

Studio 19 Dance Company Competition Family Survival Guide

Introduction

We are very proud of our past achievements at competition. For a young studio we have done very well, and hope to continue to do so. As Studio 19 Dance Company grows, we feel it is important to relay to our competition families as much information about competition as possible, so that everyone knows what to expect, and what is expected of them.

We strongly believe that students who remain on a competition track with us until they graduate will be very well prepared to pass college dance team auditions, get dance parts in plays, become dance company members, teach dance professionally and perhaps open their own studio one day!

Competition/routine selection Q & A:

How do instructors choose which competitions to participate in?

Our instructors choose competitions based on word of mouth and past experience. Competitions with competent and fair judging, competitions that are well run and on time, and competitions that offer positive feedback, student recognition and a fun atmosphere are also important to our teachers when they are choosing competitions.

How do instructors choose routines for each competition?

Through their past experience, teachers know which type of routines fair better at each competition. Some competitions score certain disciplines of dance higher than others, some competitions demand higher technical ability, while others score more entertaining dances higher. Many factors are taken into consideration when choosing routines for each competition, including preparedness of each individual dancer and classes as a whole. Our instructors have been participating in and attending competitions for many years. Please TRUST THEIR JUDGEMENT! It is not their intent to hurt anyone's feelings, but to make certain that their students will perform to the best of their ability, thereby insuring a positive competition experience for our dancers (and their parents!)

TIMELINE:

It is very important for our competition families to maintain good communications with the studio/teachers throughout the year. We ask you to please attend all scheduled meetings and print/save all email correspondence.

May of current year: Teachers begin selecting members for next season's competition team.

Summer: Students selected for competition should make every effort to attend summer classes/camps/workshops. Music selection and choreography for competitive routines are often begun in the summer.

September: First parent competition meeting. Competition contracts signed.

January: Competitions chosen. Mandatory parent/student competition meeting. Competition invoices and competition packets are distributed.

About a month before competitions start: Hair/make-up demonstrations at studio. Competition costumes distributed.

About a week before competition: Competition schedule is emailed to all parents with detailed information. It is very important to check your emails during the weeks before competition to check for any changes that we or the competition directors may make in the schedule. Hang/steam your costumes to remove any wrinkles.

Night Before Competition: Go over your checklist (last page of this handbook). Put all items together to pack in the morning. Wash and dry your hair. GO TO BED AND GET A GOOD NIGHT'S SLEEP!

Morning of Competition: Get up early enough to allow plenty of time to do your hair and apply your make-up. Remember to wear something that you do NOT have to pull over your head! Best choice to wear is a leotard with sweatpants or jeans and a jacket. Pack your stuff, go over your checklist again, have something light to eat and get to the competition venue ON TIME!

At the competition venue:

- 1. Find our dressing room and get situated. There will be a list in the dressing room with what pieces of jewelry to wear, how hair should be done and lipstick color for each routine being performed. Find out what costume to put on first, and when you need to meet your teacher back stage. Do a hair/make-up check.**
- 2. Parents may go and sit in the audience if desired. I suggest that you buy a program and highlight all of our studio routines for the day*.**

*** Please note: I have NEVER attended a competition where the routines performed in the order listed in the program. Don't worry if you see your dancer has three routines scheduled in a row. Our teachers will arrange with the back stage manager to put dances out of order to accommodate costume changes.**

There are two things that are VERY IMPORTANT to your instructors on competition weekends.

- 1. BE ON TIME! There is nothing that will set everyone's nerves on edge more than a student who is late. We would like to have everyone there as early as possible to view ALL our routines for the day, but absolutely NO later than one and a half (1 1/2) hours before your first performance is scheduled. For routines that are scheduled early in the morning, you need to get there when the doors open. All "BE THERE BY" times will be listed on the schedule we email to you a week or so before the competition.**
- 2. EVERYONE from Studio 19 Dance Company should be familiar with proper audience etiquette. Miss Erin and Miss Miranda, since they are performers themselves, are STICKLERS about this. Please review the following etiquette points below with your dance students, family members and/or friends who may be coming to watch the competition.**

Competition/Audience Etiquette

We have discussed this many times in the past, but it all bears repeating. Please remember that whenever we perform or attend a performance outside the studio, we are representing Studio 19 Dance Company. The "golden rule" really applies here. Every student on the stage has worked very hard all year, and deserves the audience's consideration. Also, remember that all the parents sitting in the audience have paid the same entry fees that we have and are just as excited about watching their dancers as we are.

DO NOT ENTER OR EXIT THE AUDITORIUM DURING ANY PERFORMANCE. IF YOU THINK YOU WILL BE GETTING UP AND DOWN A LOT, PLEASE BE SEATED CLOSER TO THE BACK OF THE AUDITORIUM.

****DO NOT ALLOW YOUNG SIBLINGS TO WALK/RUN UP AND DOWN THE AISLE, OR WANDER AROUND UNATTENDED. IT IS SOOOOOO DISTRACTING TO OTHER AUDIENCE MEMBERS.***

****ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY NO PICTURE TAKING OR VIDEOTAPING IN THE AUDITORIUM. WE COULD BE KICKED OUT OF THE COMPETITION IF ANYONE IS CAUGHT DOING IT, SO PLEASE DON'T! YOU WILL HAVE AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES FOR PICTURES DURING AWARDS, OR OUT IN THE HALLWAY.***

****KEEP CHATTER/TALKING TO A MINIMUM WHILE YOU ARE SEATED. IF YOU WANT TO HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE OR USE YOUR PHONE, PLEASE GO OUT IN THE HALL! REMEMBER TO PUT PHONES ON VIBRATE.***

****RYTHMIC CLAPPING/CHANTING IS NOT ALLOWED DURING A PERFORMANCE. THE JUDGES MAY VIEW IT AS COACHING, AND DEDUCT POINTS FROM THE ROUTINE.***

****NEVER SHOUT OUT THE STUDIO NAME, OR INDIVIDUAL NAMES OF PERFORMERS.***

Random Tricks & Tips:

- Even young students should take part in getting ready for competitions. Kids love to go over checklists, pack their stuff and do as much of their own make-up as possible.**
- If your young dancer gives you a hard time when you're doing their hair or make-up, get a competition buddy mom. Kids seem to behave and sit till better for someone else. Please remember that teachers will NOT be able to do anyone's hair and make-up at competition.**
- When applying eyeliner and/or mascara, keep your arm as close to your body as possible. It will keep your hand from shaking.**
- Stay calm. Kids pick up on nervousness. I promise that as you and your dancer get a few competitions under your belt, the heart pounding and the butterflies will disappear! Long, deep breaths help in calming nerves.**
- If you have a decent break between performances, take a little walk outside. Fresh air helps to revive you after you've been sitting for awhile. If you have a REALLY long break, and don't want to go home in between, take a little snooze in your car or in the back of the auditorium!**
- Stay hydrated. Bring water in a cooler, and drink it throughout the day. Dancers, make sure you take bathroom breaks BEFORE you have to be backstage.**

Entries/Judging/Awards

Entries are placed in divisions and categories based on each individual competitions rules and guidelines. You may wonder why your 14 year old dancer is in an 11-12 year old age group. The way we figure age placement is by taking each dancer's age in a group and figuring out the average age of the group. Some competitions allow you to drop the decimal, some require that you round up or down. Other competitions have a "bump rule". A bump rule means that a routine can only perform in an age group that is no more than one division less than it's oldest dancer. For instance, we enter a group that has a 9 year old (Petite division) dancer, and an 18 year old (Senior division) dancer. The average age of the group is 11-12 (Junior division). The bump rule would require the group to perform in the Teen Division (13-14).

In addition, some competitions only allow a certain amount of tricks in a jazz, ballet or tap routine. That is why certain dances will be placed in the "open" category.

We know this can be confusing, but we're adding this information to let you know why our groups perform in a certain age division and/or category. It actually gets more complicated for some competitions because of other rules they have to make things more fair, but I don't want you all to get headaches like we do when we are getting our entries ready :)

Judging:

Every competition has different criteria for judging routines. The four basic things that routines are always judged on are:

1. **TECHNIQUE** - This is where all those extra ballet tech and stretch/strength classes that we require will come into play! Technique means a LOT of things including pointed feet, turn-out, extensions, proper execution of turns, use of plie', etc. **TECHNIQUE IS ALWAYS AT LEAST 50% OF A ROUTINE'S SCORE, SO GET TO THOSE BALLET CLASSES!!**
2. **OVERALL PERFORMANCE QUALITY** - This is how well each student knows their routine, and how well they entertain the judges and audience with it. Also in this area is the use of facial expression to convey the "feeling " of the routine.
3. **CHOREOGRAPHY** - This is where your **TEACHERS** are judged! Choreography scores are based on appropriate choice of music and costumes, use of stage, difficulty of routine and how well the movement in the dance relates to the music. There are many other things that choreography scores are based on, but your teachers would be the better ones to ask if you're curious.
4. **APPEARANCE** - This pertains to costume fit, whether undergarments are showing, neatness of hair and make-up, etc.

Awards:

Awards Ceremonies are usually held a few times each day of competitions, and are the **MOST FUN** time of the weekend! All competitions have many different awards, so space doesn't allow going into too much detail. Awards are the time to hoot and holler (parents AND dancers), take pictures and sit back and relax. Please be sure to attend all awards ceremonies throughout the weekend because everyone will be deserving of the break!

The most important thing to remember about awards is that **ALL** scores are the opinions of 3 or 4 judges with different tastes and areas of expertise. A routine that scores a silver at one competition, may score a **PLATINUM** at another. We have seen this happen many, many times, so **PLEASE** do not take your scores too seriously!

The week after competition, teachers will go over score sheets/tapes with students in class. Parents are invited to listen in!

Finances

Q & A:

Why are competitions so expensive?

Competition fees seem to go up every year. As competitions get bigger and better, and to assure that studios will come back year after year, organizers have to pay more for venues, provide travel and lodging for their employees and judges, and provide decent trophies and awards to studio participants. These costs can run into the TENS OF THOUSANDS OF DOLLARS! Competition directors would also like to make a little money for themselves :)

Why do we have to have our competition entries/fees in so early?

Some competitions have between 400-600 entries performing over the weekend. Competition organizers MUST have entries/fees in as early as possible to begin properly placing all studio entries in the right divisions and categories, and begin writing their programs for the weekend.

We need your entry fees in on time, so that we can avoid late fees to our entries. Late fees generally are added if not received by the Competition Directors within 30 - 45 days of the competition dates. Our studio competition fees generally run between \$4000- \$5000. It's very difficult to send the required studio check to the competitions if we don't have it to spare in our account. We know that occasionally a financial emergency will arise. If you are unable to pay your entry fees by the due dates, PLEASE call Laurie at home asap :)

How can I, as a parent of a competitive dancer manage the cost of my child's dance education?

Unfortunately, after our dancers start competing, COMPETITION MONSTERS are created! The kids want to take more classes, and do more competitions. Here are some suggestions so you don't have to refinance your mortgage or get ANOTHER part time job:

- 1. Have a very frank discussion with your dancer about the family finances. Sometimes kids don't realize the costs and sacrifices that have to be made to keep them dancing.**
- 2. Suggest that they speak with their instructors about what their strong points are: maybe your dancer should drop acro or musical theatre, and concentrate more on jazz or lyrical.**
- 3. Our instructors do not expect nor do they recommend that your dancer take EVERY competition class that is available to them. Stress to your dancer (as the teachers do) that it is the QUALITY of their dance performances, NOT THE QUANTITY of classes that they take that are most noticed at competitions.**
- 4. Consider a duet or trio rather than a solo.**
- 5. Even if your dancer is on scholarship for tuition (see next page), PLEASE REMEMBER AND REMIND THEM that costume costs and competition fees are still very expensive.**
- 6. Take part in the family fundraisers we have throughout the year!**

COMPETITION DAY CHECKLIST

Costumes ___

Accessories (Hats, belts, hair pieces etc.) ___

Tights ___

Shoes ___

Make-Up ___

Jewelry ___

Hair Stuff ___

Emergency Items ___ (Safety pins, sewing kit, tylenol, etc.)

Personal Hygiene Items ___

Street Clothes ___

Street Shoes ___

Logo Wear ___

Food /Snacks ___

Water ___

Money for Parking/Concessions/Program ___

Good attitude and a SMILE _____

Go Studio 19!!