

SQUARE DANCE ATTIRE AT NATIONALS

From an Article by M Dawes WA 2002

Right now there is a flurry of dress-making going on, those ladies who can afford to are spending up big on petticoats and frilly knickers, men are being instructed to buy shirts in this or that colour, (wise husbands wear whatever their wives put out for them!) and a dancer suggested to me that now was the time to repeat once more the rules for square dance gear at National Conventions.

Being in the privileged position of the Editor's wife and said Editor also being on the Advisory Board I do have access to the latest book of wisdom "Manual for the Operation of Australian National Square Dance Conventions". I'll Endeavour to convert the clauses to 'dancer speak'.

ALL dancers should be neatly, cleanly and correctly dressed in recognised Square Dance attire and should wear their convention ribbon, state identification and name badges of some form. Otherwise, you'll be quietly escorted off the dance floor.

For MEN means neat and tidy trousers, slacks or dress type jeans (dress shorts are permitted these days but only in conjunction with long roll top socks), a buttoned, full length sleeve shirt, complete with bolo tie, cravat or similar. Clean shoes, dancing pumps or dress boots shall be worn but shouldn't mark the floor. Wearing a hat indoors is unacceptable.

For the LADIES square dance attire is a full type Square Dance dress or skirt and blouse, complete with suitable discreet underwear. Full backless-type, bare back or bare midriff dresses or blouses are not acceptable.

There is no mention of full petticoats and at recent Conventions I've noticed a few ladies wearing longish "prairie" skirts even to the round dancing.

Most women used to a full skirt and petticoat wouldn't feel right in anything else - using one's hands and the skirt for 'skirt work' always seem to be part of square dancing and it isn't possible without the full skirt. Matter of choice really. Shoes, however, should be clean, low-heeled or flat-heeled, shouldn't be likely to damage the floor and for your own safety, should be enclosed - not strappy type sandals which afford no protection from heavy footed males (or females!). Spike or small type heels are totally banned (heels must be a minimum 25mm long in all dimensions in contact with the floor surface).

Hall and centre managements do NOT like the floors ruined and are likely to impose severe monetary penalties on to hirers.

Something you may not be aware of, ladies may now dance in the left hand position (usually referred to as the man's position) and may wear either ladies attire plus a coloured sash OR, if they exclusively dance in the left hand position, the attire as set out for men.

We may get visitors who adopt the latter choice so don't be surprised if you find them in the round up or in your set, just make them welcome ^we all know most ladies are very adaptable and can dance better than the men!

In addition, all dancers are expected to be courteous to fellow dancers, follow instructions of the M.C., marshals and Caller, maintain a high standard of personal hygiene (go heavy on the deodorant and light on the garlic), don't forget to wear your ribbon identification to each and every venue, and enjoy your dancing. See you there.

MOLL Y DAWES.