

# CCD Band Selection

## Draft Policies and Procedures

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### Introduction

CCD has had a long history as a community of dancers, callers, and musicians that has evolved into the community and the event that we have today. In recent years, a need was identified to provide a more structured way to evaluate and schedule the music that is provided for CCD dances, as CCD has done for callers.

A committee was formed that included representatives from each stakeholder group in the community: dancers, musicians and callers. That committee spent many hours discussing possibilities, options, impacts, issues, procedures, criteria and qualities. The result is this set of recommendations that describes the formation a Band Selection Committee (BSC), its operation, the band evaluation process, and some of the qualities that the BSC should use in their evaluation.

In general, the approach is to create an elected committee of three individuals who would rotate out in a fashion similar to the CCD Steering Committee. They would gather information about each band who might play at the CCD dance, and make a determination concerning their readiness to create a good experience at the Friday night dance. Once accepted, bands would be scheduled by others according to scheduling parameters that are beyond the scope of this document.

# **Band Selection Committee**

## ***Composition and Election***

The committee is composed of three members from the CCD community working together to assess all bands for Friday night viability. The BSC membership may or may not be drawn from all three primary segments of the community: dancers, callers and musicians. Regardless of its composition, the BSC shall reach out to all segments as it carries out its responsibilities.

Below are the conditions and processes by which the BSC shall be constituted.

- Each elected committee member is elected by the dance community for a three-year term. Terms are staggered by one year such that one committee seat comes up for election each year.
- Elections shall be organized by the Steering Committee and conducted in such a way as to allow the greatest chance for all CCD members to vote. If the Steering Committee election process is revised to meet this criteria then the BSC election and the SC election shall be held as part of one process; otherwise, the BSC election shall be a separate process.
- Initial terms for the first serving committee would be one, two, and three years, to be determined within and by the BSC. The person getting the most votes in the initial election will be deemed elected for a three-year term and the person getting the second-most number of votes will be deemed elected for a two-year term; however, each of those individuals may elect a shorter term.
- There are no term limits. If an outgoing committee member wishes to continue to serve, he or she may run for the seat again.
- If a BSC member decides to resign before the end of their term, the Steering Committee may at its discretion appoint an interim replacement to serve until the next regular BSC election.
- The BSC shall operate as a committee of equals.
- No member of the BSC shall be the scheduler or any active scheduler's apprentice or assistant.
- If a BSC member has a conflict of interest in evaluating a particular band (due to his or her participation in, or relationship to members of, that band), then that BSC member shall recuse him or herself from the evaluation of that band.

## ***General Operation of the Committee***

The committee shall evaluate bands as described elsewhere in this document.

The committee shall report to the Steering Committee on a quarterly basis about their activities including:

- The current roster at the date of the report.
- Bands currently in the evaluation process.
- Bands requesting or being sought for evaluation.

Additionally, a member of the BSC shall provide a briefing the Steering Committee at each of its meetings on progress since the last Steering Committee meeting and on any issues that have arisen.

Any comments recorded, where possible, shall not be filed or communicated with the name of the commenter attached. All information gathered shall remain confidential within the committee. If comments are written down, then they will be anonymous, but with the category of the source of the comment noted (e.g., caller, dance organizer, musician, dancer). One example is feedback requested by email from an out-of-town reference. The comments received would be copied and pasted into the document to be filed with only a reference to the primary role of the source (e.g., caller, dance organizer, musician, dancer). Any names referenced within the comments would also be removed and replaced with a generic reference (e.g., Caller 1, Musician 2, etc.)

A continuous log of milestones in the committee's work shall be kept in perpetuity documenting when bands were evaluated and the outcome. This will allow committee members over time to see the history of the committee and the history of particular bands in the evaluation process.

Evaluation information on a particular band developed during the evaluation process shall be kept for only the two most recent evaluations. Information from evaluations prior to the last two shall be destroyed. Information on any band shall be destroyed after a period of three years. This does not apply to the milestone log.

## Definitions

The following definitions are offered to assist in clarifying the terms used in this document.

### ***What is the Roster?***

Up to now, the word roster has been used primarily to refer to an ad hoc list of local and regional bands who are available to play the Friday night dance. We are redefining that term to mean all bands, regardless of origin or location, who have been evaluated and approved to be scheduled at the CCD Friday night dance according to the process in this document. Bands who have not been evaluated or who are not accepted after an evaluation are not to be placed on the roster.

### ***What is a Band?***

For the purposes of this process, the word band refers to three basic types of configurations as noted below. Each requires a slightly different approach to evaluate as noted.

<b>Band Definition</b>	<b>How evaluated</b>
A group of musicians who consistently play in the same configuration.	The band is evaluated in its usual configuration.
A core group of musicians who are sometimes joined by additional musicians.	The smallest configuration that might be hired needs to be evaluated on its own merits. One example of how this might be done would be to have that core play on its own for several sets on a night when they are scheduled in a larger configuration.
One musician joined by other musicians, some or all of whom may be unknown to the committee.	The committee evaluates the entity based on its confidence in the "one" musician to select combinations that will consistently provide a positive experience for the dancers.

## ***Who is the Scheduler?***

The scheduler is a person or committee that manages the CCD talent schedule as defined by the Steering Committee. The scheduler maintains the roster based on the results of the BSC's evaluations, but is not a part of the evaluation process, except for the following tasks:

- To pass on to the BSC bands that have approached CCD or that CCD has approached who have not been evaluated
- To be a resource (among other resources) to the BSC in gathering information about a band in the evaluation process
- To notify the BSC when changes are communicated that may impact the band's status on the roster, especially changes in personnel. This information may come from other channels to the BSC, but the scheduler is most likely to receive this information in the scheduling process.

Other aspects of the scheduler's role such as how often bands appear beyond the scope of the BSC and this document.

## **The Evaluation Process**

The committee shall seek input from the community at large in their pursuit of information and opinions about bands being evaluated. Bands should be made aware of the entire process before their evaluation. Committee members should use the form attached to this document for organizing the data gathered.

The key to making the evaluation process effective is contacting the right people for feedback about the bands. The best resources are dancers who have heard them live, as well as dance organizers, callers, and sound techs the band has worked with.

All of the steps outlined below should be followed for any band that is being evaluated:

1. Band contacts CCD or CCD seeks out band for the Friday night dance.
2. The band gets assigned to Band Selection Committee.
3. The band is notified about the process, including range of people who will be consulted as noted above, and about the kinds of questions that may come up in those interviews.
4. Information is gathered and the data organized using the attached form.
5. The band is then evaluated based on the Qualities listed later in this document.
  - If the initial reaction to a band is negative, the committee will be sure to talk to as many more people as needed to verify that the sentiments expressed by the first respondents represent the sense of the group in general. Additional interviewees would ideally provide feedback from a different event. With particularly vitriolic

particularly vitriolic input from someone, that person should be further interviewed about specific issues using specific items from the Qualities list. The more negative the comments, the greater the need to interview additional people.

- While one category that has extreme negative comments may be grounds for rejection, the complete range of parameters should be considered when evaluating a band.
6. The band is accepted or rejected for the roster based on the committee's review as a group.
  7. The Committee notifies the Scheduler of the outcome.
  8. The Scheduler notifies the band of the outcome.

If ACCEPTED:

- The band goes on the roster for next scheduling round, or put on schedule for previously proposed date.
- For bands new to the CCD process:
  - The band is put on the roster provisionally.
  - One or more Committee members go to the band's first CCD dance to confirm the band's placement on the roster.

If REJECTED:

- The band is not put on the roster.
  - Upon request, any band will be able to have a 1 on 1 meeting with a committee member to review the feedback. No paper or electronic copies of the evaluation records are to be distributed, however.
  - The band may appeal the decision (see Re-evaluation below).
9. The Committee includes the outcome in its report to the Steering Committee.
  10. Re-evaluation:
    - A band that is on the roster is re-evaluated on a yearly basis.
    - If a scheduled band receives a significant number of complaints (see the Feedback Process) on one or more Friday nights, the Committee may choose to conduct an early re-evaluation.
      - If a re-evaluation is initiated, then at least one Committee member should attend that band's next scheduled dance as a part of the re-evaluation process.
    - A band that is rejected may request re-evaluation as follows:
    - The same configuration of a rejected band may request re-evaluation after a minimum of 6 months.

- If members of a rejected band reorganize with different musicians and request re-evaluation, it is up to the committee to decide whether a re-evaluation may be undertaken in less than 6 months.

## **Feedback Process**

A feedback process is important for the community to communicate about the bands they hear. Some feedback is a part of the primary evaluation process, but ongoing general feedback from the community can contribute to interim adjustments to the roster if needed, and provide additional input for the normal periodic evaluation process for each band. Several avenues should be made available for providing feedback. These should include:

- A written form made available at each CCD dance with a ballot-type box for submitting comments confidentially. The form includes sections for both structured, guided comments and general comments.
- A form on the website, based on the paper form, that communicates feedback directly to the BSC.

The forms allow for comments to be anonymous or not. If many or all comments are anonymous and are universally negative, then care should be taken to interview additional people who attended the dance in question. The feedback received via these avenues may be the basis for an early re-evaluation of a band.

In addition, an email address should be available that allows the community to provide general feedback to the BSC concerning future bands, scheduling or other band selection and scheduling issues. It should be made clear that this address is not to be used for specific band feedback. Commenters should be directed instead to either the paper or web forms for that purpose.

It also seems likely that community members will approach BSC members to discuss a band. While the BSC member may choose to enter into that discussion, in general it would be preferable to direct people to the feedback form.

# Questions and Qualities for Band Evaluation

Below is a list of questions and qualities to use in evaluating bands. This is not intended to be used as a "score sheet", or to represent the full range of qualities to be considered. The committee should use this list as a guide for gathering specific and useful information about each band. A deficit in one quality should not be sufficient reason to reject a band. The information gathered should be considered holistically.

## General Information

- Have they played at the CCD Friday night dance before?
- Have they played for another dance in the Atlanta area?
- Has anyone in the local dance community heard the band or individual musicians at a dance?
- Does the band have a recording?
- Does the band have a website?
- What genre(s) do they play?
- Are they primarily a contra dance band?
- What is the instrumentation?
- Who are the band members?
- What other contra dance groups has the band played for?
- What callers have they worked with?
- How long has the band in its current configuration been in existence?

## Musicianship

- Plays in tune
- Plays in rhythm
- Plays with clear, identifiable phrasing
- Chooses a variety of tunes/styles
- Finds the "groove"

## Danceability

- Picks / maintains appropriate tempos for dancing
- Selects good tunes for dances
- Plays with clear, danceable rhythm
- Makes the dancers move well (neither plodding nor racing)
- Keeps dancers interested (change in key, variety of styles, dynamics, etc.)
- Plays medleys with tight, interesting changes
- Handles the arc of the evening - sequencing and variety throughout the night
- Is inspiring

## Working Relationships

- Works well with caller
- Works well with sound person
- Work well with each other
- Acts as part of the community

## Professionalism

- Arrives on time
- Pays attention, is efficient during sound check
- Is attentive to floor during dances (adjusting as needed)

- Is spontaneous and inventive
- Plays with passion / intensity / inspiration
- Exhibits minimal rough starts, or bungled tune changes

- Doesn't distract during teaching of dances

**Secret Ingredient**

- Has that ineffable quality that makes the band more than the sum of its parts.