

UNDERSTANDING BOXES

The purpose of this article is to explain the correct and incorrect use of the term “Box”. Although this article is primarily written for callers, dancers are often confused by the term “Box,” so they will also benefit from the information given here.

A Box consists of 4 dancers. At Mainstream and Plus the term “Box” is generally used by callers when the dancers are in parallel waves, right-hand or left-hand columns, or in a 1/4 Box (see next paragraph).

(A 1/4 Box is achieved by: from a standard starting DPT (Double Pass Thru) formation, the caller says “Centers Slide Thru, Centers Touch 1/4.” If, from a starting DPT, the caller says only “Centers Touch 1/4, this is called a “modified 1/4 Box.”)

Note: There are other situations where a Box can exist, but the purpose of this article is to present only basic understanding.

Parallel Waves and Columns. Each formation has 3 boxes: a box of 4 on each side of the waves or columns, and a box of 4 in the center. A caller can have each box of 4 operate at the same time, or the caller can give a command for only the center box.

Correct terminology. If the caller wishes each box to Circulate, the correct terminology is: (1) “Split Circulate” or (2) “Each box — Circulate.” For option (2) an even better way to say it would be: “Each box of 4 — Circulate.”

If the caller wishes the center box to Circulate, the correct terminology is: “Center Box — Circulate” or “Centers Box Circulate.”

Incorrect terminology. (1) “Box Circulate” - with nothing else said. This is incorrect, because the dancers have no idea to which box the caller is referring. Is the caller referring to each box of 4, or is the caller referring to only the center box?

If a caller says only “Box Circulate” and nothing else, the dancers should freeze, because they do not know what the caller wants.

(2) “Centers Split Circulate.” This is a mis-use of the term “Split.” “Split” refers to each side of the set. **Important rule to remember: “All Splits are Boxes, but not all Boxes are Splits.”**

RULE: Any time you say the word “Box,” you MUST put a describing word immediately before “Box.”

So you can say: “Each Box — Circulate,” or “Everyone Box Circulate.” Since this signifies more than one box, each box of 4 will Circulate (ie. Split Circulate.)

You can also say: “Centers Box Circulate.” This tells the dancers that you want only the center 4 to be active.

1/4 Box. From a right-hand or left-hand Box in the center, between two outside dancers who are both facing in, one might think the word "Center" is not needed if the caller wants only the centers to do something. **WRONG!** **The caller must still say the word "Centers,"** because there are also two Boxes on each side of the set. They are not right-hand or left-hand Boxes -- they may be T-bone Boxes -- but they are still Boxes.

Remember the rule: Any time you say the word "Box," you must define where the box is located by putting in a descriptive word.

Common example of callers' mis-using the term "Box." From waves or columns, the caller says "Box Circulate." Some callers believe it automatically means each box of 4; other callers believe that since they did not say "Split Circulate," it automatically means the center Box. **WRONG** and **WRONG!**

Just saying "Box Circulate" describes nothing. The caller **MUST** explain what is wanted.

Suggestions: (1) Make use of "Split Circulate." This automatically means "each box," so everyone moves.

(2) If you want only some people in each box to be active, you must say "Each Box"

(3) Consider using the term "Box" **ONLY** when you want the Center Box to be active. This will eliminate having to worry about how to call Boxes. But remember, you still must say the words "Center Box."