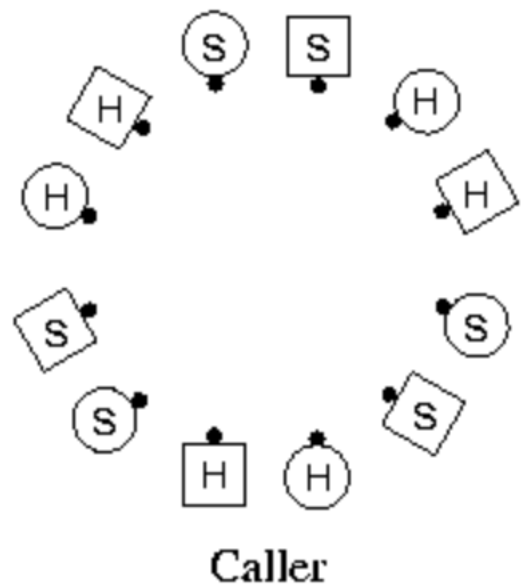


Square Dancing in a Hexagon

January 2021



Takeaway: what are hexagons and how do you dance, teach, and call them

Before we get started, who has danced hexagons?

Who hasn't danced them?

Who has been somewhat afraid of them, but still interested?

Pick someone

You have learned to square dance

You have learned a variety of calls — 2 dancer, 4 dancer, and 8 dancer calls

You can dance to the calls of an unknown caller, smoothly, rhythmically, and generally without error

You don't generally know what call is coming next

Let's assume that the choreography is symmetric — that is, no "Couple #1 do something" type of material

Get 12 dancers in the back of the hall

“Square up” in a hexagon

The caller starts calling

What happens?

1. Your set dances all the choreography !!
2. At the end of each sequence
 1. Each head man would get a head lady
 2. All promenade the same distance (beats) as the other squares
 3. Heads end on head positions (and sides on side position)

In general, each head man will not always get their original partner back and will not end up in their original squares set location.

However, each head man will always have a head lady as his partner and promenade to one of the 3 head positions at the end of each sequence.

This idea — get a hexagon up in the back of the hall and dance — is my favorite way to introduce people to hexagons.

It can work if most dancers are experienced with hexagons and only a few are new to it.

A second way to expose dancers to hexagons is to have them “square up” in hexagons and intermix some teaching, walking, and dancing with music.

This could be done with a single hexagon, perhaps with the caller in the hexagon at the same time, perhaps even learning what he (or she) is doing at the same time the dancers are learning.

This could be done with a room full of dancers with the caller on a stage.

After the talk we should discuss how others have incorporated hexagons into their calling.

Enough talk about how to use them, how do they work?

Teach me to dance hexagon

I wrote a detailed web page on hexagons in 2002 and we are going to use pieces of that

<https://fortytwo.ws/~cbaker/hexagon.html>

Or google: clark baker hexagon

Your job:

When I am about to go to the Justin Legakis animations, stop me and have me first talk about the Chinese Fan



Final thoughts

Took me and others a while to convince ourselves that all calls work

What matters is not the call's definition (!), but its traffic pattern

Opens a new world of kinesthetic dance experience

No need to learn more calls

Calls like Grand Square are danced more “with the music”

Certain calls need new teaching hints (e.g., Ferris Wheel)

Some easy calls become hard (e.g., Heads Pass The Ocean)

Motion around the flagpole center is 2/3 normal — underachieve

Teaching and showing calls in a hexagon has improved my regular square dance teaching

Helps with square awareness — where is my wave — where is my box of 4 — who is my partner — am I facing in or out

Is this for weaker dancers?

When you get lost, you get very very lost

I have received more joy and had more fun dancing and exposing people hexagons — watching them experience the multiple “Wow’s” — than anything else in the past 20 years

I hope I have left you with an understanding of what hexagons are and how you can dance, teach, and call them

Points I did not touch on which we could discuss

Who first invented hexagons?

What does Bill Eyler do?

Rectangles — 4 heads and 2 sides

What about 8 couples in a octagon?

What about 2 couples (bi-gon dancing)?

Tripod dancing — 3 couples doing 2 couple material

How have others used hexagons?

Are hexagons good or bad for square dancing?

What about Plus, Advanced, or even Challenge in a hexagon?

Teach a lot or throw them in (sink or swim)

Sight calling to a room full of hexagons

- ◆ calling
- ◆ resolving

Hashtag squares

How do we understand lead right vs. wheel thru and flagpole center