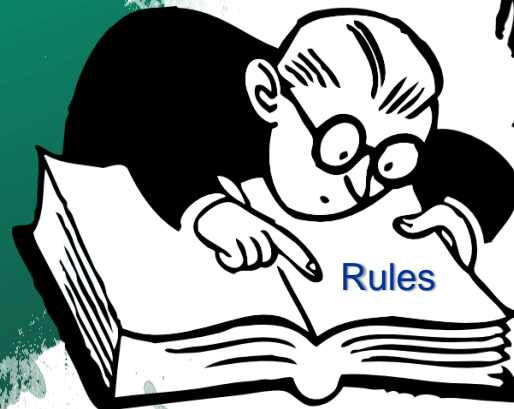


# Square Dance Definitions, Rules, Conventions and Guidelines



+ guidelines  
& tips

We always do it this way -  
convention



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# Reading the Definition

- The “Program Definitions” is a document which contains the individual call definitions.
- Rules, and conventions are usually known but not always understood.
- Qualifiers – (program restriction/proper etc.)
- Not using the rules and conventions cheats both the dancer and the caller.

15 pages at start – and appendices  
Important parts that most ignore

# Page 8 to 10 – Rules and Conventions

- **PASSING RULE** – tells you how to safely pass another dancer and on which side
- **SAME POSITION RULE** – tells you what to do if you go to the same place (and more)
- **FACING COUPLE RULE** – tells about what to treat as facing couples even when they are not
- **OCEAN WAVE RULE** – tells about what to treat as in ocean waves when you are not
- **SQUARED SET CONVENTION** – who goes in from a static square, do they stay in or get back out and what calls it may apply to.
- **CIRCLE RULE** – this is about turning a circle into a square by the use of some calls

**THREE VERY IMPORTANT PAGES**

What all the “extra” stuff applies to

**Basic 1** - included

**Basic 2** – combined with basic 1

**Mainstream** - included

**Plus** – **tried to simplify but forgot it**

**Advanced 1&2** – reinforces the basics

**Challenge** – says to read this first:

*Before you use these definitions, you should be familiar with the CALLERLAB Basic/Mainstream definitions, the CALLERLAB Plus definitions, the CALLERLAB Advanced definitions, and the CALLERLAB standard formation names. Where possible, we have used calls and formations defined in those documents. This has let us make the definitions shorter and clearer.*

# Rules and Conventions

Off-hand comment led to the request

- 5 Basic rules and one convention
- Apply to all Callerlab Programs
- Other rules exist – See Callerlab Choreographic Guidelines)

Rarely taught in  
caller school  
curriculum



# Conventions and Rules

## A CONVENTION

- In square dance terms it refers to the way things are usually done (right or wrong)



## A RULE:

- refers to an explicit and understood “method” or principle which governs the conduct or process of action applicable to a certain set of criteria for the dancers. If they meet that set of criteria - then the rule applies

# Conventions and Rules

If a convention (normal way of doing it) is followed by enough dancers/callers it may even become a rule or a revised definition

# CAUTION

There is a risk in deriving a convention from lots of dance examples and then writing it as a rule.

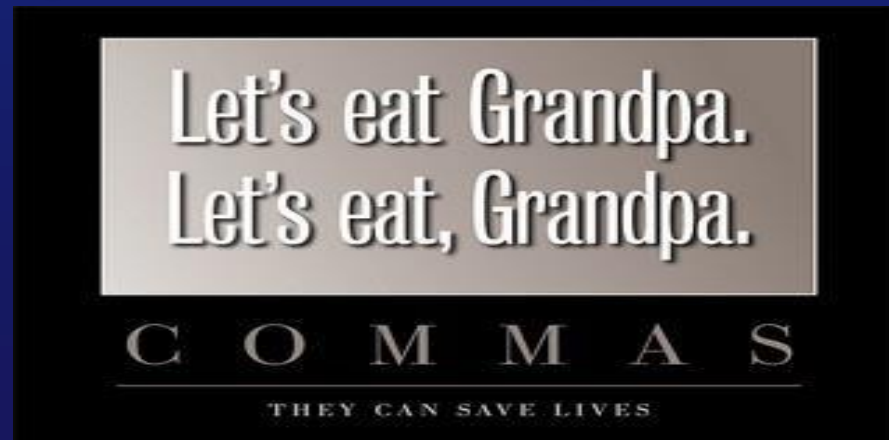
**RECYCLE AS GIRLS TURN BACK – WHEEL & DEAL  
IS AN EXAMPLE**

# Conventions and Rules

The importance of the convention and 5 rules

- callers will create new choreography or
- use choreography in accordance with their own interpretation of the definition.

A simple thing like a missing comma can really change the meaning of the message





# The Passing Rule

- If the definition of a call has two dancers on the same path and requires them to walk past each other, they should pass right shoulders (unless otherwise specified) and continue.
- The mirror image version of a call has dancers pass left shoulders and continue. That would be stated as “LEFT” DOUBLE PASS THRU.

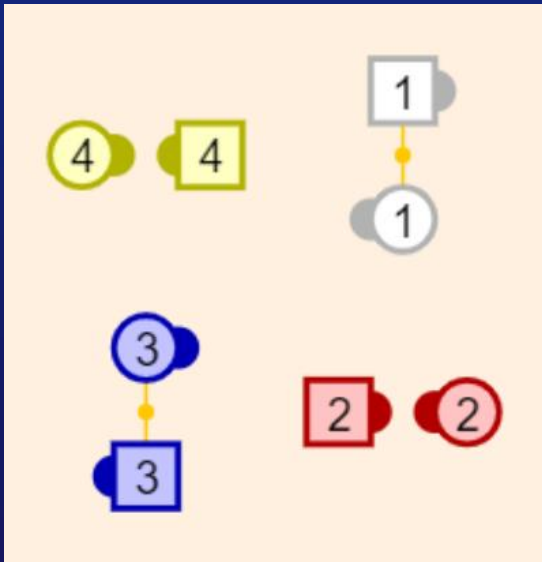
# The Same Position Rule

- If two dancers occupy the same position at the end of a call, **and** are facing opposite directions, they make a **Right-Hand Mini-Wave**.
- If adjustment is necessary (since they are now side-by-side), adjust sideways, towards the outside of the group they were working with.

**Callers – don't use calls that make dancers facing the same way, or at right angles end in the same position**

# The Facing Couple Rule

- Not in in a wave but pretend I am rule
- The calls are defined to which this rule applies
- If applicable – it is in the definition
- If it is not in definition - DO NOT USE IT
- The rule applies to funny mixed formations too.



# The Ocean Wave Rule

- Not in facing couples but pretend I am rule
- The calls are defined to which this rule applies
- If movement transitions through a miniwave, the rule applies
- This rule may change at different levels
  - Pass the ocean from a wave— no at Basic or MS
  - Pass the ocean from a wave – Plus or Above OK

**My opinion only: Proper or not,  
you would be a jerk if you did this.**

# The Rules – a closer look

## The Ocean Wave Rule (continued)

**YES:** Trade By From  $\frac{3}{4}$  Tag, Swing,  
Right & Left Grand, Double Pass Thru,  
Square Thru, Right & Left Thru, Etc.

**NO:** Circulates, Pass The Ocean, Touch  $\frac{1}{4}$

To apply: the initial dance action of the call must start with:

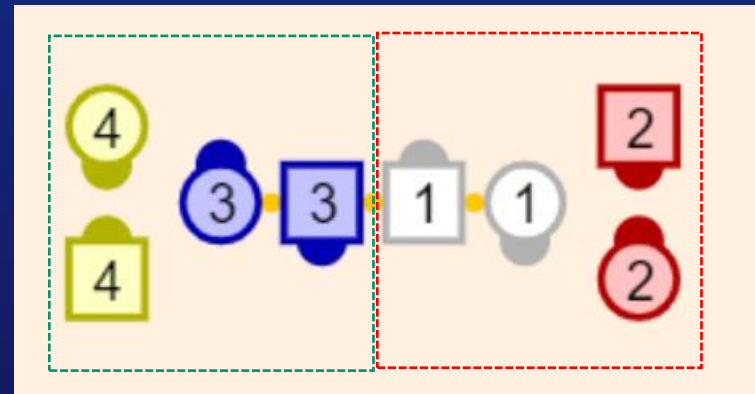
- Box The Gnat,
- Pass Thru, or
- Right Pull By. ...**AND**

The call must not be defined to have a different action from an Ocean Wave.

# The Rules – a closer look

## The Ocean Wave Rule (continued)

- Circulates not allowed ?????
- 8 chain thru is defined – ocean waves are defined
- It would be improper to call circulate from waves and expect a step thru based on this rule.
- Mixed pairings apply
- (don't be a jerk  
example – Spin the top)
- Other rule definitions apply – e.g. dosado



**The ocean wave rule applies to extended applications – be clear in what you want**

# Circle Rule

- The let's treat the circle like a square rule
- The caller must identify adjacent dancers and their opposites
- The circle becomes a squared set when the movement starts

## Examples:

- From a Squared Set: Join Hands, Circle Left; **Heads Up To The Middle And Back**; Heads Square Thru 4.
- From a Squared Set: Heads Half Sashay; All Circle Left; **4 Boys Spin The Top**.

# Squared Set Convention

- Three parts to this (rule):
- **The caller must identify active couples**
- **Same walls as inactive dancers**
  - stay in centre
- **Different wall than inactive dancers**
  - step out (exceptions apply)

## Timing consideration:

For facing couple calls - add 2 beats



# GOOD NEWS

- The rules apply to all programs
- The rules do not change
- Where the rules apply is usually defined
- Qualifiers at different levels are stated

Holistically “the Definitions” is 3 documents

- Definitions Document
- Formation Document
- Choreographic Guidelines.

# The GUIDELINES To Success

- Read the Choreographic Guidelines
- These guidelines are mainly to help callers
- They are additional “recommended rules”
- They deal with the “soft” dancing aspects:
  - Flow
  - Hand availability
  - Smoothness
  - Variety,
  - Timing etc.

# The Guideline Rules

- 2-beat Rule – command time
- Smoothness Rule – relates to body flow
  - Variety exception
- Alternating Hands (shoulders) Rule
- Difficult Choreography Convention
- The Building Block Rule
- The Weaning Rule – Cluing and Cueing
- The extra Time Convention
- The Movement Modification Convention
- The give them space rule
- The Momentum rule

# The ARC

## Applications Review committee

- Formed in 1998
- Determines proper and improper use



The ARC decides appeals are possible

# Resources

- <http://www.callerlab.org/Dance-Programs>
  - All the programs and definitions
  - Formation and arrangement charts
- <http://www.callerlab.org/Caller-Resources>
  - Choreographic Guidelines
- <http://www.callerlab.org/Portals/1/ARC%20Decisions%20History%202017-03-15.pdf>
  - ARC Decisions

# Questions

