

US ALL STAR FEDERATION

DANCE AGE GRID - EARLY RELEASE

2026 - 2027

For the Member Term: June 1st, 2026 - May 31st, 2027

Updated February 25, 2026

Adjustments in **RED** indicate a change/addition since the previous season (2025-2026)

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DANCE AGE GRID

USASF Member Event Producers (EP) host USASF Sanctioned Competitions with All Star divisions. EPs must follow the **USASF Sanctioned Competition Classifications (CLICK HERE)**

This age grid provides a “menu” of All Star divisions that may be offered by an EP. They are not required to offer every division listed.

This document contains the division offerings for the 2026–2027 season in the following **tiers**:

- All Star Premier
- All Star Intermediate
- All Star Novice
- All Star DanceABILITIES Exceptional Athletes (formerly Special Needs)

ATHLETE AGE

Athlete division eligibility is determined by their BIRTH YEAR. Some divisions have top or bottom ages that are split years. Page 11 is a grid that provides a visual reference indicating what birth year is eligible for which division. Pay close attention to the columns where a birth year has been split.

ADULT ATHLETES

- An athlete born on or before 5/31/08 (athletes who are 18 or older before **June 1st**).
- Eligibility requirements completed during the membership application process:
 - ◊ Background check
 - ◊ Adult Athlete Specific Abuse Prevention Training
- See page 10 for Adult Athletes in the EA division(s).

ROSTERING GUIDELINES

- The USASF Member Clubs must associate their USASF Official Roster for all teams attending a USASF Sanctioned Competition in All Star Divisions (except for All Star Exhibition and/or All Star Event Trial teams that are composed of non-member athletes).
- Only those athletes on a roster may take the floor with the team. The athletes who perform a routine must remain the same from start to finish and **MAY NOT** be replaced by another athlete at **any** time during the performance.
- A Recreation (Rec) team that competes or performs at **any** USASF Sanctioned competition may not represent a USASF Member Club.
- Athletes may be rostered in a competitive tier(s) and Novice.
- **Crossover Athletes:** An athlete may be rostered in as many routines in which they meet the age grid requirements.
 - ◊ Additional Considerations:
 - An athlete from one club location may compete at another club location at the same event as long as they do not compete against themselves.
 - An athlete may not crossover from one club to another at the same event.
 - An athlete may cross from cheer to dance without limitation.
- An EP may choose to be more restrictive but may not be less restrictive than the limitations outlined herein.

MOVING TIERS

- Athletes **may be** rostered in **different competitive tiers** as long as they abide by the age requirements in all divisions in which they compete AND follow the required guidelines below. NOTE: **Competitive tiers** are: Premier (including International divisions) and Intermediate.
 - ◊ Dancer(s) may compete in both INTERMEDIATE and Non-INTERMEDIATE categories with the following limitations:
 - They may not compete in routines in the same category. (i.e. Dancer(s) may not compete in Youth Hip Hop and Youth INTERMEDIATE Hip Hop)
 - They may not compete in routines in the same category in a different age division. (i.e. Dancer(s) may not compete in Youth INTERMEDIATE Pom and Junior Pom)
 - Jazz & Contemporary/Lyrical ONLY: Dancer(s) may not crossover and compete in INTERMEDIATE and Non-INTERMEDIATE performances in the Jazz & Contemporary/Lyrical categories. (i.e. Dancer(s) may not compete in Youth INTERMEDIATE Cont/Lyrical and Youth Jazz)
- Dancer(s) may progress from an INTERMEDIATE to a Non-INTERMEDIATE Team in the same category style over time but may not first compete on a Non-INTERMEDIATE team and later compete on an INTERMEDIATE team in the same style. (Clarification: dancers may only move forward in levels of progression, not backward).
 - ◊ Exception: When only one team is registered in an INTERMEDIATE Division Category at an event the team may move to the Non-INTERMEDIATE division.
- Competitive Tier Athletes may also select the Novice tier.
- Athletes are **permitted to change competitive tiers** without approval from the USASF if they have not yet taken the floor with a team at a USASF Sanctioned Competition.
- If an athlete has taken the floor on a competitive team and the club wants to move the athlete from Intermediate to Premier or Premier to Intermediate permanently during the same season, said club must request approval from the USASF [*email: support@usaf.net*]. Approval **may** be granted for an individual athlete, one time, and the athlete **cannot** return to the prior tier during the season. Exception: Temporary Athlete Replacement from different tier.

TEMPORARY ATHLETE REPLACEMENT FROM A DIFFERENT COMPETITIVE TIER

This section outlines what is permitted:

1. An athlete is unable to attend an event on short or no prior notice;
2. The only option is to replace the missing athlete with an age eligible USASF member athlete from a different competitive tier; and
3. The athlete used to replace the missing athlete wants to return to their original team (in a different competitive tier).
 - ◊ The replacement will be considered for short notice situations only. Typically, when 48 hours or less notice is given and adjustments must be made to allow the team to still compete at a USASF Sanctioned Competition. This addresses situations that may arise, such as injury, illness or circumstances that were unplanned or unpredictable (such as accidents, family emergencies, etc.) and the team does not have time to rework the routine.
 - ◊ The club must request approval from the USASF [*email: support@usaf.net*]
 - ◊ Not all requests are granted.
 - ◊ No more than 3 replacement athletes may be from a different tier for one team at the same event.

ALL STAR EXHIBITION PERFORMANCES FOR USASF MEMBER CLUBS

Exhibition Performances are for All Star teams that will not be scored, adjudicated or ranked.

- Must follow the requirements outlined in the **USASF Sanctioned Competition Classifications (CLICK HERE)**
- USASF Member Clubs may have teams exhibition at USASF Sanctioned Competitions with team participants that are not athlete members of the USASF.
- All coaches and non-coaching club representatives must be eligible members of the USASF for the current season in the appropriate member category to access restricted areas with the All Star Exhibition team.
- Participants that are not members of the USASF and who do not appear on an Official USASF Roster associated with a USASF Sanctioned Competition are not covered under the Member Accident Insurance Program.

ALL STAR EVENT TRIAL

An All Star team composed of athletes who are not members of the USASF that will compete in a USASF division at **one USASF Sanctioned Competition** during the season and must fit the USASF division requirement(s).

- Must follow the requirements outlined in the **USASF Sanctioned Competition Classifications (CLICK HERE)**
- Event Trial teams may not compete in Worlds Divisions at bid-giving events.
- Participants on these teams are not members of the USASF and do not appear on an Official USASF Roster associated with a USASF Sanctioned Competition therefore they are not covered under the Member Accident Insurance Program.

USASF DANCE CATEGORIES

JAZZ

A Jazz routine can encompass any range of jazz movement including traditional jazz, commercial jazz, musical theater, jazz funk or stylized hard-hitting jazz. Movement is crisp and/or aggressive in approach and can include moments of softness while complementing musicality. Emphasis is placed on style, body alignment, extension, control, uniformity, technical elements, and communication.

POM

A Pom routine contains important characteristics such as strong pom technique (clean, precise and sharp motions), synchronization, visual effects and may incorporate purposeful Pom Elements (i.e. pom passes, jump sequences, leaps/turns, kick lines, etc). Poms should be used throughout the routine. Inadequate use of poms may also affect the panel judges' overall impression and/or score of the routine.

HIP HOP

A Hip Hop routine can incorporate any street style movement that has evolved from the hip hop culture. Emphasis is placed on the execution of authentic style(s), originality, control, musicality, intricacy, uniformity and may incorporate purposeful elements and skills.

CONTEMPORARY/LYRICAL

A Contemporary or Lyrical routine uses organic, expressive, pedestrian and/or traditional modern and/or ballet vocabulary as it complements the lyric, mood and/or rhythmic value of the music. Emphasis is placed on control, expressive movement, dynamics, alignment, use of breath, uniformity, communication and may incorporate purposeful elements and skills.

KICK

A Kick routine emphasizes control, height, uniformity, extension, alignment, placement, proper preparation and hook up/arm connection, timing, and creativity of a variety of kick series and patterns. Kicks should be performed throughout the routine while maintaining stamina. Inadequate utilization of kicks may also affect the panel judges' overall impression and/or score of the routine.

VARIETY

A Variety routine must incorporate a blend of at least two or more dance styles listed in the USASF Categories. (Jazz, Pom, Hip Hop, Contemporary/Lyrical and/or Kick) All styles will compete together in this category. The style of dance performed will determine which "category" rules a team will follow in the appropriate age division.

USASF DANCE TIERS

NOVICE

Novice designation is for new and emerging athletes/programs/teams seeking experience with dance performance and evaluation.

INTERMEDIATE

Intermediate designation is offered for emerging teams and dancers and should be scored on a traditional scoresheet.

PREMIER

Term used to differentiate between the Intermediate and Novice tiers. The division will be referred to as Premier or simply by the Division and Category name. Example: Premier Senior Pom or Senior Pom.

COMBINING AND SPLITTING GUIDELINES

The USASF provides recommended guidelines in the best interest of providing a competitive environment. Whenever possible, USASF recommends there be at least 3 teams in any given division and level.

It is recommended that EPs share their combining/splitting policy before teams register if different than the USASF Recommendations below.

THE EP MAY NOT COMBINE:	THE EP MAY NOT SPLIT:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tiers (Novice, Intermediate, Premier tiers, etc.)• Different Classifications of Teams (School, Rec, Studio, All Star)• Different Age Divisions• Worlds Divisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The DanceAbilities division• Routines in the Novice tier

PREMIER TIER

The USASF provides guidelines for COMBINING and/or SPLITTING divisions in the best interest of providing a competitive environment. Whenever possible, there should be at least three (3) teams in any given division category. There may be instances, however, where a division may only have one or two teams. The guidelines listed herein will provide the basis for how this will be accomplished. An Event Producer may choose to follow these recommended guidelines, or they may choose to split and combine All Star divisions that work best for their event(s).

REQUIREMENTS

- Dancers may not compete against themselves.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Clubs will not compete against themselves
- Event Producers split by size and/or gender dependent upon which split will create the deepest competition for all teams entered in a particular division/category while striving for no fewer than three (3) teams remain in a particular division category.
- Teams composed of all male dancers should be combined with the coed divisions.
- Tiny will not be split by category unless:
 - ◊ There are two teams from the same program registered in the same Age Division. (Example: Tiny Jazz and Tiny Pom teams from the same program will not compete against each other. However, if a program chooses to register two teams in the same Age, Team Size and Category, the teams will compete against each other.)
 - ◊ Event Producers may split Tiny Divisions within the same category into Small and Large (as outlined in grid) if there are 10 or more teams in the division before the split occurs.
 - ◊ There are three or more teams in the same category style, and at least two remaining performances in any of the other category styles.
- Event Producers may create an "All Styles" category to combine routines of different styles within the same age division when fewer than three teams are registered in a particular category. If combined, all Category styles (Jazz, Pom, Hip Hop, Contemporary/Lyrical, Kick or Variety), in each Division, (Tiny, Mini, Youth, Junior, Senior or Open), may compete together in this category. (Example: When one team is registered in Junior Jazz and two teams are registered in Junior Pom, the event producer may combine Junior Jazz and Junior Pom to create Junior All Styles)
 - ◊ Recommended Exceptions:
 - Categories with 3 or more teams registered in a particular age division will not combine with other categories into an All Styles category. Example: If there are 3 teams in Junior Jazz, 2 in Junior Pom, 2 in Junior Hip Hop and 1 in Junior Kick, the event producer could combine the Pom, Hip Hop and Kick teams into the Junior All Styles Division/Category and leave Junior Jazz as a separate Division/Category.
 - Categories should not be combined into an All Styles category if it means that a program will compete against itself. (Example: Junior Jazz and Junior Pom teams from the same program will not be combined into the All Styles category if that would cause them to compete against themselves, unless the program is agreeable to such a combination. If a program chooses to register two teams in the same Age, Team Size and Category, the teams will compete against each other.)
 - ◊ NOTE: The "All Styles" category is not a Primary USASF or Worlds Bid category.

WORLDS DIVISIONS

REQUIREMENTS

- Open routines will not be split into Small and Large
- Dancers in the Junior (U16) and Open Divisions vying for a bid to the Dance Worlds must follow all IASF age grid guidelines. <https://thedanceworlds.net/scoring/>

INTERMEDIATE TIER

Event producers may or may not choose to split divisions in the interest of competition. The splits below are OPTIONAL and may be applied in any order. Event Producers may choose to implement any or all of the additional splits. The INTERMEDIATE designation is offered for emerging teams and dancers and should be scored on a traditional scoresheet.

REQUIREMENTS

- Members must follow the INTERMEDIATE crossover rules (See page 4)
- INTERMEDIATE teams must follow the USASF Dance General Rules and USASF INTERMEDIATE Dance Rules.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- All performances, regardless of style, in the INTERMEDIATE division categories may be judged against each other.
- Event Producers may split INTERMEDIATE routines into separate Categories (INTERMEDIATE Jazz, INTERMEDIATE Pom, INTERMEDIATE Hip Hop, INTERMEDIATE Contemporary/Lyrical, INTERMEDIATE Kick or INTERMEDIATE Variety).

NOVICE TIER

NOVICE designation is for new and emerging athletes/programs/teams seeking experience with dance performance and evaluation.

REQUIREMENTS

- NOVICE will only be evaluated on a rating system and not scored/ranked against other teams.
- NOVICE teams are gender-neutral and will not be split based on gender (novice teams will not be classified as coed, all male, etc.).
- All Category styles in each Age Division must be combined in NOVICE.
- NOVICE Teams must follow the USASF Dance General Rules and USASF INTERMEDIATE & NOVICE Dance Rules, please note the following in particular:
- Routine may not exceed 1:30 (there is no time minimum).

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Recommended ratings are Superior (Highest), Excellent, and Outstanding. Please check with your specific event producer for their rating system.
- NOVICE can be offered at both 1 and 2-day events. HOWEVER, if offered at 2-day events, NOVICE divisions will perform ONE TIME ONLY.
- An Event Producer may offer a team of less than 4 athletes to perform, as long as they meet the age restrictions of the Age Grid. Prior approval from the Event Producer is required.

DANCEABILITIES

A team comprised of dancers with a disability. The USASF follows the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), stating: An individual with a disability is defined by the ADA as a person who has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities, a person who has a history or record of such an impairment, or a person who is perceived by others as having such an impairment. *Teams must follow DanceABILITIES Rules.

PRIMARY AGE DIVISIONS

DIVISIONS ARE LISTED BY:

Age > Team Size (if applicable) > Gender (if applicable) > Category

***Coed:** female(s) & male(s). Ex: Senior Coed Hip Hop

All Male: 0 females, Ex: Open Male Hip Hop

All Female: 0 males, Ex: Senior Hip Hop (do not include gender in title)

*Both male and female dancers must perform in order for a routine to be considered Coed. Dancers who make up a coed composition must be rostered AND take the competition floor.

PRIMARY AGE GRID (NON-WORLDS DIVISIONS)

Division	Eligibility by Birth Year	Gender	Team Size
Tiny NOVICE	2019 - 2023	Female/Male	4 - 14 (Small) 15+ (Large)
Tiny	2019 - 2022	Female/Male	4 - 14 (Small) 15+ (Large)
Mini	2016 - 2021	Female/Male	4 - 14 (Small) 15+ (Large)
Youth	2013 - 2018	Female/Male	4 - 14 (Small) 15+ (Large)
Junior*	2010 - 2016	Female/Male	4 - 14 (Small) 15+ (Large)
Senior	6/1/2007 - 2014	Female/Male	4 - 14 (Small) 15+ (Large)
Open**	12/31/2011 & Before	Female/Male	6 - 30 (No Small and Large)
DanceABILITIES	2021 & Before	Female/Male	No min/max

PRIMARY AGE GRID (WORLDS DIVISIONS)

Division	Eligibility by Birth Year	Gender	Team Size
Junior* (U16)	2010 - 2015	Female/Male	6 - 30
Senior	6/1/2007 - 2014	Female/Male	4 - 14 (Small) 15+ (Large)
Open**	12/31/2011 & Before	Female/Male	6 - 30

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

Qualifying USASF & IASF World Bid Divisions & Categories for the upcoming Dance Worlds can be found online at www.thedanceworlds.net. **Amendment for 2026-27 Senior Kick Division: Male Dancers are allowed in Senior Kick.**

AGE REQUIREMENTS

The USASF recognizes the concern with fielding teams of a broad age range and highly recommends that individual programs be vigilant in monitoring participants of various ages on the same team and that, whenever possible, a team's composition is made up of participants of similar ages.

- Athletes must be born on or between the dates listed in the "Eligibility by Birth Year" column to be eligible for that division.
- Any team, from any country, may enter any USASF Division as long as they abide by the age requirements of that division.
- Junior teams that submit to qualify and compete at The Dance Worlds®: Athletes who will turn 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, or 17 in 2027 will be eligible. Be vigilant when submitting for a Junior Bid to calculate ages correctly.

**Open Divisions: The NOVICE and INTERMEDIATE Tiers are not available to Open Division teams.

PLEASE NOTE THE FOLLOWING:

Exceptional Adult Athlete (EAA) & BG Screenings Policy for 25–26 Season (PROVISIONAL STATUS):

- USASF will not require background screenings for Membership Eligibility of Exceptional Athletes 18 and over (EAA). However, should an EAA also apply for a USASF Coach Membership, USASF will require a background screening. The decision to conduct background screenings for EAA will be up to each Member Club that chooses to create/host EA teams. The Club will then be responsible for any decisions related to participation. This is consistent with the policy outlined by Special Olympics in keeping decision-making at the local level. This also keeps with USASF policy whereby Clubs may have policies/requirements that are more restrictive than those of USASF, but never less restrictive.

AGE GRID: QUICK REFERENCE TABLE

Division	Athlete Birth Year ('X' indicates eligible for that division)																		
	2006 & Older	2007		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
		1/01 - 5/31	6/01 - 12/31																
ALL TIERS																			
Open	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓												
Senior			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓									
Junior						✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓							
Youth									✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓					
Mini											✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		
Tiny															✓	✓	✓	✓	
Tiny Novice															✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
EXCEPTIONAL ATHLETES																			
DanceABILITIES	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	