

**2025-2026**

## **USASF Dance Age Grid**

All adjustments in **RED** indicate **EARLY RELEASE** changes/additions for the 2025-2026 season.  
*We do not anticipate additional changes but reserve the right to make changes as needed.*

**U.S. ALL STAR FEDERATION**



**CLUB CHEER & DANCE TEAMS**

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## **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, upper body and lower body 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 teams are gender neutral and will not be split based on gender (novice teams will not be classified as co-ed, all male, etc.).
- All Category styles in each Age Division will be combined in NOVICE, no exceptions.
- Members on a NOVICE team may crossover to an **INTERMEDIATE** or **PREMIER** team.
- NOVICE designation is for new and emerging athletes/programs/teams seeking experience with dance performance and evaluation. NOVICE will only be evaluated on a rating system and not scored/ranked against other teams. Recommended ratings are Superior (Highest), Excellent, and Outstanding. Please check with your specific event producer for their rating system
- 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)
  - No Lifts/Stunts allowed (all athletes must keep at least one body part on the ground while performing groups & pairs skills)
- 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.

### INTERMEDIATE

- All Category styles in each Age Division will be combined in **INTERMEDIATE**, unless the **INTERMEDIATE** splitting rule applies (See page 6)
- Members must follow the **INTERMEDIATE** crossover rules (See page 7)
- The **INTERMEDIATE** designation is offered for emerging teams and dancers and should be scored on a traditional scoresheet.
- **INTERMEDIATE** teams must follow the USASF Dance General Rules and USASF **INTERMEDIATE** Dance Rules.
- May be offered and competed at one and two-day events.

### 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: Senior **PREMIER** Pom or Senior Pom.*
- **PREMIER** teams must follow the USASF General and **PREMIER** Dance Rules for their team's applicable division.

### DANCEBILITIES

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:**

1) Age, 2) Team Size (if applicable), 3) Gender (if applicable) 4) Category *Ex: Senior Large Coed Hip Hop*

**\*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.

Division	Approximate Ages	Eligibility by Birth Year	Gender	Team Size
Tiny NOVICE	4-7 years old	2018-2022	Female/Male	4-14 Small 15+ Large
Tiny	5-7 years old	2018-2021	Female/Male	4-14 Small 15+ Large
Mini	6-10 years old	2015-2020	Female/Male	4-14 Small 15+ Large
Youth	9-13 years old	2012-2017	Female/Male	4-14 Small 15+ Large
Junior*	11-16 years old	2009-2015	Female/Male	4-14 Small 15+ Large
Senior	13-19 years old	6/1/2006 - 2013	Female/Male	4-14 Small 15+ Large
Open**	<b>16 years +</b>	On or before 12/31/2010	Female/Male	6-30 (No Elite and Premier)
DanceABILITIES	6 years +	2020 or before	Female/Male	No min/max#

## **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 2026** 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.

Background checks and Adult Athlete Specific abuse prevention training are an eligibility requirement for "Adult Athletes". Adult Athlete: Any athlete that turns 18 years old prior to 06/01/2026.

**Definitions Used Below:**

- **May** means that an event producer is **permitted** to combine or split but is not required. Anything that reads **may** is left to the discretion of the event producer.
- **Must** means that an event producer is **required** to combine or split if the division meets the criteria set forth in the guidelines.
- **May not** means that the event producer is **prohibited** to combine or split the division.

**I. COMBINING & SPLITTING 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 will be instances, however, where there are not permissible combinations thus having a division that may only have one or two teams. The guidelines listed herein will provide the basis for how this will be accomplished. Event Producers may not further combine or split All Star categories and/or divisions by style, level, skill, age or ability, other than outlined without prior written approval from USASF. (Exception: Tiny **PREMIER** see pg 6)

**Splitting All Star PREMIER:**

1. Open routines will not be split into Small (Elite) and Large (Premier).
2. Event Producer’s **must** first split by program. Teams from same program location will not be forced to compete against each other unless:
  - i. The coach creates two teams in same div/cat: (Ex: 2 small junior jazz teams)
  - ii. The coach may choose to have their teams compete against each other.
3. Event Producer’s **must** then 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** still ensuring no less than three (3) teams remain in a particular division category.
4. **\*NEW\* Teams comprised of all male dancers will be split with the co-ed divisions while following all items outlines above.**

Program Name	Division Category	Total # of athletes	Female	Male
Program A*	Youth Small Hip Hop	7	7	0
Program B	Youth Small Hip Hop	10	10	0
Program C	Youth Small Hip Hop	13	13	0
Program A*	Youth Large Hip Hop	16	16	0
Program D	Youth Small Coed Hip Hop	12	11	1
Program E	Youth Large Coed Hip Hop	15	14	1
Program F	Youth Large Coed Hip Hop	15	14	1
Program G	Youth Large Coed Hip Hop	17	12	5
Program H	Youth Large Coed Hip Hop	16	15	1
Program I	Youth Large Coed Hip Hop	24	23	1

*Example: 10 Teams are registered in Youth Hip Hop (3 YSHH, 1, YLHH, 1 YSCHH, 5 YLCHH). Program A\* has entered an all-girl team in both Small and Large Youth Hip Hop. These teams will not be forced to compete against each, thus splitting by size is ideal placing 6 teams in YLHH and 4 teams in YSHH regardless of gender.*

## **II. COMBINING & SPLITTING INTERMEDIATE and NOVICE TIER:**

NOVICE Tier may not split, no exceptions (see page 3).

All performances, regardless of style, in the **INTERMEDIATE** division categories will be judged against each other unless one of the splitting rules applies. Event Producers **must** split **INTERMEDIATE** routines into separate Categories (**INTERMEDIATE** Jazz, **INTERMEDIATE** Pom, **INTERMEDIATE** Hip Hop, **INTERMEDIATE** Contemporary/Lyrical, **INTERMEDIATE** Kick or **INTERMEDIATE** Variety) by Age Division if:

- a. There are two teams from the same program registered in the same Age Division. *(Example: Junior **INTERMEDIATE** Jazz and Junior **INTERMEDIATE** 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.)*
- b. There are three or more teams in the same category style, and at least two remaining performances in any of the other category styles. *(Example: 3 Junior **INTERMEDIATE** Hip Hop, 1 Junior **INTERMEDIATE** Pom, and 1 Junior **INTERMEDIATE** Kick will be split into Junior **INTERMEDIATE** Hip Hop (with 3 teams) and Junior **INTERMEDIATE** All Styles (with 2 teams: **INTERMEDIATE** Pom and **INTERMEDIATE** Kick)*

## **III. COMBINING & SPLITTING TINY:**

All performances, regardless of style, in these division categories will be judged against each other unless one of the splitting rules applies. Then, Event Producers will split Tiny into separate Categories (Jazz, Pom, Hip Hop, etc.), if:

- a. 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.)*
- b. Event Producers **must** 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 **must** be at least 3 teams in each division once the split occurs
- c. There are three or more teams in the same category style, and at least two remaining performances in any of the other category styles

## **IV. COMBINING to Create “All Styles” Category:**

Event Producer's **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)* **Exceptions:**



- a. Categories with 3 or more teams registered in a particular age division will not be combined 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.* Note: There should always be more than one team in the All Styles category.
- b. Categories will 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.)*
- c. The “All Styles” category is not a Primary USASF or Worlds Bid category.

## **V. CROSSOVERS:**

1. Dancer(s) may compete in more than one division and/or category as long as they abide by the age requirements in all divisions in which they compete.
2. An individual will not be permitted to crossover from one club to another during the same event.
3. INTERMEDIATE
  - a. Dancer(s) may compete in both **INTERMEDIATE** and Non-**INTERMEDIATE** categories with the following limitations:
    4. 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)
    5. 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)
  - iii. 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)

b. 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 a **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 a **INTERMEDIATE** Division Category at an event the team **may** move to the Non-**INTERMEDIATE** category at that event without breaking Crossover Rule 2b at future events.)*

## **VI. THE DANCE WORLDS:**

- *Qualifying USASF & IASF World Bid Divisions & Categories for the upcoming Dance Worlds can be found online at [www.thedanceworlds.net](http://www.thedanceworlds.net)*

## **VII. USASF MEMBER TERM:**

- The USASF Member Term runs from June 1st, 2025– May 31st, 2026

2025-26 SEASON	DIVISIONS	APPROXIMATE AGES	USASF TARGET BIRTH YEAR (x indicates eligible for that division)																			
			2005 or Before	1/1/2006-5/31/2006	6/01/06-12/31/06	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	
<b>ALL TIERS</b>																						
	Open	16+	x	x	x	x	x	x	x													
	Senior	13-19			x	x	x	x	x	x	x											
	Junior	11-16							x	x	x	x	x									
	Youth	9-13									x	x	x	x	x							
	Mini	6-10												x	x	x	x	x	x			
	Tiny	5-7																x	x	x	x	
	Tiny Novice	4-7																x	x	x	x	x
<b>DanceABILITIES</b>																						
		6+	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		