

Calling festivals is much different than calling a club dance or even a weekend that has one dance hall. Festivals are very unique because there are multiple dance programs in multiple halls. In the United States, many festivals have a Mainstream Hall, Plus Hall, Advanced Hall (possibly A1 Hall and A2 Hall), and a Challenge 1 hall. Many staff callers are required to call all of these programs, but there have been situations where some of the callers do not call all the programs. When dealing with the overseas festivals, there can be a completely different structure, with a single hall and each hour each tip changes programs something like: MS, Plus, MS, A1, for the one hour. An overseas convention may have several dance halls with some being dedicated to one dance program and others may have changing programs each tip, as described above.

When calling a festival the caller must treat each hour with the program as a dance. When they move to another hall they must begin calling a new dance program just like it was a full dance. Each time the caller enters the hall, it should be a new dance because there is no way to continue what you may have started in the previous hall and you can't continue what the last caller in the current hall did, because you weren't there to understand what he or she did.

A festival will have workshops for all the dance programs they offer, they will have introductions to different dance programs, they will have DBD (Dance By Definition), they will have "Take No Prisoners", they will have "Hot Hash" and the caller must be able to walk from a Mainstream hall and enter an Intro to Advanced (for Plus dancers) and re-set their mind in a matter of minutes. Becoming a good teacher, one who can get the description across in a quick way to the dancers, will help in festival calling.

Knowing the definitions of the calls in each dance program well and understanding what you can do with the calls and how to stretch them for the dancers enjoyment will help in calling a festival. A festival caller must have all of the skills and cannot be one dimensional. Having control over the dancers in each hall is essential to being a good festival caller because every hour is a new dance and the caller moves from one program to a different one each hour. Having a good rapport with the dancers and understanding within the first tip what the dancers can accomplish is most important in becoming a good festival caller.

Everyone is aware that calling a festival can lead into long hours. Making sure you get plenty of water and as much rest as you can will help in getting through the long hours with no harm done to yourself.

Let's compare calling a weekend and calling a festival.

- A weekend may consist of 1 or 2 callers.
- Specialized weekend, such as an Advanced weekend with one hall could have just one caller or possibly 2 callers.
- Working a weekend with 2 callers allows the callers to work together. You can talk about what to workshop and each caller can build on what the other caller workshops.
- If one of the callers gets a sore throat the other can help out.
- Changing halls is not necessary.
- Even if the weekend has 2 halls, normally there will be 3 callers and all of the above still applies in working together.
- Choosing singing calls will be easier when working a weekend but even at festivals try and select songs that are common to both callers. There are a lot of standard duets that many will use where as two voices can blend of if one of the two callers working together has a good ear for harmony.
- Work shopping is much easier at a weekend with limited halls. The workshop can be on the dance program calls or a selected call from other dance programs or old note services.
- Judgment is always critical in any event but a weekend with one or two halls there is time to recover as you have a captivated audience, the worst that could happen is they sit out your hour until they decide to give you another chance.
- Having plenty of material for the weekend is better than not having enough. The advantage is there are more than one caller working which is a big help. If you are calling a weekend by yourself be prepared to have a lot of material as you can become repetitious very easily.

Festivals:

- Festival could have 6 to 8 callers.
- There are multiple dance programs with up to 6 halls, where each hall has one caller.

- Time management becomes an issue. Most festivals require callers to change halls on the hour. Everyone should be working 53 to 55 minutes, depending on the distance between halls. The reason is it is not polite to call into the next hour where it can effect the calling time for next caller coming into the hall. If a caller calls up to the hour then He/She will take time tearing down to move to another hall and the incoming caller will need time to set up. As a result, it is possible that 5 to 10 minutes of the incoming callers time will have been lost. Time management is most important.
- Normally, there is not an opportunity to work together in a festival environment.
- Workshops tend to be something within the dance program such as in the Mainstream Hall choose a Basic/Mainstream call that the dancers are having a problem with. If they are dancing well then workshop a call from the program from a different position or arrangement that the dancers may not see often.
- Judgment is critical at a festival since there is an hour you do not have time to recover easily from a rough hour and they know you will be back possibly sometime later.
- Overseas weekend and festivals are totally different than in the USA. Most of the time there are no breaks and an hour could have several different programs for each tip, such as; Basic/Mainstream/Plus/Basic so each tip is labeled. Some events divide up in the morning and afternoon but in the evening they dance the lowest dance program, such as; A2, C1 and C2 weekend will dance each dance program morning and afternoon of each day and all evening dancing will be one hall at A2.
- Be prepared to have a lot of material especially if you are calling all the dance programs that the festival offers. Each hour you call you are on your own.