score High Platinum or higher are eligible to be invited to re-perform in our Elite High Platinum Challenge at Nationals for FREE. These routines will compete against other Elite High Platinum Challenge winners.

Additional routines can be picked at Nationals to perform in the above challenges.

Challenge Participation Requirements

All challenge invitees re-competing at our Nationals must contain the same dancers, choreography, and music as it was when awarded at Regionals.

If your studio receives an invitation for any Challenge at Regionals to re-compete at Nationals , please note the following:

- To participate in Challenge Day for free, all invited routines must be registered for adjudication and high scores at Nationals.
- Exception: Ultimate Challenge does not require registration to participate.

Please Note:

If your studio is not already registered for Nationals, receiving a Challenge invitation does not guarantee availability. Challenge participation is subject to space and scheduling limitations.

*The same routine can only participate in one challenge



ADCC Studio of Excellence

ADCC (Association of Dance Conventions and Competitions) this award is given to a studio that exemplifies the mission and the purpose of the ADCC which is to promote quality, integrity and opportunity in the dance competition world.

Photo for Dreams

Backstage is a proud sponsor of St Jude's Children's Research Hospital. Studio Directors and or Parents can submit a 5x7 or 8x10 color or black & white photo with the dancer's name, age and studio name on the back. The judges will select who they feel is the most photogenic in both the 9 & Under and 10 & Older age Division. 100 % of all proceeds will be donated to St Jude's Children's Research Hospital.

Photos should be submitted at the merchandise table along with your donation of \$35.00. Cash or check only written out to St Jude's Children's Hospital can be accepted.

Title Winners

Title contender must be a soloist in the Advanced performance level.

Each solo must receive a score of Platinum or higher to qualify.

Soloists who receive the highest score in their age division will be Title Winner.

No additional fees are required.

Title Winners will be recognized in the following combined age divisions.

Age Group	Ages
Mini	6 & Under
Petite	7-8
Junior	9-10
Pre-Teen	11-12
Teen	13-14
Elite Teen	15-16
Senior	17-19

Performance Team

Invitations will be given to soloists who score High Platinum or higher. Discretion of judges may be used to invite a dancer that did not make the minimum score requirements.

All participants must register by the deadline on the certificate received and agree to all terms and conditions.

Performance team members will perform in our Performance Team Showcase at Nationals. Additional selections can be made during our workshops or Backstage Ambush.



Mandatory Music Upload

All music must be uploaded online into the registration system.
The following formats will be accepted; MP3, MP4, M4A.

Music must be uploaded in order to receive your schedule

Please ensure you have the correct version uploaded, pitch and speed cannot be adjusted at the event. Notify the audio technician of any music upload issues prior to the dancer being called on stage. Failure to do so will result in the incorrect music being selected.

No Studio may use ANY music owned by Kirbko Music LLC or Watson Music Group (including “Space Jam”) without rights. Violation of this will be subject to copyright fees.

Competition Schedule

The schedule will be available 1 week prior to the competition start date. Change requests will be taken into consideration, but are not guaranteed.

You will have 3 days from the time you receive your schedule to make any changes, after the 3-day grace period any changes will incur a charge per change. Any changes made are not guaranteed to be in our program.

Absolutely no changes can be made on the day of competition.

All dancers must perform at their scheduled time unless it was cleared and in writing from the competition director, failure to perform on time will result in point deductions.

All dances should be performance ready at least one hour prior to their scheduled performance time.

Medical Release forms are attached to your schedule; forms must be completed prior to the event in order to participate

Props

Props should be set up and removed from the stage within 1 minute and 30 seconds. Please do not build any props backstage; this presents a danger to our performers.

No baby powder, liquid, hairspray, paint, glitter, or anything that could leave residue on the stage. No fog, smoke machines, or strobe lights allowed. No material under ½ inch can be used. Props that exceed 9’ in height, cannot be guaranteed to fit the stage

Props cannot be left behind or unattended. Check with our staff for specific staging areas. Any prop that includes an extensive amount of cleanup is the studio responsibility. Please clear the stage in a timely fashion.



General Rules

Payment must be submitted in order to be fully registered

Entry Fees are NON-REFUNDABLE.

Account credit will be issued for removals as long as this is done prior to the event, credits will be issued to the account the dancer was registered with. Credits may only be used towards entry fees for Backstage Competition LLC. Day-Of scratches for any reason will not be issued credits.

Backstage Competition LLC reserves the right to cancel any event due to lack of registration, inclement weather, or any other unforeseen circumstances.

Backstage Competition LLC will not issue any refunds or be held responsible for any technical issues that are beyond our control. Including but not limited to photos, videos and critiques.

All payments must be made 45 calendar days prior to your event. Any payment received after the deadline must be made by credit card. There is a \$50 fee for returned checks

Coaching is strictly prohibited and will result in point deduction or disqualification.

Backstage cannot guarantee a power supply

Except for technical difficulties on our part, re-performing of any routine will be adjudicated only

Adjudication only routines are not eligible for high scores, cash award or titles

Sexually explicit dance or music will not be tolerated and will result in disqualification if found to be inappropriate NO EXCEPTIONS!!

Video and Photography is strictly prohibited. This includes FaceTime & Video Chats of any kind. In order to protect the choreographer's artistic right and the safety and privacy of all competitors, we reserve the right to confiscate all recording devices used during the event and disqualify an entry. Anyone using a personal device for recording or photos will be asked to delete the footage in front of a Backstage crew member.

Smoking is prohibited in or around the competition area. We ask that all smokers stand at least 50 yards from the competition venue to preserve the wellbeing of our dancers, audience members and our staff.



General Rules (Cont)

Backstage Reserves the right to refuse the entry of any studio

Only studio Directors may question routines for rule infractions, however any protest must be made in writing to the competition director within 30 minutes of the performance.

All dancers, teachers and parents attending Backstage Competition give permission for any photographs or videos taken during the competition to be used to promote future events.

Only dancers, teachers, studio directors and prop crew are allowed backstage. For the safety of our dancers, anyone not wearing a VIP Backstage Pass will not be permitted to enter the backstage area.

If a routine cannot perform during their allotted time the routine will be adjudicated only.

Dancers may not exit or jump off the stage at any time during a backstage event, this includes performances.

Hallways may not be used for stretching, changing, applying makeup, storage for personal items, or for any other reason other than traveling through the building.

Backstage Competition LLC and the host venue are not responsible for any lost property during the event. By registering your dancer, you agree that Backstage Competition LLC and staff are not responsible for any lost property or injury during the event.

Sportsmanship

We strive to create a safe and family friendly event for everyone; therefore the following rules must be adhered to.

Good sportsmanship is expected from all participants, at all times, in person and on social media. Please remind your studio of this. Anything less than good sportsmanship and respect during our events will not be tolerated and will result in point deduction or disqualification.

Please show respect for our venues. Leave the dressing area, auditoriums and all other public spaces clean.

*Rules will be interpreted in the spirit of fairness to all participants. Backstage Competition reserves the rights to change, delete, or add to any rules, regulations, or policies at any time deemed necessary.

Contestants are understood to recognize the risks of physical injury inherent in dance and dance performances and be willing to assume those risks. It is agreed that participants will not hold Backstage Competition or its directors or employees liable for injuries sustained or illnesses contracted by them while in attendance and/or performing in any activity at a Backstage Competition.

It is the responsibility of the studio director/owner to review these rules and regulations with both dancers and their parents.