



## **Dogs Can Dance Challenge® – Titling opportunities in the art and sport of musical canine freestyle.**

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### **Mission Statement**

Dogs Can Dance Challenge®, a division of Dogs Can Dance® was founded to promote the art and sport of canine freestyle, worldwide, by offering musical canine freestyle titling opportunities. The premise of the Dogs Can Dance Challenge® is based on the following concept; each performance should honor and showcase the dog by emphasizing the beauty and grace of the dog's natural movements in a manner reflective of the musicality of the chosen accompaniment. Each performance is a tribute to and demonstration of the teamwork and relationship between the dog and handler. The Dogs Can Dance Challenge® goal is to encourage training of dogs at all stages of their lives and further educate the handlers toward future success.

### **Registration in the Dogs Can Dance Challenge®**

A handler may choose to campaign an individual dog or campaign as a team with multiple dogs. (Note: The handler does not have to be the registered owner of the dog, however, the dog may not be registered to any other handler in the Dogs Can Dance Challenge® and written permission will be provided by the registered owner and included with the registration paperwork.) Once a dog and handler or dogs and handler (team) are registered, they are considered “active” for 24 months from passing the Entry Level or from the last submitted performance for titling. If the handler does not submit a performance within any one 24 months, the handler’s status will become “inactive”. The handler will have to re-register to become active and repeat the Entry Level prior to submitting a performance for any division. A new campaign will be started and prior points earned will not apply.

Registration fees for an Individual dog and handler are \$20. Registration fees for a Team of up to 3 dogs and one handler are \$30. A handler may upgrade their registration from an Individual Campaign to a Team Campaign at the cost of \$15 per additional dog. A “Team” Campaign covers the handler and up to three dogs, however, at any time, additional dogs may be added at the cost of \$15 per dog. Once a dog is registered as part of a “team”, the dog can not be reduced to or participate in an Individual campaign. A handler within a registered “team” may choose any of the team’s dogs to perform in any division at any level or class.

In the event that a handler is no longer able to handle their dog, they may transfer/share their dog with a new handler until the situation resolves. For example, a Grandmother may grant their grandchild permission as a junior handler to take over performance with the dog. The new handler must complete Entry Level and register new in the database. No points are carried over from the prior team to the new handler.

*In the event that one of the team's dogs passes away, their earned points remain with the team. The deceased dog is not removed from the database as additional videos of this dog may be submitted at a later date and the points earned will be added to the current team's total points.*

Note: Registration fees are subject to change at any time without prior notice as posted on the Dogs Can Dance Challenge® Webpage. Any employee, contractor, or volunteer who has access to the Dogs Can Dance Challenge™ database is ineligible to participate. Judges may participate in any event except when they are assigned to that event's judging panel.

## Definitions

**Accompaniment** - the sound track used during a performance of a submitted routine

**Active Registration** – a handler who has registered with either an individual dog or as a team with multiple dogs and has submitted a performance with any 24 month period

**Adjudicated Match** – participation by a handler and dog(s) submitting a performance for critique and scoring only, points are not rewarded

**Artistic Director**- the individual appointed by the owner of Dogs Can Dance® who creates and oversees the “vision” of the Dogs Can Dance Challenge™. The Artistic Director may evaluate the Entry Level and the Audition Class but is not appointed to one of the judging panels.

**Attire** – clothing worn by the handler, carefully chosen to showcase the dog

**Axial** – a movement phrase that takes place in a confined space as if within in a cylinder; the handler may be the central point of the space. This cylinder may be of any size. Axial doesn't travel directly from point A to point B.

**Axial Movement Phrase** – Filling a musical section with axial movement combination. This combination may move in space, unlike a locomotor movement phrase where the intent is to travel from point A to point B.

**Brace** - performance consists of one handler and two dogs within the same routine. Each dog will be registered to the team and perform all requirements of the level.

**Campaign** – The process of earning points toward a championship, either for an individual dog and handler, or as a team. This individual or team campaign is chosen at the time of registration.

**Center** - a working position of the dog lined up and facing the center line of the handler's body; applies to both the static position and in motion

**Center Work** – Moving as a synchronized team while maintaining Center position by the dog

**Division** – one of the three titling performance classifications of a canine freestyle performance

**Dogs Can Dance®** - an Internationally Registered trademark owned by Judy Gamet, consisting of methodology, educational programs, and classes in the sport of canine freestyle.

**Editing** – changing or altering the continuous view of the performance such as zooming in for close up view, splicing video, slow motion or increasing speed, audio track manipulation, and change not naturally occurring in an uninterrupted performance

**Entry Level** – the first step in the Challenge; all handlers will pass this level, demonstrating an understanding of the five components of Dogs Can Dance® freestyle foundation in order to participate in the Challenge . Any single component that needs improvement may be resubmitted.

**Featured Attraction** – the second level within the Entertainment Division, comparable to an Intermediate/Advanced level

**Frequent Flyer** – the first level within the Music Interpretation Division, having achieved qualifying points in any first genre

**Gait** – a natural working stride demonstrated by the dog; a manner of walking or running such as a trot, gallop, canter, or walk is preferred.

**Handler Cueing** – a physical gesture by the handler’s body, or verbal word spoken by the handler in an effort to initiate a physical response or behavior from the dog

**Heel** – a working position of the dog on the left side of the handler’s body as defined by the sport of obedience, applies to both the static position and in motion

**Heel Work** – Moving as a synchronized team while maintaining Heel position by the dog.

**Honor Class** – applies to dogs and/or handlers who are seniors, disabled, or recovering from illness or injury who can not be expected to perform up to the level of the Open Class

**Inactive** – a handler who has been removed from the registration database for lack of participation within a 24 month period, for any reason agreed upon by the Dogs Can Dance Challenge administration, or has requested to be removed from the database. All points prior earned are discarded when registration is ruled “inactive”.

**Individual Campaign**- one handler and one dog working through the Challenge Divisions toward an Individual Championship

**Interactive Attention** – a high degree of continued focus between the dog and the handler creating a united working team; eye contact is not always required but demonstrating undeniable focus and attentiveness on the part of both the handler and the dog

**International Flyer** – the second level within the Music Interpretation Division, applies to an handler who has earned a total of 100 points in their second genre of choice

**Judging Panel** - A group of five judges comprised of handlers from many different disciplines in the world of dog sports, dog training, and performing arts.

**Junior Class** – applies to either dog under the age of 18 months or handlers under the age of 18; a limited number of points are awarded in this class

**Levels** - the stages within a Division, increasing with difficulty as the campaign through that division progresses; for example the Classical Freestyle Division consists of three levels, beginner level, intermediate level, and advanced level

**Locomotor** – a movement phrase that travels from point A to point B

**Multi-Dog Performance** - a performance of one handler and more than two of the team's registered dogs within a single routine

**Open Class** – applies to any healthy adult handler or dog not requiring special consideration

**Opening Act** – the first level within the Entertainment Division, comparable to a Beginner's level

**Performance** – the submitted video or either the Entry Level components or a completed routine within any class of any division level

**Props** - A prop is any physical object that the dog either interacts with or the handler utilizes to cue the dog. Articles of attire will be considered a "prop" if the handler removes the article to cue the dog to perform a behavior. Attire may be used to compliment the handler's design if obviously not used as a cue or a target.

**Rewards** – any food, toy, audible click, or physical contact that the dog could view as compensation for performance effort or for motivational purposes

**Reward Criterion** - the desired response by the dog that will gain the dog a reward delivered by the handler upon recognizing that response

**Right** - a working position of the dog on the right side of the handler's body; applies to both the static position and in motion

**Right Work** - Moving as a synchronized team while maintaining Right position by the dog

**Ring Dimensions** – the performance space measurements; most divisions will require a ring of 30 X 40, or 40 X 50 with a visual marker at the four corners and the center of each side for a total of 8 markers. A 5 point deduction per judge will result if markers are not in place. (*see deductions – neglect to following guidelines procedures*)

**Special Effects** - This term applies to the Entertainment Division Featured Presentation level. Some type of editing, special setting, or added effect which enhances the uniqueness of the performance and makes an impact on the audience.

**Team**- applies to a single handler performing with one or more dogs registered to that handler in the database

**Team Campaign** – one handler and multiple dogs registered as a “team” working through the Challenge Divisions toward a Team Championship

**Titling Opportunity Event** - an Event hosted by the Dogs Can Dance Challenge®, with a deadline date and premium list advertised on the Dogs Can Dance Challenge® Website giving the handler and dog(s) the opportunity to earn points toward their championship

**World Traveler** – The third and final level within the Music Interpretation Division awarded after scoring an accumulated total of 100 points in the third genre of choice

## Entry Level

The goal of the Entry level is to introduce the handler to the expectations of the skill level needed to perform a successful musical canine freestyle performance. The entry level tests the handler's basic training foundation in the sport. All handlers will pass the Entry Level prior to submitting a performance in any Freestyle Division. For handlers who have registered as a "team", only one dog is required to perform the Entry Level components, however, multiple registered dogs from the team may also be used. Entry level submissions are accepted daily.

**Entry Level Fee:** \$25 (this fee applies only to Entry Level)

**Ring Size:** The Ring may be indoors or outdoors with the dimensions of either 30 X 40 or 40 X 50. The longest measurement is the front and back side of the ring. These dimensions also apply to division performances for titling events through both video submission or live performances. In the event that the minimum size ring for Entry Level cannot be accommodated, a smaller size will be permitted. This exception does not apply to performance for titling within divisions.

**Leash/Collar Requirements:** The dog may perform on or off leash, wearing no collar, a flat buckle collar, roll leather collar, or a front fastening harness. Tags should be removed for all classes including the Entry Level. Therapy Dogs filmed during a visit are exempt from removing tags when performing in the Entertainment Division. These collar requirements also apply to division performances for titling.

**Rewards:** Rewards of toys, treats, or physical contact are allowed during the Entry Level, however the rewards will not be visible to the dog or the viewer until delivered as reinforcement. The use of a clicker is acceptable.

**Handler Attire:** The handler should chose attire that showcases the dog, not blending into the color of the dog causing the line of the dog to disappear.

**Accompaniment:** Accompaniment for the entry level should be played close to the video camera for Entry Level. All other divisions may have music track added for better quality. Music may be changed as desired for each component. All components should have music accompaniment. Music rights are the responsibility of the handler.

**Qualifying Evaluation:** Each component of the Entry Level is scored on a "Qualify or needs improvement" basis. In the event that a component does not receive a passing score, the handler may re-submit that particular component, along with a \$5.00 fee per component. The handler does not need to repeat the additional components that received a passing score. Upon receiving the results, if any component did not qualify, the handler will receive an Entry Level Re-Submission Form along with their results.

If the handler wishes to submit a performance in the next upcoming Titling Event, the Entry Level collection of video clips should be received in the Dogs Can Dance® Office **at any time up to four weeks prior to an event deadline, unless otherwise stated.** For example, if the Titling Opportunity Event date is December 1, any handler hoping to participate in that December 1 Event will have their Entry Level submissions received by November 1. The Entry Level Deadline will be posted on the downloadable Dogs Can Dance Challenge® Event Form.

The Entry Level submission will be evaluated by Artistic Director, owner of Dogs Can Dance®, or other appointed representative. Label each component 1 – 5 on each video clip. If the handler chooses to submit each component on one video clip, the handler will announce verbally the new component that they are demonstrating. Please allow four weeks for scoring and notification of eligibility to enter any of the three freestyle divisions.

Handlers with a registered team MAY repeat the Entry level with any or all dogs within the team at a reduced rate of \$15, however, only one dog representing the team is required. Once a handler has passed the entry level, as long as their registration remains in “active status”, they will not need to repeat the Entry Level. *For handlers who own the Dogs Can Dance programs, additional information references have been included.*

**Five Entry Level Components:** The following components will be included either on separate video clips or one master video clip announcing each component:

I. **Music Selection that matches the dog’s gait:** Performance duration 45 - 60 seconds.

The dog will be moving with the handler to the music. The music will match the dog’s gait while showcasing the dog’s strengths. The preferred demonstrated gaits are as follows: trot, gallop, or canter. A pacing gait is permitted but not preferred. This video clip should only show the dog’s gait with the handler “heeling the dog” or moving in the “right position” or “center”. No additional freestyle moves except gaiting in heel, right, or center are desired. The evaluator is watching for the dog’s foot falls to match the rhythm of the music.

Helpful Handler Suggestions: The handler may use any arm position that communicates “Heel”, “Right”, or “Center” to their dog. This handling design should be maintained while performing the music selection clip. More information on selecting music can be found in the manual, “The Next Step: Beginning Freestyle Program”.

*Note: If the dog and handler are qualified for the Honor Class, suitable music to reflect the strengths of the dog and/or the handler will result in a passing score for this component. All Entry Level components will be viewed with sensitivity to the qualifications of the honor class.*

II. **Positioning and executing transitions while moving:** Performance duration 40 – 60 seconds

The dog and handler will demonstrate moving while the dog is in proper heel position, right position, center (front) position. The dog and handler are required to demonstrate at least two transitions from Heel to Right or Right to Heel position, and two transitions from Heel or Right to Center position while moving, however, pauses are acceptable during, prior to, or after the transitions.

Helpful Handler Suggestions: The Heel and Right position placement is up to the handler and dog team. For example, some dogs Heel wide, some hug tightly to the handler. Either is acceptable. The handler is also encouraged to use hand or body cues to assist the dog in maintaining those required positions. More information on transitions can be found in the manual, “The Next Step: Beginning Freestyle Program”.

- III. **Attention while moving:** Performance duration 50 – 60 seconds.  
The dog and handler will demonstrate performing with attention for a minimum of 50 seconds. The desired interactive attention should be visibly obvious that total focus from the handler is devoted to the dog and the dog's attention is undeniably in tune with the handler and the handler's cues, denying distraction. The interactive attention between dog and handler will be obvious for at least 70 percent of the time. For example, durations of 50 seconds require a minimum of 35 total seconds of attention to receive a passing score. Your goal should be attention for the entire 50 seconds).

Helpful Handler Suggestions: Changes of position, transitions, basic freestyle moves are all accepted during the demonstration of this component. Food or toy rewards are allowed on the handler's body but not visible to the dog or the judge. More information on developing attention can be found in lesson six "Creating Your Rhythm Heeling Performance in The Next Step: Beginning Freestyle Program", and more exercises in attention can be found in "Stepping Out: Preparing for Performance"

- IV. **Training Clip / Stated Reward Criterion:** Performance duration 50 – 60 seconds.  
The handler will state the reward criterion chosen for the video clip and demonstrate selective rewarding while performing movement phrases with the dog. For example, if the handler wants to reward for precision in positioning, rewarding will take place when the handler acknowledges that the dog has executed precise positioning. If the handler wants to reward for animation, the handler will recognize when the dog is animated and reward accordingly. If the handler wants to reward for execution of a particular skill, the handler will reward when that skill is performed with clean, clear technique.

Helpful Handler Suggestions: State only one reward criterion to reward. Consider naming the one aspect of training that you feel is necessary for success in performance. More information on Reward Criterion is available in the manual, Stepping Out: Preparing for Performance.

- V. **Floor Patterns:** Performance duration: maximum 30 seconds per floor pattern, no minimum time requirement.  
The Entry Level requires demonstration of two curved floor patterns and two straight line floor patterns. The handler and dog team will perform with music the following floor patterns in a space of 30 X 40 feet or 40 X 50 feet, indoors or outdoors, boundaries should be marked by cones or other visible objects. The longest measurement is always the front and back of the ring:

- 1) Any variation of a large ring filling figure 8
- 2) Either a serpentine or spiral.
- 3) Trace the floor pattern of a "V" as a variation of a straight lines
- 4) Trace the floor patten an "L" as a variation of straight lines

Any freestyle move/transition of the handler's choice is encouraged at the change of direction. Floor patterns may be performed with the dog in heel position, right position, or center, but the dog will be moving forward. Clean clear floor pattern design will be judged. The handler may choose to splice together the floor patterns into one video clip.

Helpful Handler Suggestions: Discover the transitions that allow your dog to flow freely into the next directions. More than one transition may be used throughout the video clip. More information on transitions and floor patterns is available in The Next Step: Beginning Freestyle Program, Lesson Three, "Understanding Transitions and Direction Changes"

### **Completion of Entry Level**

Upon satisfactorily completing the Entry Level, the handler is eligible to enter the Freestyle Division of their choice in any future titling event within the next 24 months. As long as a performance is submitted within the 24 months, their registration remains "active" and the handler does not have to go through the Entry Level again. If a performance is not submitted within a 24 month time frame, the handler's registration is recorded as "inactive" and the process of registration and completion of Entry Level will need to be repeated.

### **Musical Canine Freestyle Divisions**

The Dogs Can Dance Challenge offers three divisions to allow the handler the choice to earn titles where their interests lie, or to become well rounded by completing all three divisions as required to earn a DCD Championship. *(see each separate division for description)* The three divisions offered are:

- Classical Freestyle
- Entertainment
- Music Interpretation

### **Champion Titles**

An Individual or Team has earned the Champion Title of CH-DCD when they have earned titles by completing all divisions. Advanced titles of CH-DCD2, CH-DCD3 are available for registered individuals or teams who have completed all division titles a second or third time throughout their handler's active registration. (See repeating Division Titles page 18)

**Individual Champion** – One handler and one dog who have earned titles by completing all divisions.

**Team Champion** – One handler performing with any number of dogs registered as a "team" who has contributed by performing and having earned points toward titles in which the handler has completed all divisions. (The handler does not have to be an owner of the dog but the dog may not be registered within the Dogs Can Dance Challenge™ Database to any other team or handler.) A dog who is deceased may be registered to a handler and be awarded points for a performance as long as the actual video footage has not been submitted to any other freestyle organization and is the sole property of the handler.

## Classes within Each Division

The handler has the choice to submit their performance in any class where they match eligibility. For example, a senior dog may perform in the “Open” class or the “Honor” class. Any dog may utilize the “Audition Class”.

**Audition Class** – The audition class serves the same purpose as an adjudicated match. The performance is scored according to the guidelines of the corresponding division and level. Suggestions for improvement and scores are made by Artistic Director, Owner of Dogs Can Dance, or another appointed evaluator. No points are actually awarded in the Audition Class. Rewarding is allowed as long as the continuity of the performance remains intact. The objective of the Audition Class is for the handler to gain the understanding of the weaknesses within their performance that could use improvement along with the strengths to be capitalized upon in future performances. The cost of an entry in the Audition Class is the same as the entry in any other class. Audition performances may be submitted for the event DVD or may remain private per the handler’s request.

**Junior Class** - The Junior Class allows for the performance of a dog under the age of 18 months or a handler under the age of 18 years. The objective of this class is to encourage participation and training of the next upcoming freestyle dogs and handlers. Rewarding is permitted in this class as long as the rewards are hidden and not seen by the dog or the judge until rewarding takes place. Only five points may be awarded in each judging category for a total of 30 points maximum per judge. The points awarded in the Junior Class will carry over into future classes within the division level entered. For example, if a handler earns a total of 60 points with a puppy, those points count toward qualifying at the level entered. Additional performances will be needed to complete the qualifying score of 100 to earn that level. *This class will be scored on a limited basis with a total possible of 5 points per category.*

**Honor Class** – The Honor Class allows for the performance of a senior dog, a dog recovering from illness, or a disabled dog. The Honor Class also allows for the performance of a handler who is a senior (65 years or older), a handler recovering from illness, or a disabled handler. The objective of the Honor Class is to encourage creating and training freestyle performances throughout the lifetime of a dog and handler despite limitations. Rewarding is permitted in this class as long as the rewards are hidden and not seen by the dog or the judge until rewarding takes place. Props may be utilized in this class as long as the focus is always to showcase the dog. Full points may be awarded in each judging category for a total of 60 points maximum per judge. A dog or handler performing within the honor class is always eligible to enter Open Class in the future. *Certificates of Recognition are awarded for any Honor Class performance.*

**Open Class** - The Open Class is for all adult dogs and handlers. Rewards of any kind are not permitted on the handler’s body. The objective of this class is judging the polished performance of the dog and handler with a maximum score of 60 points possible per judge. Qualifying for the level entered is possible with one performance. The maximum total combined score possible is 180 points. Please review the judging criteria for each different division and level within the chosen division. The performances from the Open Class are to be considered a tribute to the performing dog and should be created with this goal in mind.

**Examples of “team” dogs entering different classes** - Once Team Gamet has passed the Entry Level with any one of the dogs, Team Gamet is welcome to submit a routine for the lowest level within any division. Judy, the handler might choose Alena, her Junior Class puppy to be her partner in a Classical Freestyle Beginner Level performance. Judy and Alena scored a combined total of 65 points out of a possible 90. Judy then submits a different performance in the next Titling Event using her Honor Class dog, Luc, in an attempt to finish the Beginning Level. Judy and Luc scored a combined score of 80, so the team has now earned over 100 points and has qualified at the Beginning Level. The next Titling Event, Judy has decided to submit a performance for Anabelle, her strongest freestyle dog because they are now at the Intermediate Level of the Classical Freestyle Division. Anabelle earns 126 points on that new performance. Team Gamet now has qualified at the Intermediate Level. By now, Alena has matured into an adult dog and her performances are improving. Judy is going to use Alena in her first Advanced Classical Freestyle performance. Judy and Alena score a combined total of 95 for that Performance. If Judy can earn 5 more points in a performance with any of her dogs at the Advanced Level, the entire team will have earned the Classical Freestyle Title of DCD-CF. Note: Not all dogs included on the team need to be used in all divisions, the handler has the ability to pick and choose from the dog’s strengths and abilities, performing with the dog that would give the team their best advantage.

## **Multi Dog and Brace Performances**

Handlers performing with two or more dogs are welcome in the Dogs Can Dance Challenge™. The handler has the option to submit the performance in their choice of class that any of the participating dogs qualify in. For example, when showing a brace of an Open Class dog and a Junior Class dog, the handler has the choice to enter the performance in the Open Class or the Junior Class. The performance will be judged according to the judging guidelines of the indicated class. Each dog must perform all requirements of the level.

## **Divisions (descriptions)**

All participants will qualify at the Entry Level prior to submitting a performance in any division. Once they have qualified at the Entry Level, they may enter the lowest class within the chosen division. Any division may be entered. For example, if entering the “Entertainment Division”, handler will enter Opening Act level. If entering the “Classical Freestyle Division”, the handler will enter the Beginner’s level. Any music genre may be selected when entering the Music Interpretation Division.

*All divisions may be offered at Live or Live Invitational Dogs Can Dance Challenge® Events except the Featured Presentation level of Entertainment Division due to the video editing requirement and background scenery within that level.*

## Dogs Can Dance Challenge® Divisions

### Classical Freestyle Division

Movement for “movement’s sake” is Dance in the Dog World

Note: The handler is the supporting role, moving with natural grace and flow. The handler’s arm movements and body movements should complement and enhance the dog’s performance. At no time should the handler’s movements overshadow the dog or draw the viewer’s eye off of the dog. The handler’s attire should be complimentary to the dog, respectful of the dog, and enhancing the dog’s body lines. A flat buckle collar, no collar, or front fastening harness is the only acceptable attire for the dog. Tags will be removed from the collar. Props are only allowed when performing within the Honor Class. An Axial movement phrase is required at the beginning and intermediate levels and will serve as contrast to the team’s floor pattern movement phrases. The acceptable ring size is 40 X 50 Feet, or 30 X 40 Feet. Markers will be present at each corner and center of each side and visible in the performance. See *definitions for ring dimensions for exemption*. Below is a listing of the levels within the Classical Freestyle Division:

**Beginner Level** – Performance duration 1:30 – 2:15.

The Beginner Level challenges the dog/handler team to create a basic performance that meets several criteria:

- 1) Showcases the dog’s strengths and willingness to work as a team
- 2) Clearly shows traveling floor pattern design
- 3) Shows clean positioning when in Heel, Right, and Center
- 4) Some axial work will be demonstrated (more information is available in The Next Step: Beginning Freestyle Program, lesson 3 “Locomotor vs. Axial”) Examples of axial work are kicks, spins, circles, any movement phrase that does not travel from point A to point B)
- 5) Synchronized moving as a team demonstrating Heel work, Right work, and Center work is required

**Intermediate Level** – Performance duration 2:00 – 2:30.

The Intermediate Level challenges the dog/handler team to create a performance that demonstrates more depth in choreography. Some contrast is required at the Intermediate Level. (See Moving Forward: Intermediate Handler’s Program, lesson 5 “Using Contrast to Create Interest”) The Intermediate performance should meet the following criteria:

- 1) Showcases the dog’s strengths and willingness to work as a team
- 2) Choreography that utilizes traveling floor patterns as well as axial movement phrases
- 3) Choreography clearly shows elements of contrast in height, distance, and/or dynamics
- 4) Choreography clearly relates to the musicality of the accompaniment

**Advanced Level** – Performance duration 2:30 – 3:30.

The Advanced Level challenges the dog/handler team to create a performance that stands alone as a true legacy of the dog and the relationship of the team. The choreography and performance should be strong enough to tell your dog's story without hearing the music. The accompaniment will provide for some contrast as well as the movement. (See Moving Forward: Intermediate Handler's Program, lesson six, The Fourth Dimension) The Advanced performance should meet the following criteria:

- 1) Showcases the dog's strengths and willingness to work as a team
- 2) The viewing of the movement phrases are clearly considered when selecting a direction to present the moves to paint the most artistic picture possible
- 3) Aesthetic choices will clearly be made when creating the movement phrases. Was the dog honored by these choices?
- 4) Each movement phrase will demonstrate precision in position and movement
- 5) The cueing of the handler's body should be related to the path of the dog, enhancing the dog's performance.
- 6) A pace change will be present within one of the movement phrases
- 7) The use of contrast will be apparent within the choreography and accompaniment

Once a handler and dog(s) have completed the Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced Level, they have earned the Classical Freestyle Title (DCD-CF)

## **Entertainment Division**

The Entertainment Division is the creative outlet for those who desire to use the art and sport of canine freestyle purely for the entertainment of others. As in all of the divisions of the Dogs Can Dance Challenge®, the handler is the supporting role and should at no time overshadow the dog's performance. Video may be recorded at a live event during an entertainment opportunity as long as written permission from the hosting entity is included. For example, if a video of a performance of a therapy dog team is submitted from a live demonstration, a letter of permission from the facility would be required. The performance does not have to be in the presence of an audience but may be filmed in private with the intent to entertain via video. The handler's attire should fit the theme of the routine while still enhancing the dog. The dog attire should be tasteful if attire is part of the theme. However, please note that the dog is never required to wear attire. Tags should be removed unless required during a therapy dog live performance. Video filmed during a therapy team performance during a visit requiring tags should be labeled as such so no points will be deducted for lack of removal of tags. Props employed during the performance are accepted in all classes within this division. No actual ring space limits are required. Below is a listing of the two levels within the Entertainment Division:

**Opening Act:** Performance Duration 1:00 to 2:30.

Opening Act is the beginner level of the Entertainment Division. The Opening Act level challenges the handler to create a performance for the purpose of entertaining the public or specific target audience. A theme will be present throughout the performance. This "theme" may be in the form of music, character, handler attire, or audience participation. (See The Next Step: Beginning Freestyle Performance, Lesson Five "Opening and Closing Pictures")

Opening Act will meet the following criteria:

- 1) Showcases the dog's strengths and willingness to work as a team
- 2) Display a coherent theme throughout the performance
- 3) Will include some Heel work, Right work, Center work
- 4) One or more movement phrases will consist of Axial work and will be scored on creativity
- 5) Opening and Closing pictures relate to the overall theme

**Feature Presentation:** Performance Duration 1:30 to 3:00.

Feature Presentation is the Intermediate/Advanced level for the Entertainment Division. The Feature Presentation level challenges the handler to create a freestyle music video. Editing is encouraged, along with selecting a background setting that relates to the theme being presented or other special effects.

Feature Presentation will meet the following criteria:

- 1) Showcases the dog's strengths and willingness to work as a team
- 2) Displays a coherent theme throughout the performance
- 3) Opening and Closing pictures relate to the overall theme
- 4) Editing of the video by zooming, cross fading, splicing, or any other video editing skill is permitted and encouraged
- 5) Handler's attire should complement the dog and the theme
- 6) Special effects are applied so the end product should evoke an emotional impact within the viewer

Once the handler and dog(s) have earned both the Opening Act and Feature Presentation levels in the Entertainment Division, will have earned the Entertainment Title (DCD-Ent)

## Music Interpretation Division

Performance Duration 1:30 – 3:00

The goal of the Music Interpretation division is to present the handler with an even greater choreographic challenge. The handler will select three different genres of music from the provided list and to create three unique performances which will showcase and honor their dog while interpreting the style of the music through the choreography. Props are only allowed within the Honor Class. All ring requirements are the same as Classical Freestyle Division. When the handler has accumulated 100 points through the chosen genre, the handler then proceeds to the second chosen genre. When the handler and dog(s) have performed and successfully accumulated 100 point for three different genres, the handler has earned the Music Interpretation Title.

One performance will be created from the “International / World” genre. The other two performances may be from any acceptable genre. If a performance from any selected genre scores less than 100 points, the handler has two options:

1. The handler may make improvements and re-submit the improved performance from the same genre in an attempt to earn the minimum 100 points needed to qualify with that performance from the chosen genre. The performance will be submitted in a future titling event.
2. The performer may opt to change songs within the genre and submit a new performance to a future titling event in order to accumulate the balance of 100 points to earn that level.

Genre options include, but are not limited to):

- International -**1 performance routine required.** (any international style of your choice. Some examples but not limited to : Native American, Celtic, Arabic, Scottish, Taiko Drumming, any nationally recognized style)
- Waltz
- Swing/Jive
- Blues
- Jazz
- Salsa
- Foxtrot
- Quick Step
- Big Band
- Blue Grass
- Zydeco
- Rhumba
- Paso Doble
- Tango

The handler's movements may or may not reflect the style of the music, however, if they do reflect the music style, the dog should never be over shadowed. No additional points are given for footwork by the handler that is associated with the "dance form" of that genre. Note: it is the music that is being interpreted, not the dance form.

The handler's attire may or may not reflect the style of music, however, if it does reflect the music style, it should not distract the eye from the performance and glory of the dog, but rather enhances the showcasing of the dog and is respectful. Dog's may wear a flat buckle collar or front fastening harness, no additional attire in this division. No props are allowed in this division.

Music Interpretation Performances will meet the following criteria:

- 1) Showcases the dog's strengths and willingness to work as a team
- 2) Music matches the natural gait of the dog
- 3) Movement phrases reflect the style of the music
- 4) Movement phrases show clarity of design and precision
- 5) The choreographed movement phrases are clearly phrased with the music

The following three levels are offered within the Music Interpretation Division:

**Frequent Flyer** – This level is awarded when a handler has earned their first 100 points in any genre.

**International Flyer** – This level is awarded when a handler has earned their second 100 points in a second separate genre.

**World Traveler** – This level is awarded when the handler has completed their third separate genre and final qualifying performance. Once World Traveler is awarded, the handler and dog(s) have earned the Music Interpretation Title (DCD-MI)

## **Dogs Can Dance Challenge® Awards**

**Entry Level** - Certificates of completion will be awarded to each handler who completes the Entry level. This handler is entitled to enter the lowest level of any Division in the Dogs Can Dance Challenge®.

**Division Levels** - Certificate and ribbons will be awarded for completion of any division level.

**Division Titles** – Certificate and rosette will be awarded for the completion of any Division.

**Repeating Division Titles** - Additional titles may be earned for repeating any division. For example, repeating the Entertainment Division will result in earning a DCD-Ent2, repeating the Music Interpretation Division would result in earning a DCD-MI2, repeating the Classical Freestyle Division would result in earning a DCD-CF2. Unlimited titles are possible. The following requirements apply:

Classical Freestyle Division – Earn 300 additional points, at least 300 points must be earned at the advanced level. The additional 100 points may be earned at any level.

Entertainment Division – Earn 200 additional points, at least 100 points must be earned at the Feature Presentation level with the additional 100 points in the Opening Act, or all 200 points in Featured Presentation.

Musical Interpretation Division – Earn 300 additional points in at least two different genres. You may select music styles from previous genres used in prior titles.

**Championship** – A trophy will be awarded to any individual or team who has completed all three division titles. Any handler who has earned the DCD-CH may repeat all divisions; the handler would earn a DCD-CH2. Unlimited Championships are possible.

### **Entry fees for all performances-**

The fee for submitting a performance at the Entry Level is \$25 in U.S. Currency. Once the handler has completed the Entry Level successfully, the cost of all future submitted performances for any class at any level within any division is \$32 in U.S. currency. *Fees are subject to change at the posting of the premium list of the next upcoming event.*

Payments should be made payable to Dogs Can Dance. Acceptable forms of payment are checks, hand delivered cash, Visa, Mastercard, or by Paypal along with the accompanying performance entry form, DVD, or video clips.

Please note: If you are providing credit card information, check, or money order, mailing your entry is advised.

The points accumulated from the total score of your performance will be entered into the Dogs Can Dance Challenge® database and will be tracked toward completion of the division level entered.

## Video and Live Events

Instructions for both video or live events along with premium lists for participation in upcoming video or live events, will be available on the Dogs Can Dance/Challenge website approximately two months prior to the event. **Note: Handlers may only enter one performance per division per event.** If a tie for Highest Scoring Performance results, the scores from all five judges will be combined. The highest resulting score will become the Highest Scoring Performance of the event. In the event that over fifteen video entries are submitted in any one titling event, two judging panels may be used. When two judging panels are scoring, the highest scoring performance from each panel will be additionally scored by the other panel of judges. The total of all 10 scores will determine the highest scoring performance.

### Video Submissions & Tips–

The video may be provided as a DVD along with the entry form and entry fees. A video file of the performance may be e-mailed using a service such as “Hightail”, YouTube link, or “Vimeo.com” along with the entry form attached. Your signature will be required to verify that rewards were not present within the ring or on the body of the handler performing in the Open Class. Each handler performing in the Dogs Can Dance Challenge® will receive a DVD of the collection of submitted routines, their scores and Judge’s comments, and list of awards for that event. Handlers submitting Audition Class entries will have the choice to have their routines represented on the Titling Event DVD.

All video entries are the property of the handler with written permission for use through Dogs Can Dance®. Music rights are the responsibility of the registered handler.

The handler and dog(s) will enter the performance space, introduce themselves and their dog, the Division, Level (or MI genre), and the Class that the team is performing in only. This introduction must not exceed 15 seconds. Once the performance is completed the handler will thank the dog first, and then thank the viewer for watching.

Introduction Example: My name is Judy Gamet, and this is my dog, Bella. We are representing Team Gamet. We’ll be performing a tango in the Music Interpretation Division, Honor Class. (After the performance is over, Judy will thank Bella, then turn and thank the audience/judges and exit the ring). See individual premium lists for compatible video format options. In the event that the dog is not alive or present when preparing the video, either a spoken introduction and thank you, or a written on screen introduction and thank you will be acceptable. However, the purpose is to acknowledge your canine partner above all else.

**All 8 ring markers must be visible in the performance except for Entertainment Division.** Panning the ring prior to entering the performance area is acceptable. It is advisable when allowing the camera to follow the dog and handler, to also include the ring markers in the view as a reference for the judges.

## Scoring

### Judges Scoring

Five judges will score each titling event. The highest and lowest judge's scores will be discarded. The remaining three judge's totals will be added together to create the performance total score. When an accumulated score of one hundred points in any level has been earned, you have qualified for the title at that level. When titles for all levels of any division have been earned, the title for that division will be awarded.

### Scoring Deductions –

When submitting a video performance, it will be assumed that the quality of the performance represents the team's highest level of ability unless submitted to the "auditions class" where feedback for improvement is the goal. Because of the ability to re-film before submitting a performance, the following scoring deductions will be upheld:

**Barking** – Dogs Can Dance Challenge® takes into consideration two different attitudes of vocalization by the dog. If the barking is a natural expression of joy and does not interrupt the flow of the performance, it will not cause a deduction in the scoring of the performance. If, on the other hand, the barking is determined to be one of "protest or lack of patience by the dog", or from obvious overstimulation, a five point deduction for every session of excessive barking will be applied to the team from each judge. If the barking halts the dog's performance in any manner, the same deduction will result. These deductions will be applied in the scoring of teamwork.

**Leaving the Ring** - Dogs Can Dance Challenge® will deduct five points per judge if the dog exits the indicated performance area once the actual performance music has started.

**Music Length** – The music must fit within the time guidelines. No leeway of time is permitted. Time begins at the start of the first audible note of the song and ends with the last audible note.

**Music Vocals** – If a judge feels the wording content within the song is inappropriate and does not honor the dog, the routine will not receive a score by that judge. Note: Judge's discretion will be permitted.

**Handler Corrections** - Any physical or verbal correction by the handler that inadvertently affects the performance of the dog, will result in a ten point deduction from each judge per each incident "perceived". This deduction will be applied to the handler's teamwork score. More than two "perceived" handler corrections will result in a zero applied to the handler's score from each judge.

When handling "On Leash", a tight leash without a handler's correction will be a 1 point deduction per incident from each judge. This will be applied to the technical training score.

**Use of Rewards as a Lure** - No food or toys may be visible during the performance except when rewarding briefly in the Junior Freestyle Class or the Honor Class. *Food may be hidden in the mouth or pockets in the two above mentioned classes.* The use of rewards as lures will result in a deduction of five points per incident in the Junior Class or the Honor Class per judge in the handler's scoring.

**Lack of Control of the dog** – A dog who appears to be out of control will be scored as a five point deduction for each incident per judge in the technical training score.

**Pauses of Movement** – Pauses are a great choreography asset, however, any pause lasting more than five seconds where neither the dog or the handler is moving, whether planned or unplanned, will result in a 1 point deduction per additional second over five seconds from each judge. This deduction will apply to the artistry/choreography score.

**Inappropriate Attire or Movements** – Attire over shadowing the dog, except in the Entertainment Class, will result in a five point deduction per judge. Movements by the handler that are determined as unflattering or not honoring to the dog, in any division will result in a five point deduction per judge. Note: Judge's discretion will be permitted.

**Neglect of following guideline procedures** – Any neglect to follow the written guidelines set forth in this guide, live or video performance instructions, or premium list, whether intentional and unintentional will result in a deduction of 5 points per judge. (Example: Neglect to introduce/honor the judges or thanking your dog post performance)

*Note: These guidelines may be updated. Be sure to download the newest version of the guide prior to creating and submitting any performance in the Dogs Can Dance Challenge®.*

### **Contacting Dogs Can Dance®**

General Questions? Email Judy, [ChallengeInfo@DogsCanDance.com](mailto:ChallengeInfo@DogsCanDance.com)  
Registration questions? Email Denise, [ChallengeRegistrations@DogsCanDance.com](mailto:ChallengeRegistrations@DogsCanDance.com)  
Submission questions? Email Judy, [ChallengeSubmissions@DogsCanDance.com](mailto:ChallengeSubmissions@DogsCanDance.com)

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