LEGENDS

judging process
2026-2027

The judging process for Legends Dance Championship and its Partner Competitions has been updated after extensive feedback from competition boards, current judges and team captains via surveys and focus groups. Modifications made to the rubric, competition judging process and judge selection process are described in the following document. Any further modifications to this document can be made at the discretion of the Legends Executive Board.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Judges are allowed to judge a maximum of 3 Legends Partner Competitions (PCs) during the competition season. In order to judge at Legends Dance Championship, an individual may only judge 1 PC during the respective competition season.

Judges are NOT allowed to judge at Partner Competitions whose lineup includes competing team(s) that they were previously affiliated with in any capacity, including but not limited to as a dancer, (dancing or non-dancing) manager, founder and/or captain. Exceptions may be made on a case-by-case basis (described in "Panel Approvals") for judges who are at least TWO YEARS removed from the circuit.

Judges that are also DJs may NOT be allowed to judge for a team they have compiled a full mix for, if said team is competing at that Partner Competition.

Partner Competition judges are required to attend at least ONE standardized Legends judging training, and participate in ONE mock deliberation for every PC they judge.

Partner Competition judges are required to complete any training and/or verification requirements assigned by the DDN People & Organizations (P&O) committee.

Partner Competitions are required to provide teams with the opportunity to ask judges questions at least ONE WEEK before the competition.

Partner Competitions are required to adhere to a FOURTY-FIVE MINUTE time limit for deliberations and a FIVE MINUTE time limit for caption awards either at the beginning or at the end of deliberations, if applicable.

Partner Competitions are required to provide teams with the opportunity to receive feedback from judges. This must happen in a full-panel format. Round robin formats will NOT be allowed.

APPLICATION PROCESS

To maintain consistent and accurate evaluation of judges, prospective applicants will be required to submit information to the Legends Judging Database and to apply for Legends endorsement to judge at Partner Competitions.

New judges must complete and submit: (1) a Judging Endorsement Application; and (2) an individual, timed mock judging assessment. The assessment will take ~60 minutes to complete and includes watching three performances, ranking them and providing justification.

Judges are evaluated by Legends based on their experience(s) in and out of the fusion circuit, years removed from the circuit, previous judging experience and/or previous feedback from references.

Judges who were endorsed during the 2025–2026 season are not required to submit another application and will automatically be considered endorsed for the 2026–2027 competition season, unless they choose to opt out or Legends removes their endorsement. In line with our new staggered endorsement process, we will be clearing small groups of judges on a yearly basis based on qualifications, board and circuit feedback, and recency of involvement. This process is designed to maintain judging consistency while gradually reviewing all judges over multiple years. If Legends removes a judge's endorsement and that judge is still interested in judging, they are welcome to reapply for reendorsement by submitting the mock judging assessment.

If a judge chooses to update any information in the database or to opt-out of judging, they must email legendsjudging@desidancenetwork.org with the desired changes or opt-out notification, respectively.

The Judging Database can be found here.
Deadline: December 9, 2026. Legends reserves the right to adjust this deadline as necessary.

DDN INC. EXPECTATIONS

We have high expectations for our judges and the quality of work that they present. The DDN Inc. Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct (CEPC) describes the distinction between appropriate and inappropriate conduct and possible actions that we may take in response to alleged or confirmed misconduct. By accepting your status as a Legends-endorsed judge, you agree to comply with such expectations for appropriate behavior as outlined in the CEPC, such as:

1. Advocating for a fair, inclusive environment for all artists within and outside of DDN Inc. events and spaces.
2. Taking steps to maintain a fair, inclusive environment for all artists within and outside of DDN Inc. events and spaces.
3. Taking accountability for any missteps or harm done, including:
    a. Addressing conflict readily and internally or involving DDN Inc. when necessary.
    b. Taking accountability for endangering the safety of others (whether intentionally or unintentionally, or as an inactive bystander).

Please note that appropriate conduct includes adhering to requirements for Partner Competitions and P&O as necessary. These requirements are detailed on the next page.

PANEL APPROVALS

Partner Competitions must have a minimum of 5 judges; at least 3 judges must have an extensive fusion background.

Partner Competitions must ensure that judging panels do NOT include alumni of competing teams that they were previously affiliated with (described in "General Guidelines"). Exceptions may be made for judges who are at least TWO YEARS removed from the circuit IF the competition is unable to secure Legends-endorsed judges that are unaffiliated with the competing lineup or if the competition must replace a judge, within ONE WEEK of the competition.

Judges that are also DJs may NOT be allowed to judge for a team they have compiled a full mix for, if said team is competing at that Partner Competition.

Spring Partner Competitions must submit their judging panels for approval to their designated Legends Registration Chair by January 6th, 2027, with panels confirmed by January 17th, 2027. Partner Competitions may work directly with their Legends Registration Chair in extenuating circumstances regarding any requirements or deadlines.

It is the sole responsibility of a Partner Competition to ensure that all judges on a panel are varied and comprehensive in style, and that they are all available the weekend of competition, BEFORE presenting a panel to Legends Judging for approval.

For a Partner Competition panel to be officially approved, Legends must confirm the panel, and Partner Competitions and judges must be in agreement regarding travel and compensation expectations. Only AFTER approval from Legends Judging should Partner Competitions move to sign contracts and prepare expenses/travel/accommodations for their judging panel.

JUDGING PROCESS

Legends will provide a standardized rubric with specific categories and assigned point values to all Partner Competitions. Judges are required to score teams using the standardized rubric.

Judges are allowed to add/edit scores at their own discretion, and may revisit previous teams' scores at any time during the show. Judges are allowed to score in increments as precise as 0.5 in any category on the rubric.

Judges may discuss with each other during the performances & show but may NOT discuss their numerical scores. Judges are NOT allowed to interact or discuss with any other judging panel that may be present at a Partner Competition during the show.

After all competing performances have concluded, judges will have an allotted time to finalize their scores. Deliberation is required and will be guided by a Legends Representative.

Judges will have viewing access to the following items as a panel:

- Overall Score Rankings
- Categorical Averages for each of the teams
    - Judges will not be able to view other judges' individual scores.

Judges will have a THIRTY MINUTE time limit for deliberations, plus an additional FIVE MINUTE time limit for caption awards either at the beginning or at the end of the deliberations, if applicable. Judges may discuss rankings of teams in any order. Judges may edit their scores based on insights from other judges. No team may move more than TWO placings (up or down) in the overall rankings relative to their pre-deliberation overall ranking.

Judges are REQUIRED to confirm all overall rankings for all competing teams starting from EIGHTH and ending at FIRST. Judges' individual rankings are NOT required to align with the overall rankings. Legends and the Partner Competition will verify final placings before announcement.

If a judge suspects biting during competition or deliberations, they are encouraged to submit an official biting appeal and ARE allowed to discuss biting with other judges during competition or deliberations.

BITING APPEALS PROCESS

If a party suspects the use of non-original choreography (biting) by a team at a Partner Competition, an appeal may be submitted to Legends DURING said Partner Competiton OR within 48 hours of the competition. An appeal must include a completed submission form with supporting evidence, which can be done through the official Biting Appeals form. Once an appeal is submitted, a statement will be requested from the accused team, and both the evidence and the team's statement will be available for review.

During the appeal process, a panel of five votes—four from the Legends-endorsed biting panel and one combined vote from Legends leadership—will evaluate the case. If a majority (three out of five) of the votes determines that the choreography is not biting, the appeal will be denied, and the accused team will be notified of the denied appeal and advised that this decision could be re-evaluated in future competitions even with the same biting panel. The appeal writer will also be informed if they requested follow-up.

If the majority votes that the choreography warrants further review, the biting panel will then reconvene with three possible outcomes: (1) they may decide that no biting occurred; (2) that biting did occur, and warrants a point deduction; or (3) that biting did occur and, if all involved members of the biting panel agree unanimously, warrants an automatic disqualification of the accused team.

If biting is confirmed and the panel would like to proceed with (2) as aforementioned, point deductions will be determined by each biting panel member submitting a vote, including zero as a valid option, and an average will be calculated. The final point deduction must have unanimous agreement from all biting panel members, with deductions ranging from 1 to 25 points based on the severity of the biting, and will be placed in the "Biting" category of the rubric. Final placings and decisions will be sent out during the competition or approximately 1 week from the conclusion of the competition.*

*If biting escalates DURING a competition, the teams have TWENTY (20) minutes from initial contact with Legends to provide their rebuttal or response to the appeal.

If a judge suspects biting during competition or deliberations, they are encouraged to submit an official biting appeal and ARE allowed to discuss biting with other judges during competition or deliberations.

RUBRIC

Legends will provide a standardized rubric with specific categories and assigned point values to all Partner Competitions. Judges are required to score teams using the standardized rubric.

The goal of this rubric is to score based on three concepts: choreography, set design, and execution. For example, this rubric allows judges to deduct for mistakes and asynchrony, but also allows them to award points for ideas behind the creation of a set or performance. The questions described in each category are not the only aspects to consider when judging: they are meant to prompt the viewer's judgment.

During the show, judges must input their scores into Legends-provided Google Sheets. If a judge prefers to score on paper, either they or a Legends representative must input their scores into Legends-provided Google Sheets before official deliberations begin. A judge’s copy of their notes may be kept by the individual judge, but should also be transcribed on the Notes tab of their scoresheet.

Legends will be sharing the full scoresheet, inclusive of all judges’ scores for all teams, with all competing teams and the public after the competition.

OFFICIAL RUBRIC

CHOREOGRAPHY (40 POINTS)

COMPLEXITY OF CHOREOGRAPHY (10 POINTS)	Level of difficulty implemented through movement such as weight changes, varied intricate movement, isolations, tempo changes, and other technically demanding elements
MUSICALITY (10 POINTS)	Use of choreography that interprets and responds to instrumentation, rhythmic variations, vocals, and lyrics in the music. Movements should highlight the depth and complexity of the selected track.
CREATIVITY (10 POINTS)	Original movements, concepts, and transitions that make the routine unique, refreshing, and distinguished from others.
FORMATION STAGING (10 POINTS)	Use of varied formations and creative ways to move from one formation to another to allow for quick and seamless transitions. Adequate use of the performance floor.

OFFICIAL RUBRIC

EXECUTION (35 POINTS)

PROJECTION & COMMUNICATION (5 POINTS)	Includes expression, emotion, interaction within the team, energy, and entertainment
CLEANLINESS (10 POINTS)	Consistent unison and timing by the team. Uniformity of team movement within choreography and skills.
FOUNDATIONS & TECHNIQUE (10 POINTS)	Proper execution of movements that are authentic to the styles from which they originate.
FORMATION SPACING (5 POINTS)	Consitent and even positioning of dancers throughout all formations and transitions that provides clairty of intended staging and pictures.
STAMINA (5 POINTS)	Consistent energy management and execution throughout the entire routine. Athletes maintain power, control. and commitment from beginning to end.

OFFICIAL RUBRIC

SET DESIGN (25 POINTS)

THEME: CONCEPT & STORY (10 POINTS)	Clarity and cohesion of the set's concept or story, and how intentionally the choreography and non-choreography elements work together to tell it, including props, staging, dialogue, video, etc.
IMPACT (10 POINTS)	Whether the set as a whole — choreography, music, theme, and production — comes together to create a cohesive and unforgettable performance. Includes whether creative risks paid off.
PRODUCTION (5 POINTS)	Intentional and effective use of production elements — lighting, video, backdrops, props, and gimmicks — to elevate the performance rather than distract from it.

OFFICIAL RUBRIC

DEDUCTIONS (0-X)	Adherence to competition rules throughout the performance, with no moments or movements that felt inappropriate or out of line.
BITING (1-25)	

* Fall competition rubrics will not include the theme category.

Deductions must only pertain to the performance. They are up to the discretion of the judges but require consultation from the Partner Competition and Legends. If a judge places a deduction on any team for any reason, they MUST disclose it privately to the Legends Representative before official deliberations begin, and the Legends representative will determine whether the deduction is valid or if it must be moved to another category during deliberations. Deductions made in the “Deductions” category are made on show day.

If a judge suspects biting during competition or deliberations, they are encouraged to submit an official biting appeal and ARE allowed to discuss biting with other judges during competition or deliberations. Biting deductions must follow the official biting appeals process. If the official biting appeals process concludes that a team has performed unoriginal/’bitten’ choreography, judges may edit scores, change placings and/or deduct between 1-25 points using the “Biting” category depending on the severity of the infraction.

LEGENDS

thank you for reading!

If you have any questions regarding information displayed on the database or the status of your endorsement for Legends Partner Competitions, please reach out to the Legends Judging Relations Committee at legendsjudging@desidancenetwork.org

2026-2027