



From the President

Observations from the Dancesport Competition at the 2018 Gay Games in Paris, IFSSDA's third World Championships

Naturally, as is customary at any same-sex dance event, that I have ever attended, the atmosphere was enormously supportive, for the very advanced dancers as well as for the rank beginners, no exceptions. All, spectators, volunteers, officials and participants, seemed to have had fun throughout the four long days, despite the heat and lack of air-conditioning.



For the very first time did we have couples participating from Asia, which was both very welcomed and exciting, especially considering that the 2022 Gay Games will be held in Hong Kong. These three male couples, dancing Latin, came from the Philippines and had entered the Mixed Gender category, because, as is customary for them, they dressed and for the most part danced as a couple in the traditional roles, the leader as man and the follower as woman (only one of these couples was more ambiguous and also changed lead within dances). After their arrival and their observance of the first day of competition, they ended up questioning their choice of category and/or dress, which led to the organizers switching them into the male category. Though their choices of costumes and interpretation

of a couple has not been the trend in the male same-sex Latin dance category in Europe and in North America, it is comparable with many female couples in the Standard as well as Latin dance categories, who choose to portray more traditional roles and don't switch lead. Those couples from the Philippines, presenting us with high caliber dancing, gave us therefore a very exciting and divers male Latin A-class final.



For me though, this brought also home again the question of whether switching lead within a dance of a couple should, if done well, be marked higher than a couple that doesn't take that risk. It is so defined in the rules of NASSPDA, but not ESSDA, and when I brought this up at the initial judges meeting for this event (I was once again, for the third time in a row, privileged to be invited to adjudicate at the Gay Games), I was instructed that this shall not matter, since "good dancing is just that, good dancing." But I have to confess, when watching closely those that do switch successfully and smoothly the lead, I am thoroughly impressed and feel that it should indeed be rewarded and at the very least be included in one's calculation of all the merits that places a couple in front of the other.



This point of risk taking, which defines the competitive and athletic aspect of any sport, hence Dancesport (not denying also the artistic aspect as in Gymnastics, Ice Dance, Synchronized Swimming, etc.), is and should be, in my humble opinion, part of a judge's consideration. Of course, I understand and mostly agree with the assessment of "good dancing is good dancing," but without taking any risks, "good dancing" is a lot easier to accomplish. That is why I was also quite taken back by the results of the grading or also called classification rounds of almost every category.



Based on the quantity of the field, it was decided to divide couples into four grades/classes, A through D. In the end, the C-Class was the one with the most couples and most diverse range of degrees of difficulties in their routines. The D-Class typically had either one or two couples at the most. Any other sport that employs comparative judging considers, as part of the final scores, the degree of difficulty of the material/routine presented. In mainstream dance competitions, this is typically not as much an issue, since grading isn't done and lower classes are typically restricted by levels of a syllabus. Restricting and defining grades by any syllabus has been from the start rejected by our community, simply because there are too many different syllabi in existence and there has been no proof that syllabus limitations actually create better growth in our dancing (I know firsthand, since I started to compete before there was any restriction or, for that matter, separate Latin competitions - yes, a long time ago). Classifying couples into the same level of competition, even though some take a much higher risk by dancing more advanced figures, but their level of dancing seems equally good to those dancing simpler figures, doesn't seem entirely fair, because ultimately that unconsidered risk factor will place the couple with the more challenging routine, but equal good dancing in front of the other. We saw couples being graded into the C-Class that typically get classified as A- or B-level couples and then winning a medal, which is on one hand great, since having a medal ultimately beats being downgraded, but also sad, since it prevented those that are truly that level from winning.

Another point that I tried to make at that initial judges meeting and which is anchored in NASSPDA's rules as well, relates to another uniqueness within our community, and that is that we all come in many different shapes and colors with different understandings of our own identity, which is something we want to celebrate off as well as on the dance floor. I was quickly assured that that goes without saying, though the results didn't support this assurance. Unfortunately, even in our community this is an uphill battle, considering the daily bombardment of advertisements that tell us what to consider beautiful and desirable. But I think that especially our community should be able to take on that battle and make a difference, as we so often do.



In summary, as much as I enjoyed yet again an amazing event within our beautifully diverse

community, I see room for improvement. Our judges need to be carefully selected, which was indeed a point of discussion at the end of this event, and, in my opinion, even better instructed at the beginning of each competition as to what to expect and look for, how to categorize what will be seen on the dance floor and what to consider in one's final markings.

Hopefully, I will see all of you at the 2018 New England Open in Providence, RI, at the end of September, the last NASSPDA sanctioned event of the year, which promises to be an exciting two days and gives us a chance to continue this discussion and quest for making it an even better experience for all!

HAPPY DANCING!

Picture:
Horace Luong and
Cactus Capture Photography

Announcement

The 'Hot to Trot' movie by Gail Freedman has opened theatrically in NYC, at the Quad Cinema in August and will open on Friday, September 14th, in Los Angeles, at the Laemmle Music Hall Theater!
Tickets are on sale now.

[Visit Hot To Trot Facebook Page](#)

[Visit Hot To Trot Website here](#)



Competition Calendar

Competition Committee

SEPTEMBER 28-29th 2018, Providence Rhode Island

**Regional Same-Sex Championship (Sanctioned by NASSPDA) at the
NEW ENGLAND OPEN - Ballroom Dance Championships**



This event is hosted by Kalin Mitov and Boston Open DanceSport LLC.
September 28th and 29th, Rhode Island Convention Center, [1 Sabin St,](#)
[Providence, Rhode Island](#)



Friday, September 28th American Smooth and International Standard;
Showdance and Formation Teams

Saturday, September 29th - American Rhythm and International Latin,
Country Western and Argentine Tango

Workshop A - American Foxtrot by David Rosinski, 09/28 at 4pm

Workshop B - Country Western Two Step by Lee Fox, 09/28 at 4:45pm

Workshop C - International Rumba by Patti Panebianco, 09/29 at 4pm

Workshop D - Salsa, by Martin Rivera, 09/29 at 4:45pm

*Workshops are free (actual price of \$20/workshop per person) for all registered
NASSPDA members.

*Discounted rates to register for active NASSPDA members.

The NEW ENGLAND OPEN also include:

-Single Dances

-Championships

-Scholarships

-kids, pre-teen, youth and junior divisions

-Country Western Championships

-Mainstream Professional divisions, Pro-Am and Amateur divisions

-GALA Dinner with social dancing

[Visit the website for registration package and information](#)



Floorplay in the Desert

January 19th 2019

Palm Springs, CA

<http://www.floorplaypalmsprings.com/>

Upcoming World Championships:

Gay Games 11- HONG KONG 2022

36 sports and 11 cultural events



Unity In Diversity
在多元中團結

GAY GAMES XI
HONG KONG
2022

Membership Information

Membership Committee

Join NASSPDA TODAY! Payments will now be taken by credit card instead of through PayPal. The new system has special encryption to keep your data safer than before. The new site URL is the same as before: nasspda.org.



If you have problems, or want to help us improve the website-parts are still under construction-please write to Kathy Wildman, our website administrator, at wildmankathy@gmail.com or to info@nasspda.org

Outreach and Media

Promotions Committee

ACTIVITY GRANT FUNDING PROGRAM

NASSPDA would like to encourage its members and our community at large to engage in various fun activities that promote same-sex dancing. We recognize that many of our members may have a creative idea and NASSPDA would like to contribute in a small financial way.

Up to 4 grants of \$250 each will be awarded per calendar year on a first-come first-

served basis to applicants who can demonstrate that the proposed activity will advance NASSPDA's mission of promoting and expanding social and competitive same-sex partner dancing.

The proposed event should also be in alignment with NASSPDA's following goals:

- * Support functions and venues for social same-sex partner dancing.
- * Provide a resource for same-sex partner dancers.
- * Aim to raise the level of same-sex partner dancing
- * Encourage the inclusion of dancers from diverse backgrounds with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, age, [dis]ability, gender identity and/or expression.

Some ideas for events and organizers to receive grant support:

- Same-sex dance classes
- A social dance mixer with actively inviting and encouraging same-sex dancing or "alternative lead and follow"
- An excursion to a local competition, introducing dancers to the concept
- A welcome party before one of NASSPDA's sanctioned competition
- Setting up a booth at a local street fair promoting same-sex dancing
- A neighborhood or community event promoting partner dancing and the inclusion of same-sex dancing
- Involving studios to promote same-sex dancing
- An event in conjunction with a city's Pride activities

These are just a few suggestions. To apply for financial support from NASSPDA's \$250 Grant Program, please visit our website at NASSPDA.org, click on the 'Scholarships and Grants' bar and then 'Grants' to read more for more information. You can also email us at promotions@nasspda.org with any questions.

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