

**Some Thoughts on
Creating Interesting Singing Call Figures**

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Some Thoughts on Creating Interesting Singing Call Figures

The Sad Story of the Tired, Over-Worked Cousins

Consider the following popular Mainstream singing call figure and its Plus cousin:

- (MS) HEADS SQUARE-T, SWING-T, SPIN-TOP, R<, SQUARE-T 3, SWING CORNER, PROM.
- (Plus) HEADS SQUARE-T, SWING-T, LADIES FOLD, PEEL TOP, R<, SQUARE-T 3, SWING C, PROM

These are incredibly popular figures. My wife and I enjoy dancing and attend many club dances and festivals. I am surprised at the number of times I hear these calls at dances. They aren't bad as figures, but they are tired and over-worked. They flow well and are a good length. But the bigger problem is the limited variety of singing call figures in general.

I have written my own singing call figures for about 15 years because I like the singing call figures to match the theme of the tip. Over the years I have developed a systematic approach to writing figures. Having to explain it to others has helped crystalize the process for me. I don't claim this is the best approach. I will just say that it has worked well for me over the last 15 years.

Notation note: I have spelled out most of the calls but consistently used "-T" for THRU.

Singing Call Philosophy

There is one objective on which we all can agree: Singing call figures should have a high dancer success rate. There are two methods to achieve that objective:

- 1) **Keep It Easy** - Use easy, familiar choreography on singing call figures to promote high dancer success. This view holds that dancers sometimes must think hard on the patter call and they want the singing call to be easy so they can relax and just enjoy moving to the music.
- 2) **Keep It Interesting** - Design singing call figures to be interesting and somewhat unusual. Work on those unusual parts in the patter call so that dancers will be highly successful in the singing call. This view holds that dancers enjoy the creative aspects of square dancing which extends to the singing calls. Giving dancers material which is way below their dance level results in repetitive, uninteresting dancing.

My observation from attending many club dances and multi-caller festivals is that most callers subscribe to method #1 above. I am firmly planted in method #2. Note that these two philosophies are not mutually exclusive. There are many interesting, easy singing call figures. I have written many singing call figures which are interesting (but not necessarily easy) and indexed them by the main theme of the figure. I draw on these to plan dances, making the interesting idea the theme of the tip so that dancers will be prepared for the singing call figures. The purpose of this paper is to describe my approach in writing new figures.

Even those who are not fans of method #2 above will benefit from this paper:

- The techniques described in this paper can be used to develop simple figures so fans of method #1 will see some new material with simple figures.
- Those who do singing call figures extemporaneously may find the techniques presented here will yield new paths and modules for extemporaneous calling.

This paper initially describes some guidelines I use to generate singing calls. Next I outline a procedure describing the steps to create figures. Five example sessions develop new figures following this procedure with annotations of the thought process in creating new figures. Then we look at a method to organize and store the new figures so they can be used in dance planning. Finally, we show an example of a dance plan which draws from these stored figures.

Guidelines For Good Figures

The guidelines all come from addressing problems I see with many singing call figures.

Problem #1: Many singing call figures look like “HEADS SQUARE-T 4, (Do something in a box), SWING CORNER, PROMENADE. This is box choreography which limits the call selection to two-couple calls.

Guideline #1: Use whole square choreo, not box choreo. Have different groups of dancers interacting, not just the same four.

Problem #2: Dancers swing corners in the corner position and then just stop at home rather than doing a full 16 beat promenade. Other dancers run into the back of them causing a traffic jam.

Guideline #2: Design your figures so that dancers get their corners just past their home position.

(4 LADIES CHAIN, HEADS SQUARE-T 2, R<, SWING CORNER) Then they can't short stop at home. Some argue that this gives a 12-beat promenade with 16 beats of music. Given the problem, the choice is not 12 or 16 beats. The choice is 12 or 0 beats. In addition, older dancers who move slowly get a benefit from the slightly shorter promenade.

Problem #3: The vast majority of singing call figures end with SWING CORNER, PROMENADE. But a third (my guess) of the dancers won't swing at all. They skip the swing and immediately promenade, running into the back of those who do swing. My wife and I actually swing once (or twice) and have sometimes hit the dancers with our joined hands who ran right into us from the rear. That gives me a chance to practice tact and diplomacy.

Guideline #3: Design your figures to promenade without a swing. If they won't dance a SWING, then I won't call one. For example,

- CHAIN DOWN THE LINE, PROMENADE
- SCOOT BACK TO A STAR-T, PROMENADE
- ALLEMANDE LEFT NEW CORNER, PROMENADE.

Problem #4: So many singing calls seem to just take up music without much personality. We see the same handful of figures over and over (like the over-worked cousins above). I have seen papers

telling how to write singing call figures which focus heavily on selecting calls to fill the required 48 beats without any discussion of the content of the figure.

Guideline #4: Every singing call figure should have at least one interesting idea. The figure is built around this idea.

These are not rules or laws – they are guidelines. I have many figures which do not conform with one or more of these guidelines – but my best figures conform to them all.

The Development Process

1. Decide the target audience. This includes the program (Basic, Mainstream, Plus) but more specifically the difficulty. For example, you might be writing for a Mainstream class and need to limit yourself to the first 60 calls. Your target audience might be a strong Plus group that can handle some extended applications. Defining the target audience sets the calls and arrangements that can be used in the figure.
 - But this step is optional. I focus on a target audience if I am working on a figure for a beginner class or for a Plus DBD singing call. Otherwise, I leave the target audience undefined initially and develop different figures for a single idea. Then I identify the target audience at the end. This approach gives me the flexibility to use whatever calls I need to resolve the figure.
2. Find an interesting idea to serve as the foundation for the figure. This is the core step for the “Keep It Interesting” callers. The idea can be anywhere in the figure: beginning, middle, end.
3. Determine the development technique to use. The placement of the interesting idea in the figure influences the techniques which will be most helpful.

Front-to-back development. If the main idea is at the start (for example, HEADS SPIN-TOP, EXTEND), then lock down that part and work out how to move the dancers to a target setup where all have their corners available. Appendix 1: Corner Swing Targets shows the possible targets for front-to-back development. It is not necessary to know that detail at this point, but it will be important in understanding the exercises.

Meet-in-the-middle development. If the main idea is at the end (for example, DOUBLE PASS THRU, TRACK 2, SWING CORNER), then put your square dance “dolls” where they will swing corner and work your way backward to see where they would be before the DOUBLE PASS-T. This is the target setup. Then work out how to get the dancers to that target setup from a static square. The name of the approach is “meet-in-the-middle” because the target setup is in the middle of the figure.

Middle ideas. If an idea occurs in the middle (like HALF SASHAY 1+1/2), I normally develop the ending which follows it and then treat the whole package as an end-of-figure idea.

4. How do we decide what calls to do next?

The driving purpose of moving the dancers in both development methods is to reach the target setup efficiently within the constraints of flow and level. Step 3 determines the target box. This step moves the dancers to the target box.

Move to the target box in two steps. In front-to-back development, the first step is getting the correct dancers in the target box with little regard for partners or arrangements. Once they are in the target box, then develop alternatives to get them in the right place to resolve with corners. This will become clearer in the examples.

Creative notes. The call sequences are the creative, fun part of the process. We want our calls to be different and distinctive from the average figures, but here are some ideas to consider:

- Singing call figures have 48 beats to use, so we must be efficient in getting to the target. It is always easier to add a few beats than to remove a few beats, so go short.
- Be interesting. Consider unusual ways to move the dancers. Find an alternative to SQUARE-T 4 to start the figure. But remember, we want interesting and highly successful.
- Body flow is super important to high success rate. Surprise direction changes lead to mistakes and broken-down squares. Note that the Overworked Cousins figures at the top both require all dancers to turn and face corner before the swing. As a dancer, I feel that this kills the momentum going into the swing. For this reason, I never write a singing call figure where all dancers must turn before the swing. This is a good example of a body flow consideration.

Setting expectations. Note that every path we go down will not produce a great singing call figure. This is like finding your way through a maze. Some paths do not pan out. If I spend 10 or 15 minutes trying to reach a target without success, I move on to a new path. Also, just putting it aside and coming back later may help. I recently had an idea I really liked but just could not come up with a single good figure so I put it aside. Over the next two days, I came up with three great figures for it.

5. Estimate the figure length.

The length of a figure is 64 beats. The promenade takes the last 16 beats, leaving 48 beats for the body of the figure. Estimating the length should occur after the figure is written. Although experience gives us a gut feel for length during development, focusing too much on beat counting is a distraction during the creative process.

The first method of estimating length is to use the CALLERLAB documentation on timing and add up the beats for each call in the figure. The CALLERLAB documents can be seen in Appendix 2. Note that these timing counts are averages. Many factors can influence the

actual length. Actions done concurrently, size of the squares, and age of the dancers all influence the actual figure length. Experience has shown that we should target about 44 beats, not 48. These observations are not intended to discount the value of using this approach for estimating the length – just to emphasize that it is an estimate.

A second approach for estimating length is to play singing call music and call the new figure to check the length. Most experienced callers have a good sense of timing when they are calling. This approach also gives us a good sense of how the new figure plays with the phrasing of the music. Ultimately, “truth” is determined by how the dancers perform the figure no matter what technique we use for an estimate.

Using either approach, if the length is off, try to apply a fix to make it fit. If the figure is too short, pad it with a LINES FORWARD AND BACK, a DOSADO or a longer equivalent. If the figure is too long, we may be able to find a shorter way of getting to the same spot. It is easier to pad a figure to make extra length than to shorten it. Ultimately, we may need to just throw out a figure that cannot be brought to the right length.

Be aware that the figure lengths developed in this paper have not been verified with actual dancers. I developed the figures in the course of writing this paper so the rationale would be fresh and realistic. Sometimes the dancers are hesitant and they dance slower because they are unfamiliar with the material. I take that as a sign that I did not adequately prepare them during the patter call.

6. Plan for Dancer Success

Part of the deal with being a “Keep It Interesting” caller is planning for dancer success. This has two parts: picking the right target audience and identifying the unusual parts to work in the patter call so dancers will not be surprised.

Target Audience - Obviously, the program (Mainstream, Plus, etc.) can be seen in the call selection. But there is a wide variety within each program to address. For example, 8 CIRCULATE 1+1/2 from left-handed waves is a Mainstream call, but callers should have the good judgement to use it only with strong Mainstream or solid Plus dancers.

Using the patter for preparation – After the final version of each figure has been developed, we should examine it for unusual or difficult parts. Then we plan to work on those parts during the patter call. For example, a LEFT SQUARE-T in a figure should prompt us to use that call frequently during the patter. If we find that those sequences do not go well in the patter, then we should bail out of the planned singing call figure in favor of an easier one. Sometimes a figure may have so much unusual material that we should introduce the parts over multiple tips and plan for the figure in the last half of the dance. Frank Lane was my “caller hero” and mentor for many years. He was a master at preparing dancers for the singing call in the patter and enjoyed high success rates with his singing calls.

The example sessions below label each figure with target audience and identify material that should be worked in the patter.

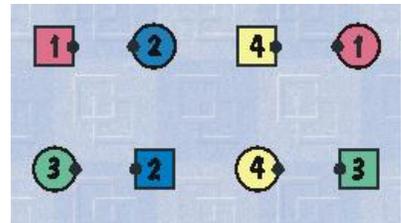
Example Sessions

These examples are organized into sessions because a single idea frequently results in multiple figures. One idea may give rise to a related idea, generating more figures. When everything comes to rest, the session is concluded. Each session has one or more call charts which show how the figures were developed. The discussion addresses the thinking behind each step in the call chart. As we go through these sessions, note how the guidelines above influence the development of the figures. Read Appendix 1 at this point to understand the terms Right Box, Left Box, and Home Box.

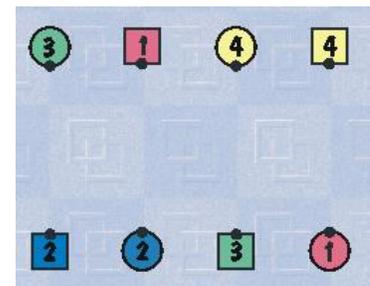
Session #1A: Home Box

The main idea for this session is at the beginning of the figure: HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T. When the main idea is at the front, we use a front-to-back development process. The first part of this session targets the Home Box. Initially we just try to get the correct four dancers into the Home Box with little regard to being in the final spot required for a Corner Swing. Finally, we move them to the target spot for resolution.

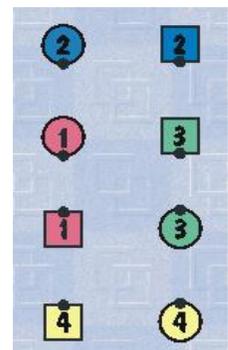
The square on the right shows the square after calling the main idea. We need to get from here to a Home Box. If we call SLIDE-T, PASS-T, WHEEL & DEAL, the men are in a Home Box but the ladies are across the street. We can fix that using a LADIES CHAIN. We call SLIDE-T, LADIES CHAIN, PASS-T, WHEEL & DEAL to get the correct four dancers in a Home Box. But that flow is not so good. We want an equivalent with good flow.



Calling TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRCULATE, MEN RUN, R< (See boxes A & B on the Call Chart, page 7) is an equivalent to SLIDE-T, LADIES CHAIN and results in the square shown on the right.

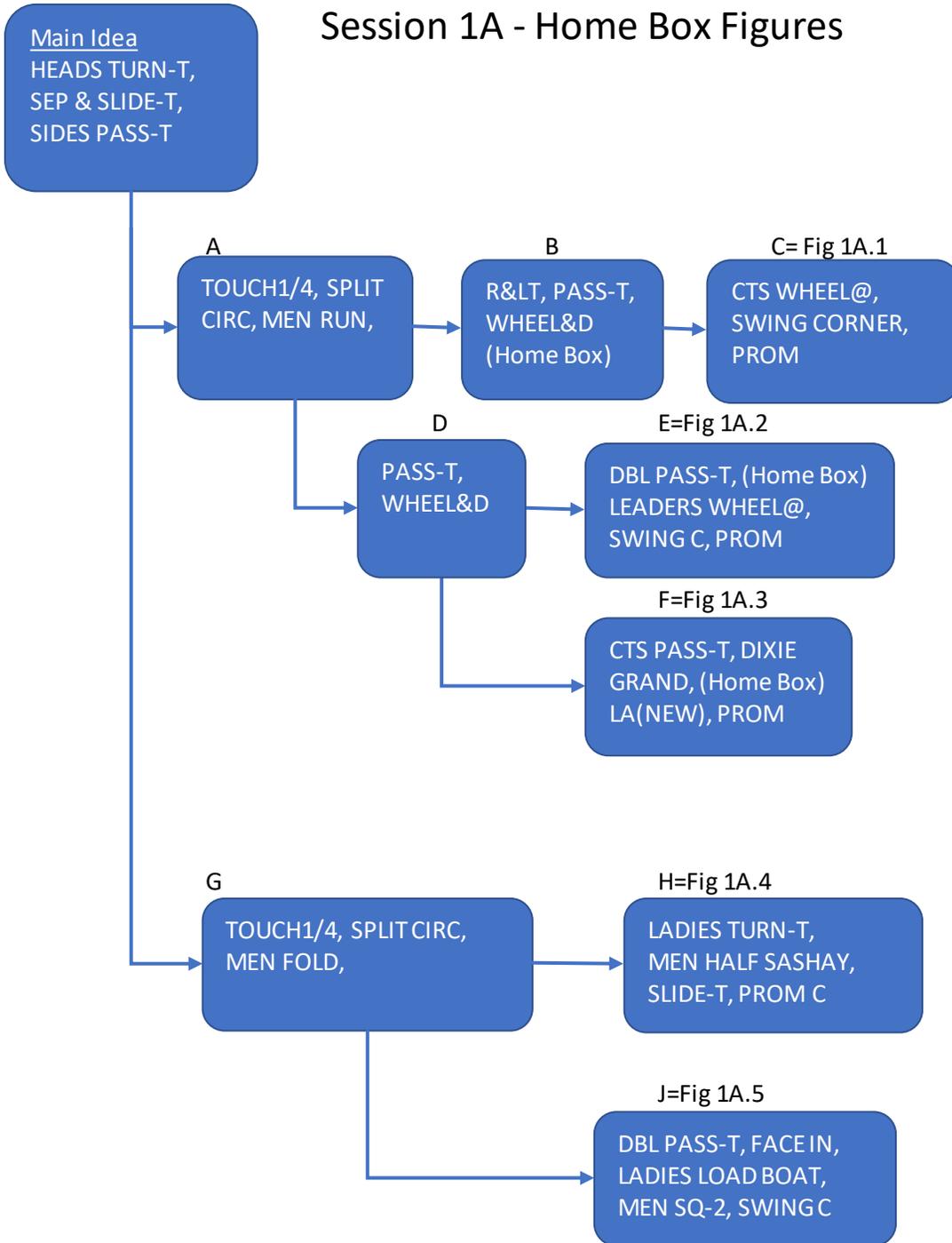


From there calling PASS-T, WHEEL & DEAL (Box B) results in the four dancers we need in the Home Box as shown in the square on the right, but we are not quite to a CORNER SWING. Calling CTS WHEEL AROUND, SWING CORNER (Box C) finishes the figure. We could also finish with CTS SQUARE-T 3 but that move takes longer. At this point we want to complete the figure as efficiently as possible.



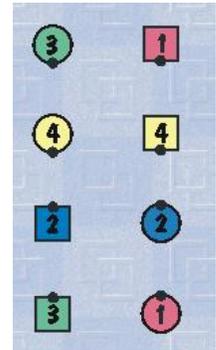
Main Idea at the Beginning

Session 1A - Home Box Figures



We now have one figure that works. The approach is to develop many alternative figures in the session and pick the best few at the end. So we continue to look at additional options.

From the Call Chart Box D is an alternative path to box B. We can call PASS-T, WHEEL & DEAL to give the square on the right. One resolution is to call DOUBLE PASS-T, LEADERS WHEEL AROUND, SWING CORNER (Box E). We have reached the Home Box after the DOUBLE PASS-T.

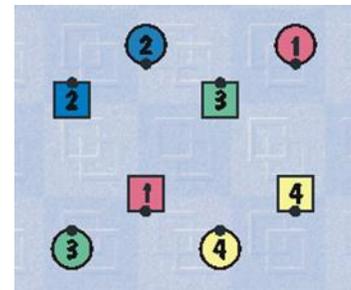


Another resolution is CENTERS PASS-T, DIXIE GRAND, ALLEMANDE LEFT (NEW), PROMENADE (CORNER) (Box F). The Dixie Grand moves us to a Home Box.

We now have three figures which use the same basic approach to move the dancers to a Home Box.

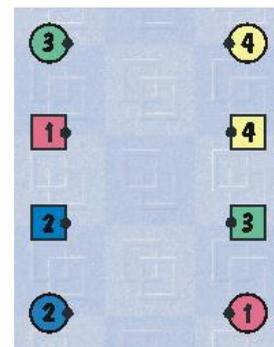
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRCULATE, MEN RUN, R<, PASS-T, WHEEL & DEAL, CTS WHEEL AROUND, SWING CORNER, PROM (Fig 1A.1)	HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRCULATE, MEN RUN, PASS-T, WHEEL & DEAL, DOUBLE PASS-T, LEADERS WHEEL AROUND, SWING CORNER (Fig 1A.2)	HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRCULATE, MEN RUN, PASS-T, WHEEL & DEAL, CENTERS PASS-T, DIXIE GRAND, ALLEMANDE LEFT (NEW), PROMENADE (CORNER) Fig (1A.3)
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We move on to box G on the Call Chart. The calls in G give a new way to get to a Home Box. The square on the right shows the result after TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC in box G. Note that we have the four dancers we need already in the Home Box. The ladies are in-sequence but the men are not. Therefore, we can resolve using MEN FOLD, LADIES TURN-T, MEN HALF SASHAY, SLIDE-T, PROM CORNER (Boxes G & H, Fig 1.4).



However, I have some reservation about this figure. My gut feel is that the figure will be too short. Also, I am concerned that the men are too far apart after the FOLD to see the HALF SASHAY. I would work on this combination in the patter. I could avoid the HALF SASHAY by changing the figure to MEN TRADE, LADIES TURN-T, MEN COURTESY CORNER, PROM. In fact, I like this better than the original. If this figure is too short, I should take this ending and make a figure based on it. This is a good example of one figure generating new figures based on totally different main ideas.

The calls in Box J may seem strange. In doing the DOUBLE PASS-T I am moving them away from the Home Box which is my target. My original thinking is that I would bring them back using LOAD THE BOAT. The square on the right shows the setup after DOUBLE PASS-T,FACE IN. Note that if I use LOAD THE BOAT, the ladies will be in sequence, but the men will be out of sequence. I am sensing that the figure may already be too long so I have LADIES LOAD BOAT, MEN SQUARE-T 2 which nicely resolves to SWING CORNER (Box J). This branch has resulted in two more figures.



HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, MEN FOLD, LADIES TURN-T, MEN HALF SASHAY, SLIDE-T, PROM C (Fig 1A.4)	HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, MEN FOLD, DBL PASS-T, FACE IN, LADIES LOAD BOAT, MEN SQUARE-T 2, SWING C (Fig 1A.5)
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Before continuing with more figures in session1, we will move on to evaluating the figure length for the five figures we have developed in session 1A. These figures are listed below. To evaluate the length, I call the figures to some singing call music. If the decision is close, I sometimes use two different styles of singing call music. This is also the time when we identify the target audience for the figure and the parts of the figure that should be worked in the patter. The main idea for these calls (HEADS SEPARATE AND SLIDE-T) is unusual and should be worked in the patter for all these figures.

Figure	Length Check
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRCULATE, MEN RUN, R<, PASS-T, WHEEL & DEAL, CTS WHEEL AROUND, SWING CORNER, PROM (Fig 1A.1)	Length is good. No changes. Target audience: Solid Mainstream. Patter should work WHEEL & DEAL, CTS WHEEL@.
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRCULATE, MEN RUN, PASS-T, WHEEL & DEAL, DOUBLE PASS-T, LEADS WHEEL AROUND, SWING CORNER (Fig 1A.2)	Length is good. No Changes. . Target audience: Solid Mainstream. Patter should work DBL PASS-T, LEADS WHEEL@.

Figure	Length Check
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, [HEADS PASS-T & CLOVERLEAF], or [HEADS SEPARATE & SLIDE-T], SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRCULATE, MEN RUN, PASS-T, WHEEL & DEAL, CENTERS PASS-T, DIXIE GRAND, ALLEMANDE LEFT (NEW), PROMENADE (CORNER) Fig (1A.3)	Too Long. I like the ending so the figure is worth fixing. There are two ways to save some time in the opening: 1) Use HEADS PASS-T & CLOVER, SIDES PASS-T 2) Use HEADS SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T (Without the TURN-T) With either change, the figure length works. Target Audience: Easy Plus. Only one Plus call (Dixie Grand). Patter works Dixie Grand from facing boxes.
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, MEN FOLD, LADIES TURN-T, MEN HALF SASHAY, SLIDE-T, PROM C (Fig 1A.4)	This figure is about 16 beats too short. Throw it out.
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, MEN FOLD, DBL PASS-T, FACE IN, LADIES LOAD BOAT, MEN SQUARE-T 2, SWING C (Fig 1A.5)	This is a little tight but workable. Be sure to call the SIDES PASS-T immediately after HEADS SEPARATE & SLIDE-T to save a little time. If this still proves to be too long, then make the same change as in 1A.3 to buy a little more time. Target Audience: Simple Plus. Patter should work LADIES LOAD BOAT, MEN SQUARE-T 2.

Figure 1A.5 is tight so we turn to beat counting for a second opinion. Counts are from Appendix 2.

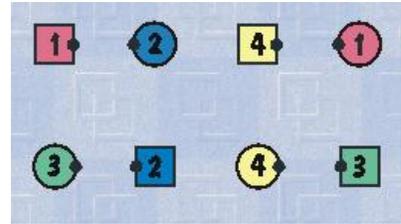
Call	Count	Comments
Start Calling	2	If we start calling on beat 1, dancers need 2 beats to hear the call
HEADS TURN-T	4+2=6	4 beats from close facing couples. Add 2 from static square
SEPARATE & SLIDE-T	4+4=8	2 beats + travel time (2) for separate; 4 beats for SLIDE-T
SIDES PASS-T	4-2=2	At least 2 beats (or more) of PASS-T is concurrent with heads action. This is conservative.
TOUCH1/4	2	From list
SPLIT CIRC	4	From list
MEN FOLD	2	From list
DBL PASS-T, FACE IN	4+1=5	From list plus 1 beat for FACE IN.
LADIES LOAD BOAT	12	From list
MEN SQUARE-T 2	0	Men's action is fully concurrent with LOAD BOAT
SWING C	4	From list
Total	47	

Our target is about 44 beats and this totals 47 beats. We can save 2 beats by giving the first call before the phrase which gets the length really close. This is tight but workable – same conclusion as the first method. Note that using beat counting requires some judgement to apply accurately.

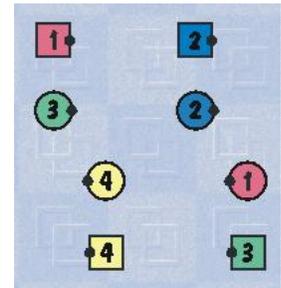
Session #1B: Left Box

We continue with the main idea: HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T. This time we look at figures resolving in the Left Box. We must swap the side couples across the set to get the right four dancers in a Left Box. The Call Chart on page 12 shows all the figures discussed here.

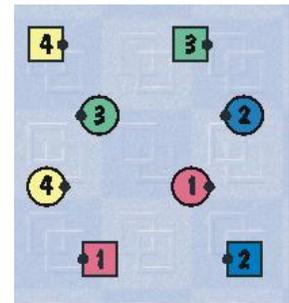
The square on the right shows the completion of the main idea.



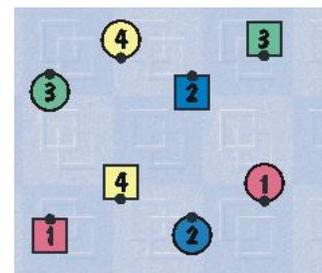
An obvious way to move the side couples across the set is SWING-T, MEN RUN, CPLS CIRC (Box A) which results in the square on the right. We have the four dancers we need in the left box. An obvious resolution is CHAIN DOWN LINE, SLIDE-T, SWING C, PROM (Box B).



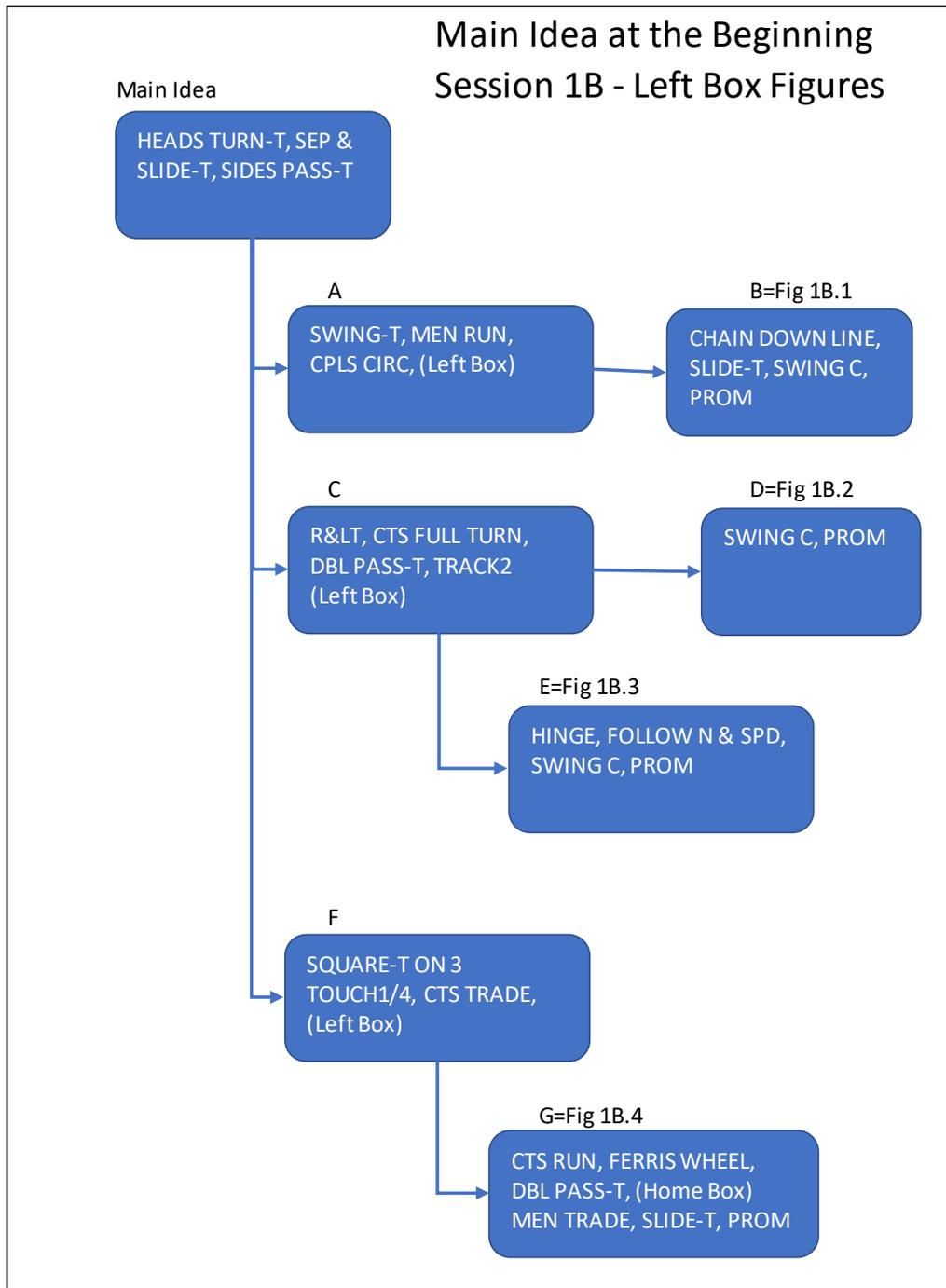
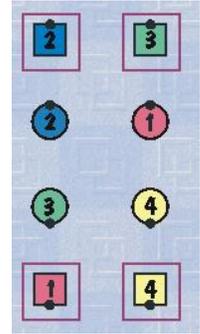
An alternative way to move the sides to a Left Box is using R<, CTS FULL TURN, DBL PASS-T, TRACK2 (Box C) which results in the square on the right. This is a Corner Swing Target so we can finish the figure with SWING CORNER, PROMENADE (Box D). However, this figure may be too short. We can pad the figure using SCOOT BACK, SWING CORNER or SINGLE HINGE, FOLLOW NEIGHBOR & SPREAD, SWING CORNER (Box E).



A third way to move the sides to a Left Box is shown in Box F: SQUARE-T ON 3 TOUCH1/4, CTS TRADE as shown in the square on the right. Now the problem is getting to a Corner Swing Target starting with same sexes together on the ends of the waves.



While trying to get there, I discovered the following: CTS RUN, FERRIS WHEEL, DBL PASS-T which converts the Left Box to a Home Box as seen in the square on the right. This conveniently resolves using MEN TRADE, SLIDE-T, PROM CORNER. Even though I was looking for a Left Box, I stumbled into a good finish with a Home Box. I'll take it.



Session 1B developed the following four figures which we now check for length. The main idea for these calls (HEADS SEPARATE AND SLIDE-T) is unusual and should be worked in the patter for all these figures.

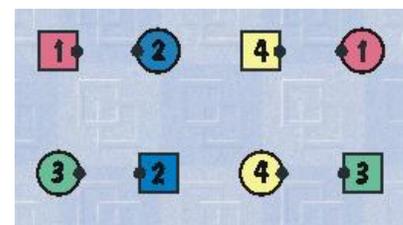
Figure	Length Check
HEADS TURN-T, SEP & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, DOSADO ~, SWING-T, MEN RUN, CPLS CIRC, CHAIN DOWN LINE, SLIDE-T, SWING C, PROM (Fig 1B.1)	Too short. If this figure was in Home Box or Right Box, we could PASS-T, ALLEMANDE LEFT (NEW), but that will not work in a Left Box. A good fix is to add a DOSADO after the sides PASS-T. This is a simple Mainstream figure so adding a DOSADO to a wave should not bore anyone. Target Audience: Mainstream
HEADS TURN-T, SEP & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, R<, CTS FULL TURN, DBL PASS-T, TRACK2, SWING C, PROM (Fig 1B.2)	Far too short. Figure 3 is the fixed version.
HEADS TURN-T, SEP & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, R<, CTS FULL TURN, DBL PASS-T, TRACK2, HINGE, FOLLOW N & SPD, SWING C, PROM (Fig 1B.3)	Length is good. No Changes. Target Audience: Simple Plus Patter should work TRACK2; and FOLLOW NEIGHBOR
HEADS TURN-T, SEP & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, SQUARE-T ON 3 TOUCH1/4, CTS TRADE, CTS RUN, FERRIS WHEEL, DBL PASS-T, MEN TRADE, SLIDE-T, PROM (Fig 1B.4)	Length is good. No Changes Target Audience: Good Mainstream Patter should work SQUARE-T ON 3 TOUCH1/4, CTS TRADE.

Session #1C: Right Box

We continue with the main idea: HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T. This time we look at figures resolving in the Right Box. We must swap the men across the set to get the correct four dancers in a Right Box. The Call Chart on page 14 shows all the figures discussed here.

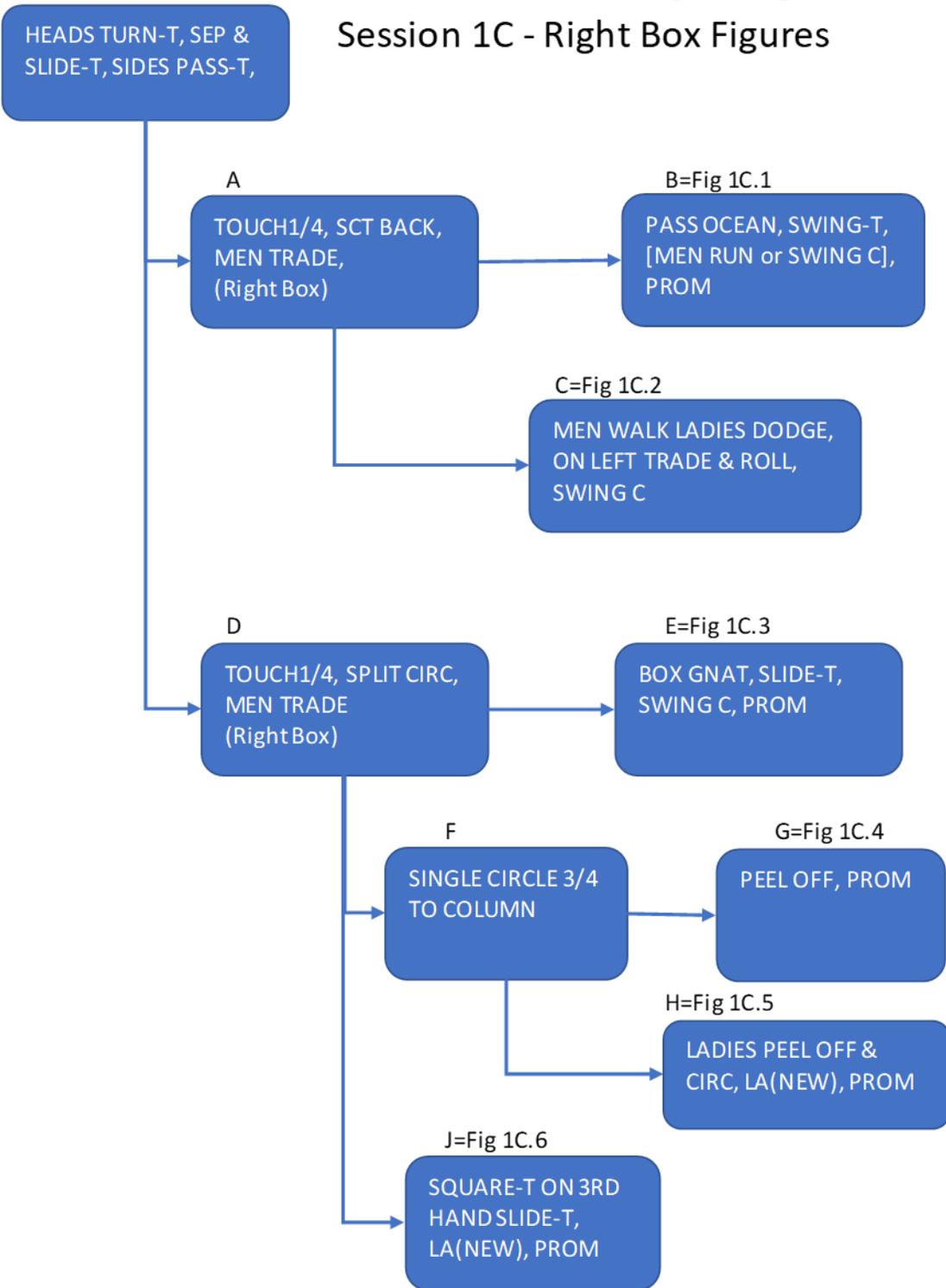
The square on the right shows the completion of the main idea. The best way to get the men across the set is MEN TRADE (DOWN THE LINE). The Call Chart shows two possibilities:

- 1) TOUCH1/4, SCOOT BACK, MEN TRADE (Box A)
- 2) TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, MEN TRADE (Box B)

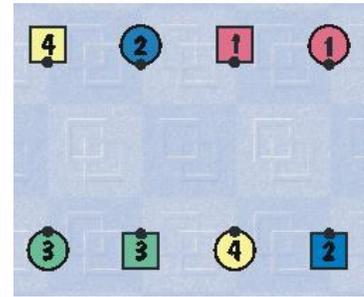


Main Idea

Main Idea at the Beginning Session 1C - Right Box Figures



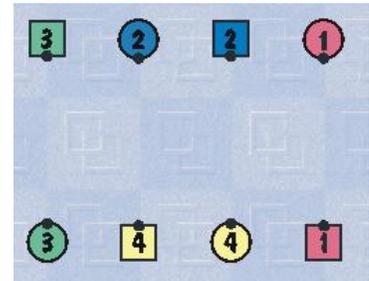
The square on the right shows the results of Box A. Note that the correct four dancers are in the Right Box. We need to resolve by getting them to one of the Corner Swing Targets. We need a LADIES CHAIN equivalent in the process.



Box B resolves using PASS OCEAN, SWING-T, [MEN RUN or SWING C], PROM. Note that this is a half-sashayed PASS OCEAN.

Box C resolves using MEN WALK LADIES DODGE, ON LEFT TRADE & ROLL, SWING C. I really like this ending because it is unusual but not difficult.

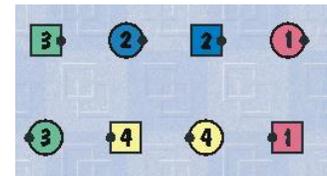
Box B uses the second approach for moving the men: TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, MEN TRADE. The square on the right shows the result. We need to resolve by getting them to one of the Corner Swing Targets. Note we do not need to effect a LADIES CHAIN.



Box E resolves simply using BOX GNAT, SLIDE-T, SWING C, PROM although the length may be short.

Box J resolves using SQUARE-T ON 3RD HAND SLIDE-T, LA(NEW), PROM. Although this is all Mainstream, it is unusual Mainstream. Note that the SQUARE-T and the SLIDE-T are both from half-sashayed positions. But the move is really a nice surprise as the new corner comes out of nowhere.

Box F sets up columns using SINGLE CIRCLE 3/4 TO COLUMN. The square on the right shows the results of this.



- Box G resolves using PEEL OFF, PROM CORNER.
- Box H resolves using LADIES PEEL OFF & CIRC, LA(NEW), PROM CORNER

Clearly one of these is going to have a length problem, but I don't know which at this point.

Session 1C developed the following seven figures which we now check for length. The main idea for these calls (HEADS SEPARATE AND SLIDE-T) is unusual and should be worked in the patter for all these figures.

Figure	Length Check
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T TOUCH1/4, SCOOT BACK, SLIDE-T, PASS-T, CHASE RIGHT, MEN TRADE, PASS OCEAN, SWING-T, [MEN RUN or SWING C], PROM (Fig 1C.1)	<p>This figure is about 8 beats short. I like the ending so we need a fix. If I replace the TOUCH1/4, SCOOT BACK with SLIDE-T, PASS-T, CHASE RIGHT, then it takes more time to get to the same spot. That change seems to be a good fix.</p> <p>Target Audience: The fix has shifted the figure from Mainstream to Easy Plus.</p> <p>Patter should work Chase Right and half-sashayed PASS THE OCEAN.</p>

Figure	Length Check
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SCOOT BACK, MEN TRADE, MEN WALK LADIES DODGE, ON LEFT TRADE & ROLL TO FACE, SWING C (Fig 1C.2)	<p>This figure is just a bit short. The fix is to wait an extra 2 beats before calling SIDES PASS-T. Due to the unusual sequence, the few extra beats may be needed. So take this figure as is.</p> <p>Target Audience: Good Mainstream Dancers Patter should work the sequence MEN TRADE, MEN WALK LADIES DODGE, ON LEFT TRADE & ROLL TO FACE</p>
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, MEN TRADE, BOX GNAT, SLIDE-T, SWING C , PASS-T, ALLEMANDE LEFT (NEW), PROM (Fig 1C.3)	<p>The figure is about 10 beats short, but there is an easy fix. Because we have a Right Box the fix is PASS-T, ALLEMANDE LEFT (NEW), PROM C. Length is good with this change.</p> <p>Target Audience: Easy Mainstream Patter should work SPLIT CIRC, MEN TRADE (Down Line)</p>
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, MEN TRADE, SINGLE CIRCLE 3/4 TO COLUMN, PEEL OFF, PROM CORNER (Fig 1C.4)	<p>This figure is about 12 beats short. The additional length in figure 5 is a great fix. Forget this figure.</p>
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, MEN TRADE, SINGLE CIRCLE 3/4 TO COLUMN, LADIES PEEL OFF & CIRC, LA(NEW), PROM CORNER (Fig 1C.5)	<p>Length is good. No Changes.</p> <p>Target Audience: Good Plus Dancers Patter should work SINGLE CIRCLE 3/4 TO COLUMN, LADIES PEEL OFF & CIRC</p>
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, MEN TRADE, SQUARE-T ON 3RD HAND SLIDE-T, LA(NEW), PROM (Fig 1C.6)	<p>Length is good. No Changes. There is a little extra time for the unusual figure.</p> <p>Target Audience: Strong Mainstream Dancers or Plus Dancers Patter should work MEN TRADE (Down Line), SQUARE-T (half-sashayed) ON 3RD HAND SLIDE-T. This is a challenging Mainstream move. Be prepared to bail out if the patter shows issues.</p>

Session 1 Summary – Given a single main idea we generated 16 viable figures with target audiences ranging from easy Mainstream to good Plus. This shows the flexibility of waiting to the end to state the target audience. This also demonstrates the point that Front-to-Back development generates a wealth of material due to the large variety of Corner Swing Targets which are available. I would normally generate five or six figures that I like with good variety and stop there.

Session #2: Ending Idea Using Meet-in-the-Middle Approach

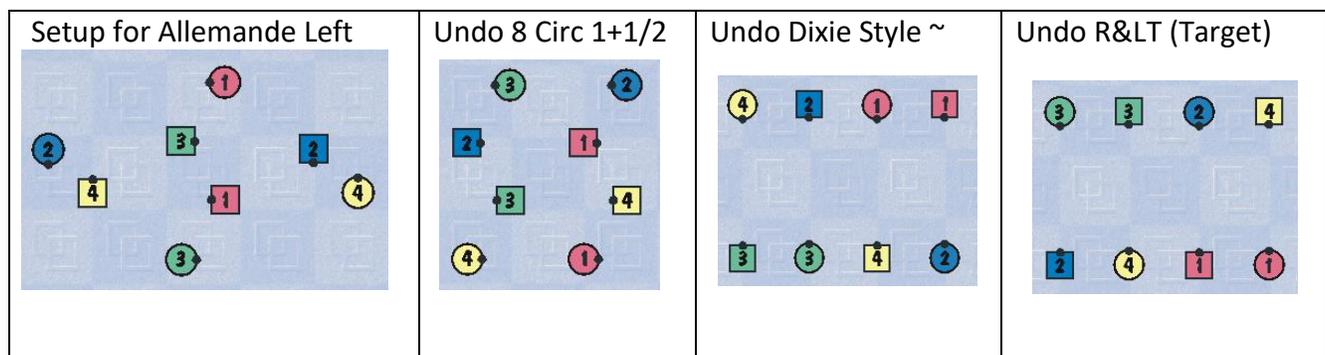
This session has the key idea as the resolution at the end of the figure. The ending idea here is

- R<, DIXIE STYLE, 8 CIRC 1+1/2, ALLEMANDE LEFT (NEW), PROM CORNER.

The first job is to find the target setup. We setup our square dance dolls where they need to be for the final ALLEMANDE LEFT then work backwards through the calls above to arrive at the target setup. Then we create the calls needed from a static square to hit that target in the middle of the figure.

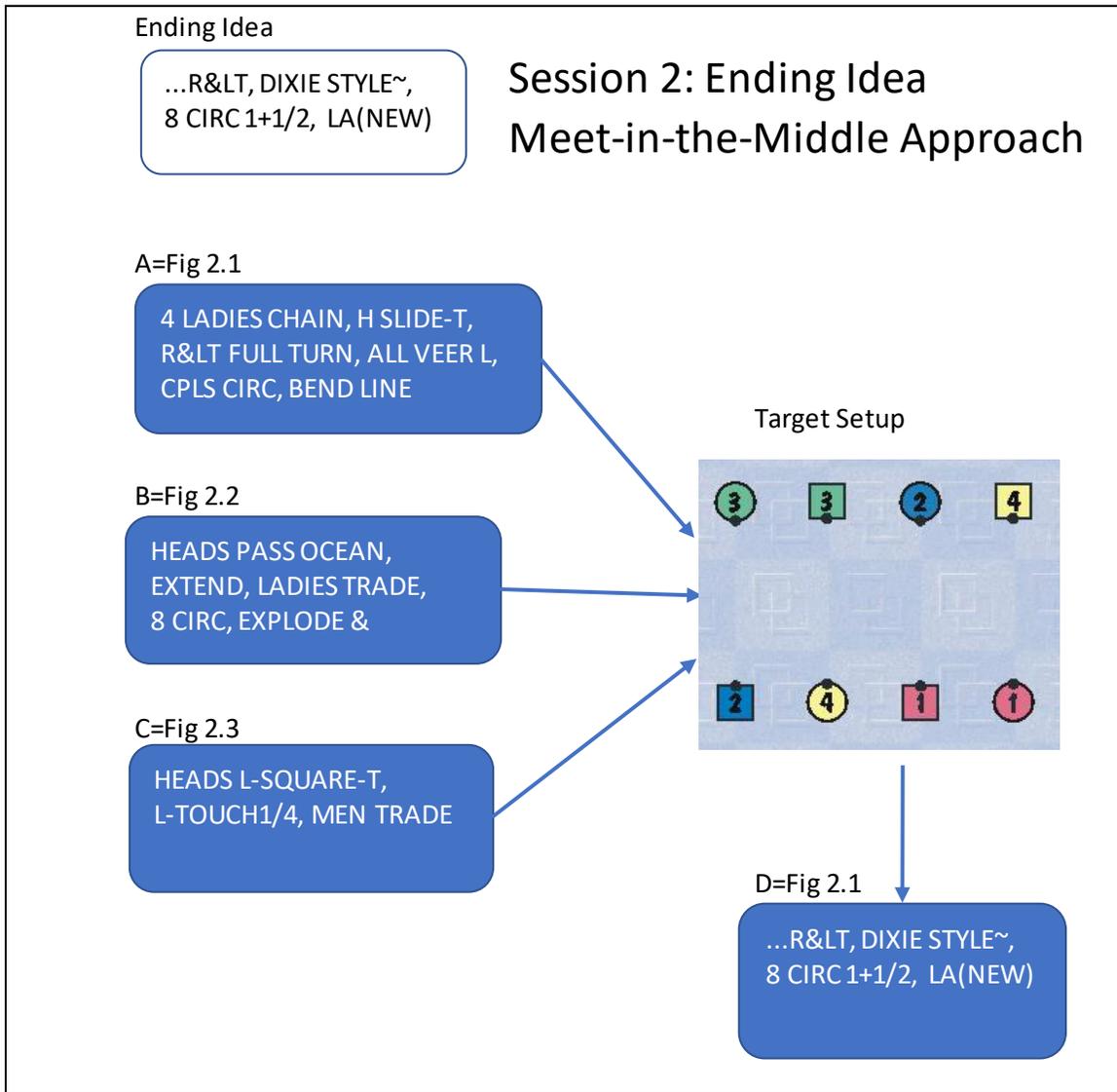
The series of squares below show the progression of backing up from the final ALLEMANDE LEFT. The left box shows the setup for the final ALLEMANDE LEFT. The second box is the setup when we undo 8 CIRCULATE 1 + ½. The third box is the setup when we undo DIXIE STYLE. The fourth box is the setup when we undo R<. This becomes our target setup. These calls together take up about 26 beats, leaving us with about 22 beats to get from a static square to this target setup.

Notice that the initial setup (left picture) resolves so that all get corner past the home position. This shows my preference for a Right Box solution due to Guideline #2. If I cannot find a call sequence from the static square to the target setup, I will rotate back to a Home Box solution and try again for a solution.



This process is quite different from the Front-to-Back process where we had many possible targets for Corner Swing. Here we have exactly one target setup. The Call Chart on page 18 shows this target setup and the down arrow to Box D which holds the closing calls. In this example, we show three alternatives for getting to the target setup, shown in Boxes A, B, and C.

When I first began writing singing call figures, I found creating the calls to hit the target in the required beats very challenging and time consuming. But I became better with practice. Finding these three took about 15 minutes. I am successful in solving these types of problems about 90% of the time. I fail to find a good solution in about 10% of the targets.



This session has developed the following three figures which we now check for length. The call 8 CIRC 1+1/2 from a left wave puts the target audience as strong Mainstream at a minimum. Patters should work the sequence DIXIE STYLE~, 8 CIRC 1+1/2. A getout is shown below to use in the patter.

Figure	Length Check
4 LADIES CHAIN, H SLIDE-T, R< FULL TURN, ALL VEER L, CPLS CIRC, BEND LINE, R<, DIXIE STYLE~, 8 CIRC 1+1/2, LA(NEW), PROM (2.1)	This figure is too long. I tried some fixes but was not satisfied with the flow. Throw it out.
HEADS PASS OCEAN, EXTEND, LADIES TRADE, 8 CIRC, EXPLODE & R<, DIXIE STYLE~, 8 CIRC 1+1/2, LA(NEW), PROM (Fig 2.2)	Length is good. No Changes. Target Audience: Plus due to one Plus call.
<p>HEADS L-SQUARE-T, L-TOUCH1/4, MEN TRADE, R&LT, DIXIE STYLE~, 8 CIRC 1+1/2, LA(NEW), PROM (2.3)</p> <p><u>Getout for use in patter to prepare for singing call figure.</u></p> <p>From Heads lead left box: SLIDE-T, PASS-T, BEND LINE, [R&LT, DIXIE STYLE, 8 CIRC 1+1/2, ALLEMANDE LEFT CORNER]</p>	<p>This figure works but is a little tight. I recommend calling HEADS L-SQUARE-T just before the start of the first phrase. This gives the dancers the first beat of the phrase and buys a couple of beats. In fact, giving the dancers the first beat initially causes the figure to match the music phrasing very well, giving the dancers the first beat of the phrase consistently.</p> <p>Target Audience: Strong Mainstream or Plus Use the getout shown on the left as practice in the patter. In addition, patter should work the sequence L-SQUARE-T, L-TOUCH1/4, MEN TRADE. This is enough material that I recommend working the unusual parts across multiple tips.</p>

Session #3: Middle Idea with Specific Ending

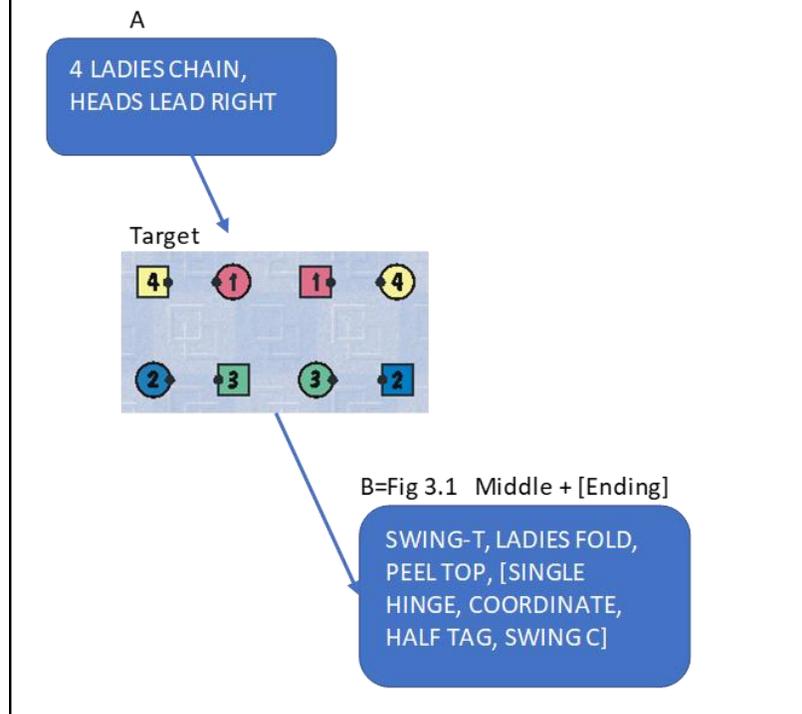
This session has the key idea in the middle of the figure. I normally develop a good resolution to the corner to tack on the end. This creates a long version of the main idea at the end which we covered in the previous session. Since I was critical of the Overworked Cousins at the beginning of the paper, I will adopt SWING-T, LADIES FOLD, PEEL THE TOP as my middle main idea. I really hate to promote this square dance cliché but admit that most Plus dancers can't succeed with PEEL THE TOP from anywhere else. The best I can do is to encourage some good material using it. I thought the following would make a good ending:

- SINGLE HINGE, COORDINATE, HALF TAG, SWING C.

The call chart on page 20 shows the long middle + ending in Box B with the target setup developed like in session #2. With this long, fixed sequence, we have very few beats left to move from the static square to the target setup so I need a really short sequence. Box A shows a figure that works but I must comment on the flow. When we follow a 4 LADIES CHAIN with HEADS LEAD RIGHT, it is critical that we call LEAD RIGHT just as they begin the courtesy turn. If we wait too long for the LEAD RIGHT call, the flow is horrible. I generally try to avoid this combination.

Session 3: Middle Idea with Specific Ending.

Treated as long ending idea. (Meet in Middle)



We will now check the length.

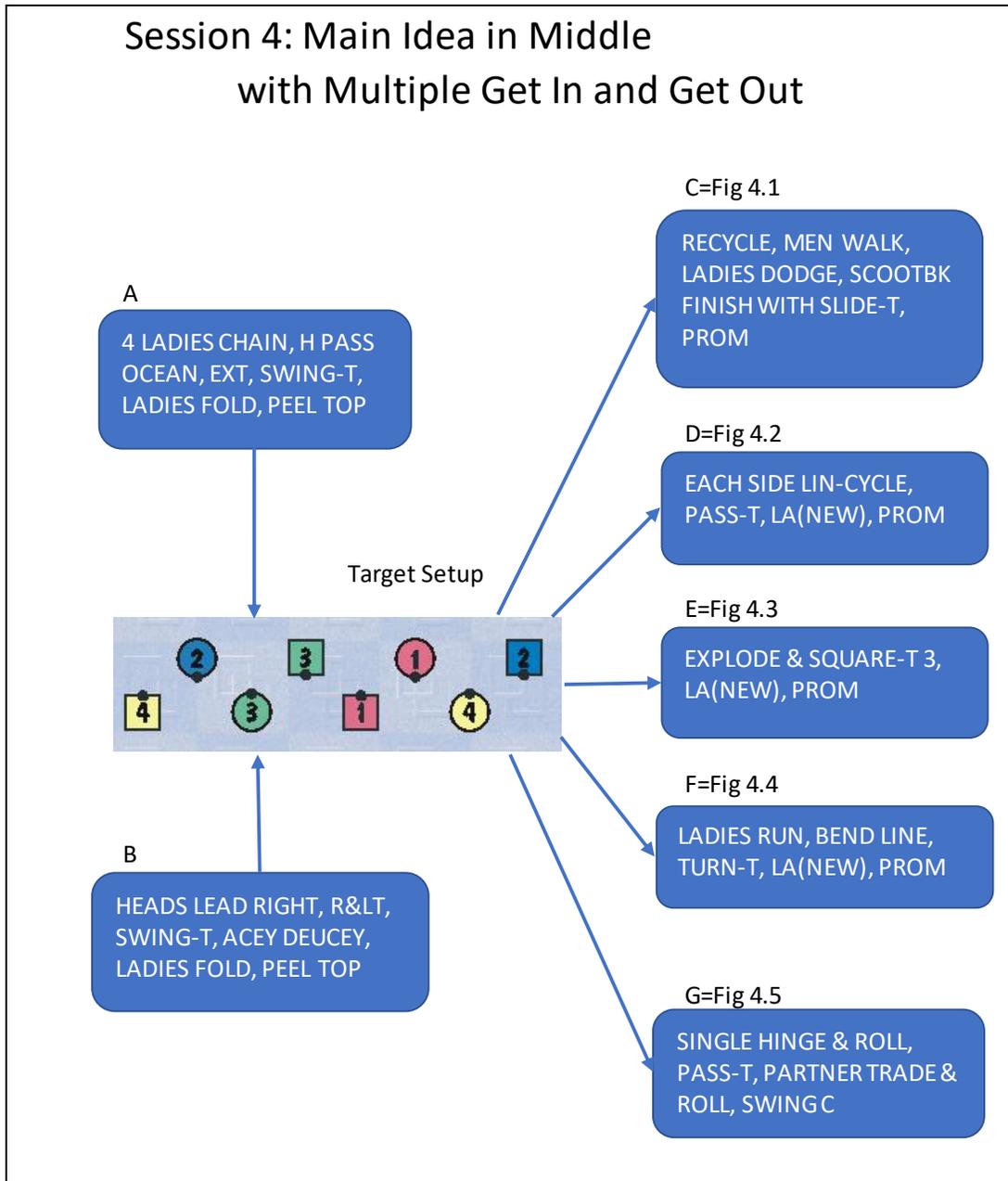
Figure	Length Check
4 LADIES CHAIN, HEADS LEAD RIGHT, DOSADO ~, SWING-T, LADIES FOLD, PEEL TOP, SINGLE HINGE, COORDINATE, HALF TAG, SWING C (Fig 3.1)	The figure is about 8 beats short. One fix is to DOSADO to the wave. That fix is shown on the left. Plus dancers are not so tolerant of DOSADO to a wave. A second fix which works better for Plus dancers is shown below.
4 LADIES CHAIN, HEADS LEAD RIGHT, HEADS [PASS OCEAN, LADIES TRADE] or [FAN TOP], EXTEND, SWING-T, LADIES FOLD, PEEL TOP, SINGLE HINGE, COORDINATE, HALF TAG, SWING C (Fig 3.2)	<p>A second fix is to replace the LEAD RIGHT with [PASS OCEAN, LADIES TRADE] or [FAN TOP], EXTEND. My preference is HEADS FAN TOP. Plus dancers should be able to do this although it is rarely heard.</p> <p>Target Audience: Plus Dancers Patter should work HEADS FAN TOP and the PEEL TOP sequence. Please do not follow PEEL TOP with R&LT in the patter. Dancers think there is no other call which can follow PEEL TOP so they do a R&LT automatically. We need to break this bad habit.</p>

Session #4: Middle Idea with Multiple Get-In and Get-Out

This session has the key idea in the middle of the figure. We continue to work on the same ideas as session #3:

- SWING-T, LADIES FOLD, PEEL THE TOP.

The Call Chart below shows the target setup with two paths to get there and five resolutions. I initially began with a single resolution (Box D) and worked backwards to the target setup as described in Session #2. But additional resolutions kept showing up for this target setup. Then I found two paths to get to the target setup.



At first glance it appears that we have generated ten figures (2 get-ins X 5 get-outs), but my preferences influence that outcome. Since I prefer a Right Box resolution, many of my figures begin with 4 LADIES CHAIN. Box B in the Call Chart above is more attractive because it avoids the 4 LADIES CHAIN. In addition, Box B avoids the SWING-T, LADIES FOLD, PEEL THE TOP cliché by adding an ACEY DEUCEY after the SWING-T. I really like Box B. I also like the five resolutions, so I hope the length works out.

This session has developed the following five figures which we now check for length. Patters should work on sequence SWING-T, ACEY DEUCEY, LADIES FOLD, PEEL TOP since it is a little different than what dancers expect.

Figure	Length Check
HEADS LEAD RIGHT, R<, SWING-T, ACEY DEUCEY, W FOLD, PEEL TOP, RECYCLE, MEN WALK, LADIES DODGE, SCOOTBK FINISH WITH SLIDE-T, PROM (Fig 4.1)	Length is good. No Changes. Target Audience: Average Plus
HEADS LEAD RIGHT, R<, SWING-T, ACEY DEUCEY, LADIES FOLD, PEEL TOP, EACH SIDE LINEAR CYCLE, PASS-T, LA(NEW), PROM (Fig 4.2)	Length is good. No Changes. Target Audience: Average Plus Patter should work on LINEAR CYCLE from tidal waves as this is unusual. Might even need to workshop this.
HEADS LEAD RIGHT, R<, SWING-T, ACEY DEUCEY, LADIES FOLD, PEEL TOP, EXPLODE & SQUARE-T 3, LA(NEW), PROM (Fig 4.3)	Length is good. No Changes. Target Audience: Average Plus
HEADS LEAD RIGHT, R<, SWING-T, ACEY DEUCEY, LADIES FOLD, PEEL TOP, LADIES RUN, BEND LINE, TURN-T, LA(NEW), PROM (Fig 4.4)	Length is good. No Changes. Target Audience: Average Plus Patter should work on TURN-T from facing couples.
HEADS LEAD RIGHT, R<, SWING-T, ACEY DEUCEY, LADIES FOLD, PEEL TOP, SINGLE HINGE & ROLL, PASS-T, PARTNER TRADE & ROLL, SWING C (Fig 4.5)	Length is good. No Changes. This figure might be a little tight so call the LEAD RIGHT before the phrase to buy a couple of beats. This also gives the dancer the first beat of the phrase. Target Audience: Average Plus Patter should work on PARTNER TRADE & ROLL from half-sashayed lines.

Session #5: Specified Target Audience, Main Idea at the End

I finish a DBD dance with one singing call using four DBD figures. The target audience for this session is Plus DBD. That sets the tone for what the choreo will look like. The main idea is at the end. I really like ½ Scoot Back so the ending sequence is from left columns:

- COORDINATE, LEFT HALF TAG, 1/2 SCOOT BACK, PROMENADE CORNER

The target setup was developed by working backwards through these calls. Note that everyone gets the corner in the Right Box which is my preference.

The Call Chart is on page 24. Full disclosure – I created an initial sequence to get to the target, but it was too short by about 8 beats. So the Call Chart is my second effort where I put more length into Boxes A, B, and C. The implications of a Plus DBD target audience are as follows:

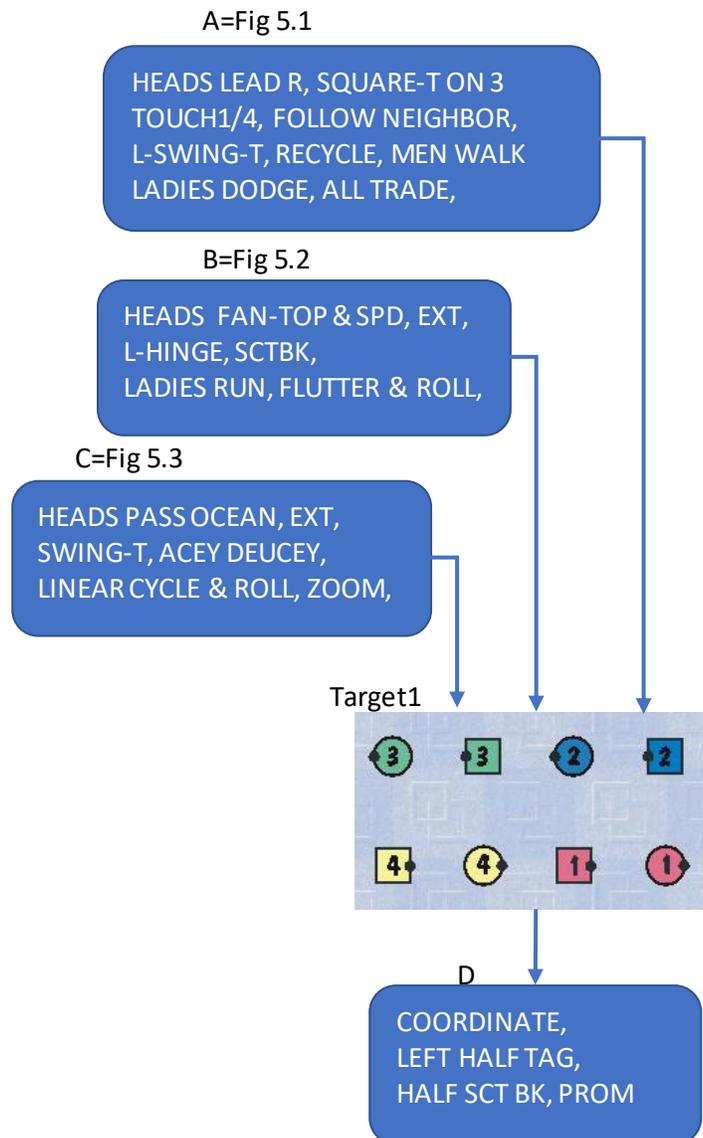
- DBD is like a level. We don't want a bunch of regular Plus calls with a "DBD Call" (whatever that is) tucked in somewhere. The whole sequence needs to be worthy of DBD.
- If the length is short, we can't just add a LINES FWD & BACK or DOSADO to a wave to kill time. The quality expectations at DBD preclude that. Consequently, nailing the length is more difficult.

Here are the three figures with good length. During the development process I considered several ideas that turned out to be dead ends on the way to finding these three that I like. One point to note is the variety of the three calls. I consider the level of difficulty very danceable by DBD dancers.

Figure	Discussion
HEADS LEAD R, SQUARE-T ON 3 TOUCH1/4, FOLLOW NEIGHBOR, L-SWING-T, RECYCLE, MEN WALK LADIES DODGE, ALL TRADE, [COORDINATE, LEFT HALF TAG, 1/2 SCOOT BACK, PROM] (Fig 5.1)	Note we get into columns using MEN WALK, LADIES DODGE and then TRADE into the COORDINATE which is a nice flow.
HEADS FAN-TOP & SPD, EXT, L-HINGE, SCTBK, LADIES RUN, FLUTTER & ROLL, [COORDINATE, LEFT HALF TAG, 1/2 SCOOT BACK, PROM] (Fig 5.2)	I needed a HEADS LEAD RIGHT, LEFT TOUCH1/4 but FAN-TOP & SPREAD, EXT, L-HINGE is a much better way to do that. Note we get into columns using FLUTTER & ROLL into a COORDINATE which is unusual, even at DBD.
HEADS PASS OCEAN, EXT, SWING-T, ACEY DEUCEY, LINEAR CYCLE & ROLL, ZOOM, [COORDINATE, LEFT HALF TAG, 1/2 SCOOT BACK, PROM] (Fig 5.3)	This is the only figure that does not start with a HEADS LEAD RIGHT. Head man goes to the right box with the #3 lady. We get the head couple back with partner quickly using SWING-T, ACEY DEUCEY. We get to the left columns using LINEAR CYCLE & ROLL, but the man is in the lead. We fix that using ZOOM right into the COORDINATE which is nice. Note that the body flow for the man coming off the ROLL is perfect for the ZOOM.

Session 5 - DBD - Ending Idea

Ending: (Left Column) COORDINATE, LEFT 1/2TAG, 1/2 SCOOT BACK, PROM (



Where Do the Ideas Come From?

Here are some questions that I ask myself to generate the main idea for the figures.

What are some different ways to start from a static square? For example,

- HEADS BOX-GNAT, SQUARE-T 2
- HEADS PASS-T, GO SINGLE FILE RIGHT, LADY AROUND 2, MAN AROUND 1 TO A LINE.

What are some interesting ways to get to a promenade without a swing? For example,

- Acey Deucey, Promenade
- Flip the Diamond, Promenade

What are some combinations that flow well but are not common? (Middle Idea) For example,

- HALF SASHAY 1+1/2.
- SWING-T and anything except MEN RUN, MEN TRADE, or SPIN TOP.
 - o How about SPLIT CIRCULATE or 8 CIRCULATE or SCOOT BACK or LADIES CROSS RUN?

Miscellaneous Issues

The Grand Square Explosion - A high percentage of the new singing calls from record producers are coming out with three GRAND SQUAREs (opener, middle, and ending). I even found a recent new singing call that had four - one during a 32-beat tag at the end. If the average dance has six or seven tips, we are looking at up to 21 GRAND SQUAREs in the singing calls alone. While I enjoy singing, the point of this paper is about variety and interesting figures. So how many GRAND SQUAREs is too many? I have developed a guideline for myself which I will share. If you don't like my guideline, set your own but please have one.

- Basic and Mainstream Dance – limit 6. This translates into roughly one GRAND SQUARE on each singing call.
- Plus Dance – limit 4 GRAND SQUAREs. (How many ALL 8 SPIN TOP are too many?)
- Plus DBD – limit 0. We can find better break figures than GRAND SQUARE for DBD dancers.

The Crooner's Lament – When I began calling in 1965, we could actually “sing” all the singing calls. But now SPIN CHAIN THRU, ENDS CIRCULATE DOUBLE and SPIN CHAIN & EXCHANGE THE GEARS are not so singable. While some simple figures can be sung, most figures today require a patter-like delivery with singing limited to the CIRCLE LEFT, GRAND SQUARE, and PROMENADE. Perhaps this explains the GRAND SQUARE explosion. We are trying to recover more singing time.

The Worst Figure Ever – Here is my award for the worst figure that shows up at dances:

HEADS PROMENADE HALF, DOWN CENTER R<, SQUARE-T 4, [do something in a box],
SWING CORNER, PROMENADE

The Sides have fallen asleep from boredom after waiting 24 beats at home. Please never use this figure.

Organizing the Work

Ideas for singing call figures can pop up at any time. I keep a 6X9 spiral notebook in a cover to write down ideas and figures. When I go dancing, I frequently get ideas from what others are calling. The idea is usually a short sequence that I use as the basis for a new call. All new ideas go in the notebook. As time permits, I will develop new figures from the ideas. When I get a chance to check the length with music, I put a check mark by each figure that seems to be the right length. Periodically I take these figures and enter them into my figure library and write “entered” beside each figure in the notebook. On occasion it is helpful to have this historical record.

Maintaining a Figure Library

At one point about 20 years ago I became very frustrated with my lack of organization. When I planned a dance, I knew I had developed a singing call figure relevant to a theme I was planning, but I had no idea where I had put it. I began trying to organize my singing calls to help my dance planning. The short version of this story is my figure library:

- I keep the figures in a Word document, one document for each program (Mainstream, Plus). The Basic program is a section in the Mainstream document. Plus DBD is a section at end of the Plus document.
- Each page is a table of boxes (2 columns X 9 Rows).
- Each box contains the figure and a label naming the key idea of the figure.
- I use the Word search capability to find figures with a give key word (i.e. SPIN-CHAIN-THRU). The following table shows how figures are cataloged in Word. “Plus-1” is the program and page number. The figure theme is highlighted in yellow. I have over 2000 figures cataloged in this way.

Plus-1

Sep & Turn-T	Sep & Turn-T
H TURN-T, SEP & SLIDE-T, S PST, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, B RUN, R<, PST, WHEEL&D, CTS WHEEL@, SWING C, PROM (Fig 1A.1)	H TURN-T, SEP & SLIDE-T, S PST, R<, CTS FULL TURN, DBL PST, TRACK2, HINGE, FOLLOW N&SPD, SWING C, PROM (Fig 1B.3)
8 Circ 1+1/2 (L)	Linear Cycle (Tidal)
H PS~, EXT, G TRADE, 8 CIRC, EXPL & R<, DIXIE~, 8 CIRC 1+1/2, LA(NEW) (Fig 2.2)	H LEAD R, R<, SWING-T, A/D, W FOLD, PEEL-TOP, EACH SIDE LIN-CYCLE, PST, LA(NEW), PROM (Fig 4.2)

Notes:

- 1) The figure number in () relates back to the figure in this paper. Not there in general.

- 2) Try to keep the primary call first in the label for search purposes with variations noted after. For example, (Tidal) follows LINEAR-CYCLE to show it is done from a tidal wave. **8 Circ 1+1/2 (L)** above has the (L) at the end to show that the circulate is from left waves. I would show RECYCLE (SS) to show that the recycle is done with same sexes.
- 3) This example mixes both MS and Plus calls. These are usually in different documents.
- 4) I use font Arial 11 for storage because it is the maximum size for fitting 7 tips on a single sheet in the dance plan.

Developing a Dance Plan from Singing Call Figures

This topic is the punch line of the whole paper. Because “Keep It Interesting” callers are committed to dancer success, we identify problem spots in the singing call figures to work in the patter call. The implication of this is huge. Dance planning is driven by the selection of the singing call figures which sets the theme for each tip.

Picking a different theme for each tip is an excellent idea to give each tip its own unique look and content. For each tip, I decide on the theme keeping the expected dance level in mind. Then I search the singing call library based on the theme name, picking out one or two figures that are the best fit. I may pick out one that is a little more challenging and an easier one for the same theme if I am unfamiliar with the dancers. Then I have the flexibility to pick between the two at the dance. I copy one figure into the row for the tip and copy the second figure into a table on another page titled “Additional Material.”

Here is an extract from a dance program using figures from this paper. I normally set this up in landscape with one tip on each row leaving room left on the right to write down corners. I usually select two figures for each tip with one being easy and the other a little more challenging. I always have the option of staying with the easier figure if it becomes clear that the harder figure is risky.

Diamond Squares - Denver 4/5/2019

	PATTER	SINGING A	SINGING B
1 S	Open: Circle, 8 Sp-Top Turn-T, Sep&Slide-T Lin-Cycle (tidal) Peel Top	H TURN-T, SEP & SLIDE-T , S PST, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, B RUN, R<, PST, WHEEL&D, CTS WHEEL@, SWING C, PROM	H LEAD R, R<, SWING-T, A/D, W FOLD, PEEL-TOP, EACH SIDE LIN-CYCLE , PST, LA(NEW), PROM

The name of the club and the date of the dance are on the top line. I can recover the dance plan for every dance I have done in the last 10 years. This is a big advantage in being able to reuse parts of previous dance plans. The left column shows the tip number. A code below the number shows the tip personality: Smooth(S), Workshop(W), High Energy (H).

In the Patter column I note what I will use to open the patter. In this case, it is CIRCLE LEFT, ALL 8 SPIN-TOP. Then I highlight the unusual parts of the selected figures so they stand out when I glance

down at the program. I note the parts that need to be worked on in the Patter column. If something is critical, I will put it in bold print. “Critical” means if I don’t cover it in the patter, I cannot do the singing call figure.

This process continues through each tip. When all the tips are planned, then I setup my music playlist for the dance. The personality notes (smooth, high energy) on each tip are key in picking the music.

This section has limited the dance planning to looking at each individual tip. For a more detailed discussion on the bigger picture of dance planning please download the paper titled “Square Dance Programming.”

Figure Summary

I would normally write these calls using abbreviations to use less space, but I don’t want to define all the abbreviations. Figures are separated into Mainstream, Plus DBD, and Plus.

Mainstream

HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRCULATE, MEN RUN, R<, PASS-T, WHEEL & DEAL, CTS WHEEL AROUND, SWING CORNER, PROM (Fig 1A.1)	HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRCULATE, MEN RUN, PASS-T, WHEEL & DEAL, DOUBLE PASS-T, LEADERS WHEEL AROUND, SWING CORNER (Fig 1A.2)
HEADS TURN-T, SEP & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, DOSADO ~, SWING-T, MEN RUN, CPLS CIRC, CHAIN DOWN LINE, SLIDE-T, SWING C, PROM (Fig 1B.1)	HEADS TURN-T, SEP & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, SQUARE-T ON 3 TOUCH1/4, CTS TRADE, CTS RUN, FERRIS WHEEL, DBL PASS-T, MEN TRADE, SLIDE-T, PROM (Fig 1B.4)
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SCOOT BACK, MEN TRADE, MEN WALK LADIES DODGE, ON LEFT TRADE & ROLL TO FACE, SWING C (Fig 1C.2)	HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, MEN TRADE, BOX GNAT, SLIDE-T, PASS-T, ALLEMANDE LEFT (NEW), PROM (Fig 1C.3)
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, MEN TRADE, SQUARE-T ON 3RD HAND SLIDE-T, LA(NEW), PROM (Fig 1C.6)	HEADS L-SQUARE-T, L-TOUCH1/4, MEN TRADE, R<, DIXIE STYLE~, 8 CIRC 1+1/2, LA(NEW) (Fig 2.3)

Don’t assume that Plus dances must be all Plus singing call figures. The more challenging Mainstream figures work really well at Plus dances. The Plus dancers will not even realize that the figure is Mainstream. Plus dancers are probably the better target audience for the Mainstream calls which are shaded in the table above. In my Plus dances about one-third of my singing call figures are mainstream.

Plus DBD

HEADS LEAD R, SQUARE-T ON 3 TOUCH1/4, FOLLOW NEIGHBOR, L-SWING-T, RECYCLE, MEN WALK LADIES DODGE, ALL TRADE, [COORDINATE, LEFT HALF TAG, ½ SCOOT BACK, PROM] (Fig 5.1)	HEADS PASS OCEAN, EXT, SWING-T, ACEY DEUCEY, LINEAR CYCLE & ROLL, ZOOM, [COORDINATE, LEFT HALF TAG, ½ SCOOT BACK, PROM] (Fig 5.3)
HEADS FAN-TOP & SPD, EXT, L-HINGE, SCOOT BACK, LADIES RUN, FLUTTER & ROLL, [COORDINATE, LEFT HALF TAG, ½ SCOOT BACK, PROM] (Fig 5.2)	

Plus

[HEADS PASS-T & CLOVERLEAF], or [HEADS SEPARATE & SLIDE-T], SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRCULATE, MEN RUN, PASS-T, WHEEL & DEAL, CENTERS PASS-T, DIXIE GRAND, ALLEMANDE LEFT(NEW), PROM (Fig 1A.3)	HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, MEN FOLD, DBL PASS-T, FACE IN, LADIES LOAD BOAT, MEN SQUARE-T 2, SWING C (Fig 1A.5) (Tight)
HEADS TURN-T, SEP & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, R<, CTS FULL TURN, DBL PASS-T, TRACK2, HINGE, FOLLOW N & SPD, SWING C, PROM (Fig 1B.3)	HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, SLIDE-T, PASS-T, CHASE RIGHT, MEN TRADE, PASS OCEAN, SWING-T, [MEN RUN or SWING C], PROM (Fig 1C.1)
HEADS TURN-T, SEPARATE & SLIDE-T, SIDES PASS-T, TOUCH1/4, SPLIT CIRC, MEN TRADE, SINGLE CIRCLE 3/4 TO COLUMN, LADIES PEEL OFF & CIRC, LA(NEW), PROM CORNER (Fig 1C.5)	HEADS PASS OCEAN, EXTEND, LADIES TRADE, 8 CIRC, EXPLODE & R<, DIXIE STYLE~, 8 CIRC 1+1/2, LA(NEW) (Fig 2.2)
4 LADIES CHAIN, HEADS LEAD RIGHT, DOSADO ~, SWING-T, LADIES FOLD, PEEL TOP, SINGLE HINGE, COORDINATE, HALF TAG, SWING C (Fig 3.1)	4 LADIES CHAIN, HEADS [PASS OCEAN, LADIES TRADE] or [FAN TOP], EXTEND, SWING-T, LADIES FOLD, PEEL TOP, SINGLE HINGE, COORDINATE, HALF TAG, SWING C (Fig 3.2)
HEADS LEAD RIGHT, R<, SWING-T, ACEY DEUCEY, W FOLD, PEEL TOP, RECYCLE, MEN WALK, LADIES DODGE, SCOOTBK FINISH WITH SLIDE-T, PROM (Fig 4.1)	HEADS LEAD RIGHT, R<, SWING-T, ACEY DEUCEY, LADIES FOLD, PEEL TOP, EACH SIDE LINEAR CYCLE, PASS-T, LA(NEW), PROM (Fig 4.2)
HEADS LEAD RIGHT, R<, SWING-T, ACEY DEUCEY, LADIES FOLD, PEEL TOP, EXPLODE & SQUARE-T 3, LA(NEW), PROM (Fig 4.3)	HEADS LEAD RIGHT, R<, SWING-T, ACEY DEUCEY, LADIES FOLD, PEEL TOP, LADIES RUN, BEND LINE, TURN-T, LA(NEW), PROM (Fig 4.4)
HEADS LEAD RIGHT, R<, SWING-T, ACEY DEUCEY, LADIES FOLD, PEEL TOP, SINGLE HINGE & ROLL, PASS-T, PARTNER TRADE & ROLL, SWING C (Fig 4.5) (Tight)	

Guidelines Revisited

A good way to conclude this paper is to review these new figures relative to the guidelines given at the top of this paper to see if I practice what I preach.

Guideline #1: Use square choreo, not box choreo. Box choreo is quickly putting dancers in a box and never leaving that box through the whole figure.

After review, none of the new figures use box choreo.

Guideline #2: Plan to meet corners past home position to avoid short-stop promenades at home. Figures which resolve in a Right Box or Home Box with Sides Paired satisfy this guideline.

Only figures that were developed in Session 1B do not satisfy this guideline. Session 1B purposely resolved in the Left Box.

Guideline #3: Try to avoid SWINGS since many dancers don't dance them anyway.

Ten figures out of the 24 figures end with CORNER SWING. Generally, about one third of my figures end with CORNER SWING.

Guideline #4: Each figure should have at least one interesting idea.

All 24 figures started with an interesting idea as the basis for developing the figure.

As you try this approach for developing new figures, don't be discouraged if great figures don't come pouring out immediately. I found that I improved quickly with practice.

Hal Barnes

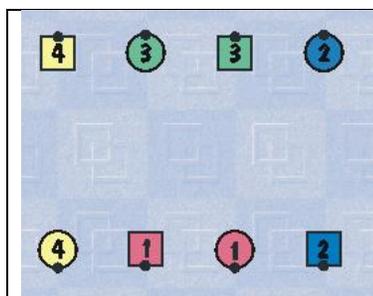
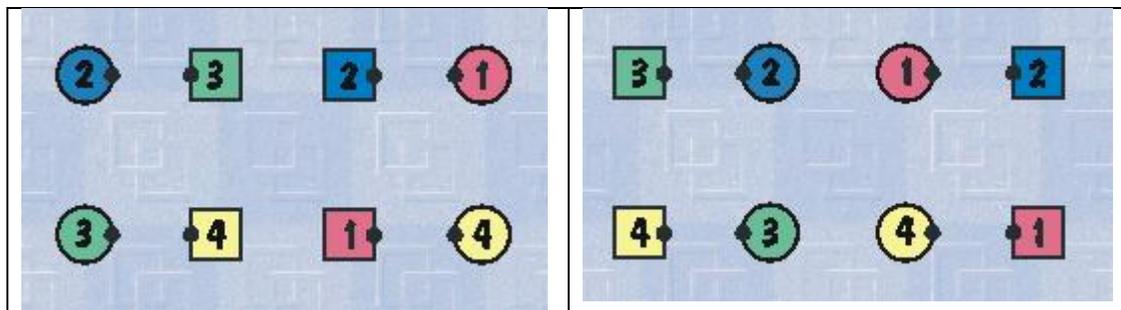
Appendix 1: Corner Swing Targets

	Left Box	Home Box Heads Paired	Home Box Sides Paired	Right Box
Normal Box				
½ Sashay Box				
Normal Trade- by				

The table shows the setups for corner swing in a singing call. The men are squares and the ladies are circles. The figures were generated by Callarama software sold by Reinhold Roedig.

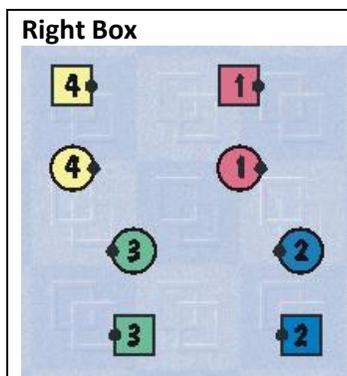
The box name is from the perspective of the #1 man. Left Box has men #1 and #4 and their corners (ladies #3 & #4) to the left of the #1 home for normal and ½ sashayed. The Right Box has men #1 and #2 and their corners (ladies #1 and #4) to the right of #1 home. There are two versions of the Home Box: one with men #1 and #4, the other with men #1 and #2, but both boxes are at the #1 home . Note that the Trade-By setups have the two men and their partners (not corners).

This list is not exhaustive. For example, the same-sex together corner swing is not shown. For each box setup there are two same-sex equivalents: one with the men on the inside and one with the men on the outside. The figures below show the Right Box examples of same-sex together corner swing. They are useful and represent only an arrangement variation of the regular boxes. The important fact is the men #1 and #2 and their corners are still in the box.

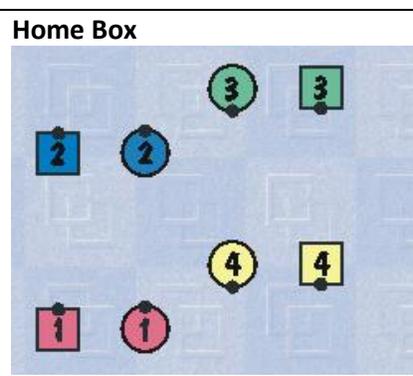


I have also omitted the case where all are facing out next to corners. The figure shows the left box version of this. As I dance I really do not like endings where both must turn to face corner and swing because it kills all the momentum going into the swing. I never write a dance with this ending.

From two-faced lines, I like TAG THE LINE, LADY GO LEFT, MAN GO RIGHT, SWING CORNER. The setup for this is shown below. In past years this resolution was popular but seems to have gone out of favor recently.



TAG THE LINE, LADY GO LEFT,
MAN GO RIGHT, SWING CORNER



These setups are important because they become the targets for front-to-back figure development. This provides the driving purpose of moving the dancers. My order of preference is Right Box, Home Box, Left Box because of guideline #2 which promotes getting the corner slightly past home.

TIMING — THE CALLERLAB BASIC AND MAINSTREAM PROGRAMS

Revised November 2016

ABBREVIATIONS: SS = Static Square, FC = Facing Couples

Timing is given from point of contact. If it takes some steps or beats of music to get to the point of contact, then add that to the numbers. We have listed this in more detail for the commonly used calls where the Squared Set Convention returns the dancers to a Squared Set.

TIMING — THE BASIC PROGRAM

Alamo Style Allemande Left in Alamo Style: 4
 Allemande Left 1/2 arm turn: 4 to 6, 3/4 arm turn: 6 to 8, full arm turn: 8
 Allemande Thar Left Arm Turn 1/2 to Thar: 2, SS Allemande Left Forward Two to Thar: 12
 Arm Turns 1/2 around: 4, 3/4 around: 4 to 6, full around: 6 to 8
 Backtrack 2
 Balance 4
 Bend the Line line of four: 4, line of eight: 6
 Box the Gnat 4
 California Twirl 4
 Chain Two Ladies from FC: 6, from SS: 8, Four Ladies from SS: 8, 3/4: 10, Down the Line: 8
 Circle Left (or Right) SS 8 people full around: 16, 3/4 around: 12, 1/2 around: 8, 1/4 around: 4
 FC 4 people full around: 8, 3/4 around: 6, 1/2 around: 4, 1/4 around: 2
 2 facing dancers 1/2 around: 4, 3/4 around: 5
 Circle to a Line 8
 Circulates 4, except if the Circulate is a Pass Thru: 2
 Courtesy Turn 4
 Dive Thru couple diving: 2, couple making arch: 6
 Do Paso 12
 Dosado SS across set: 8, otherwise: 6
 Dosado to a Wave 6
 Double Pass Thru 4
 Extend 2
 Ferris Wheel 6
 First Couple Go Left/Right, Next Couple Go Left/Right 6
 Flutterwheel / Reverse Flutterwheel FC: 8, SS Heads or Sides: 10, SS All: 12
 Forward and Back lines close together: 4, all others: 8
 Grand Square 32
 Half Sashay / Rollaway / Ladies In, Men Sashay 4
 Lead Right (or Left) 4
 Pass the Ocean 4
 Pass Thru Facing Dancers: 2, SS Heads or Sides: 4

Promenade / Wrong Way	SS full around: 16, 3/4 around: 12, 1/2 around: 8, 1/4 around: 4
Right and Left Grand / Weave the Ring / Wrong Way Grand	10
Right and Left Thru	FC 6, Ocean Wave 6, SS Heads or Sides: 8
Run / Cross Run	centers: 4, centers Cross Run: 6, ends: 4, ends Cross Run: 6
See Saw	8
Separate	2 plus time to travel around the outside
Separate around 1 or 2 to a Line	Pass Thru, Separate Around 1 to Line: 8, around 2: 10
Separate around 1 or 2 into the middle ..	Pass Thru, Sep. Around 1 into Middle: 8, around 2: 12
Shoot the Star	4, full around: 6
Single File Promenade	4 dancers inside: 8
Slip the Clutch	2
Split Two	2 plus next call
Square Thru	FC 1: 2, 2: 5, 3: 7 or 8, 4: 10, SS odd numbers: add 2 to previous count
Step to a Wave	2
Star Promenade	four couples full around: 12, 3/4 around: 9, 1/2 around: 6, 1/4 around: 3
.....	four couples full around with back out at home: 16
Star Thru	4
Stars	four people full around: 8, 3/4 around: 6, 1/2 around: 4, 1/4 around: 2
.....	eight people full around: 16, 3/4 around: 12, 1/2 around: 8, 1/4 around: 4
Sweep 1/4	two couples: 2, all four couples: 4
Swing	advancing skill and variable, at least 4
Swing Thru	6
Touch 1/4	2
Trade By	4
Trade	4, Couples Trade: 6
U-Turn Back	2
Veer Left (or Right)	2
Walk Around the Corner	8
Wheel and Deal	4
Wheel Around	4
Zoom	4

TIMING — THE MAINSTREAM PROGRAM

Cast Off 3/4	6
Centers In	2
Cloverleaf	8 dancers: 8, 4 active dancers: 6
Dixie Style to an Ocean Wave	FC or facing tandems: 6, SS All: 8
Eight Chain Thru	eight hands: 20, four hands: 10
Fold / Cross Fold	Fold: 2, Cross Fold: 4
Half Tag	4
Hinge	Couples Hinge: 3, Single Hinge: 2

Pass to the Center	dancers who finish in the center: 2, dancers who finish outside: 6
Recycle	4
Scoot Back	6
Slide Thru	4
Spin Chain Thru	16
Spin the Top	8
Tag the Line	6
Turn Thru	4
Walk and Dodge	4

TIMING - THE CALLERLAB PLUS PROGRAM

Revised June 21, 2016

3/4 TAG THE LINE	5
ACEY DEUCEY.....	4
ALL 8 SPIN THE TOP	10
(ANYTHING) & ROLL	2
(ANYTHING) & SPREAD	2
CHASE RIGHT	6
COORDINATE.....	8
CROSSFIRE.....	6
CUT THE DIAMOND.....	6
DIAMOND CIRCULATE	3
DIXIE GRAND.....	6
EXPLODE FAMILY	
(a) Explode the Wave.....	6
(b) Explode and	2 + (Anything) call
FAN THE TOP.....	4
FLIP THE DIAMOND.....	3
FOLLOW YOUR NEIGHBOR	6
GRAND SWING THRU.....	6
LINEAR CYCLE.....	8-10
LOAD THE BOAT	12
PEEL FAMILY	
(a) PEEL OFF	4
(b) PEEL THE TOP	6
PING PONG CIRCULATE.....	6
RELAY THE DEUCEY.....	20
SINGLE CIRCLE TO A WAVE.....	4
SPIN CHAIN & EXCHANGE THE GEARS.....	26
SPIN CHAIN THE GEARS.....	24
TEACUP CHAIN	32

TRACK II	8
TRADE THE WAVE	6