Definitions
July 2020

How did you learn how to square dance?

How do dancers at a one-time party dance learn how to dance?

How did you learn to dance Mainstream? Probably not by reading the definitions.

How do you teach Dosado to new dancers?

How do you teach Right and Left Thru at Mainstream lessons?

April 1993 Doug Sewell creates a square dance callers email list after the more general-purpose square-dancing email list starts getting out of hand.

March 1995 Rob French announces that the Callerlab definitions are available on his web site.

Did not have definitions in the old days (1940's and 1950's). My first exposure was Burlesons and the Set In Order Basic 50 and Extended 75 booklets.

June 1995 Clark Baker writes:
The Basic and Mainstream definitions occasionally suffer because
1) they have to be accessible to new dancers and callers, and
2) some callers who participated in their creation didn't care if the definition given at Mainstream was suitable for common usage at C4.

Bottom line, while they aren't perfect, don't assume that the Callerlab definitions are from standard/normal formations and you can extend them however you want. The definitions contain a section on how to extend them.

Hartmut Niemann: Well - they are written and maintained (if at all) by callers that do not care about C4 because all those who know how Challenge is danced/called do not seem to care about MS.

There is a way out: start rewriting MS definitions to make them
- backward compatible with the common use
- leading to identical results at MS level
- compatible with Advanced and challenge needs.
If that leads to a very complicated definition, this definition is probably wrong ;-)

Wow, how did C4 get into a discussion of Mainstream definitions?

Continuum of dance programs (what we use to call levels but that term implies to so that higher level is "better" than lower level so we user the term program and stumble around the fact that they are still ordered and there is a "next" program).

One-time party dances	10	
Contra dances	20	
Basic 1	32	
Basic 2	16	48
Mainstream	19	67
Plus	28	95
Advanced 1	41	
Advanced 2	32	
Challenge 1	~85	
Challenge 2	~85	
Challenge 3A	~85	
Challenge 3B	~75	
Challenge 4 (popular)		~250
Challenge 4 (occasional)	~150	
Challenge 4 (dead)	~350	

Do we want
1. one set of definitions that work from Basic through C4, or
2. a definition at Basic/Mainstream suitable for "them" and a different definition at Challenge if "they" need it?

The definition shouldn't change as we go up the levels.

We should define it once at its first level and perhaps only augment it at other levels.

Mainstream callers need to be in charge of their definitions. They don't want definitions written by challenge callers.

Callerlab's Mainstream definitions were written in the late 1970's and were showing their age as the Internet and Email became popular.

Proposal to rewrite them started in the late 1990's. Partly to put an end to all the discussions on sd-callers about how calls work and what the definition says and how they were taught.

Initial idea – two sets:
1. Technical definitions
2. For the masses definitions

The technical definitions would provide the base and answer all questions and the "for the masses" would be the definitions most use because they are sufficient and go into less detail.

Who is the audience for definitions?

How do you learn to play a board game?

Examples where we see definitions:
- Mathematics
- Computer hardware descriptions (machine language)
- Computer programming languages
- Board games
- Square dancing

Callers are in the business of teaching dancers, not writing definitions.

Callers want teaching definitions.

Callers don't want technical definitions.

Compromise – one set of definitions that are as precise as we can make them, will work for all levels because they are written by people who know all levels, and the "corner cases" will be relegated to comments that some can ignore on a first reading.

Can you really define anything?

What is a chair?

Should definitions limit creativity?

Gimmicks?

How often are there disagreements on what a caller means (other than on the internet)?

Application Review Committee (ARC)

37. SWING THRU FAMILY: Starting formation - ocean wave or alamo.

(a) SWING THRU: Those who can, turn by the right one half (180°), then those who can, turn by the left one half (180°). If "right" is not specified preceding the command to Swing Thru, it is a right Swing Thru.

(b) ALAMO SWING THRU: Everyone turns half by the right, then everyone turns half by the left. When left Swing Thru is directed from an alamo formation, everyone turns half by the left, then everyone turns half by the right.

(c) LEFT SWING THRU: Those who can, turn by the left one half (180°), then those who can, turn by the right one half (180°). If left Swing Thru is required, it must be specifically directed "left Swing Thru".

STYLING: All hands are joined in hands-up position, elbows in close. Exert slight pressure to assist opposite dancer in turning. Arcing turns should be utilized rather than pull by type of movements and should flow effortlessly from one turn to the other so that you are in a sense, "weaving" along the line.

TIMING: 6 steps from point of contact.

38. Swing Thru / Left Swing Thru

Starting formations: Ocean Wave, Alamo Ring

Command examples:
    Swing Thru
    Left Swing Thru

Dance action:

    Swing Thru: Those who can turn 1/2 (180 degrees) by the right; then those who can turn 1/2 (180 degrees) by the left.

    Left Swing Thru: Those who can turn 1/2 (180 degrees) by the left; then those who can turn 1/2 (180 degrees) by the right.

   Dancers must work in their group:
   · From an Alamo Ring, all dancers form one group.
   · Otherwise, active dancers form one or more groups of four dancers each.

Ending formation: Ocean Wave, Alamo Ring

Timing: 6

Styling: Use Hands Up throughout the call. (See "Additional Detail: Styling: Arms and hands"; however, also see "General: Standardization".) The first part of the call blends smoothly into the second part.

Comments: The Facing Couples Rule applies to these calls.

    From a Tidal Wave, Swing Thru is danced in the Ocean Wave on each half; no dancers cross the center of the Tidal Wave.
    After applying the Facing Couples Rule, the starting formation of Swing Thru must be a Wave or an Alamo Ring (except for the

extended application below). It is improper, for example, to Swing Thru from an Inverted Line.

As an extended application, dancers can work in other groups, provided that after applying the Facing Couples Rule they are in a wave of three or more dancers. In this case, the caller must clearly tell those dancers to work together. For example, Heads Pass the Ocean; Extend; Boys Circulate 1 1/2; Girls Cast Off 3/4; In the Wave of 6, Swing Thru. To have eight dancers work together is especially tricky, and should be used only with great caution, since normally eight dancers work in two groups of four. The eight-dancer application is usually reserved for dance programs in which a different call[1] achieves this action.

Prescriptive vs. descriptive