

SCD Ball Etiquette: Some DOs and DON'Ts

1. **Be prepared.** Know the dances you wish to dance, and be clear on those you'd rather sit out.
2. Get on the dance floor **only when the MC has announced a dance** or the musicians play the first eight bars.
3. **Find a partner** for the dance and **always join the set from below.** Do not walk through sets that have already formed.
4. If you are part of the **top couple in your line**, it is your job to **count off the sets.** Be sure to know how many couples are needed per set before you start counting. When in doubt, ask the MC. Indicate to the MC how many couples are still needed to complete the set by raising the appropriate number of fingers.
When the set is complete, raise your arms and cross your wrists.
5. **Listen** carefully (and silently) **while the MC is recapping** the dance. In case of "walk as I talk" make sure that the least confident couple in your set gets to walk from first place.
6. **Do not push** a reluctant, inexperienced or less confident dancer to complete a set.
7. **Do not let yourself be pushed** into a dance you don't want to attempt to make up the numbers for a set.
8. Generally, there are **two reasons to decline** if you are being asked to dance: Either you already have a partner, or you wish to sit out this dance. **Be brief and polite in refusing** so the person who asked can find another partner before the dance starts.
9. **Ask anyone to dance** and change partners after every dance. If you are an experienced dancer, make a point of asking less experienced dancers. Also, try to make sure someone sitting out a dance has a chance to dance the next one. Do not spend all evening dancing only with the person you came to the ball with or the friends from your own SCD group.
10. **Be considerate to your fellow dancers** on the dance floor (not only those in your own set). Remember that Scottish dancing is a team effort.
11. **Show the musicians your appreciation** by letting them finish the last chord – and then clap, whistle, yell and stamp to your heart's content if you want to.
12. If you wish for an **encore of a dance** ("once and to the bottom"), indicate this to the MC by raising a hand and moving it in a circle while remaining in the set. If not, clear the dance floor swiftly after applauding.
13. Remember to look and **smile at your partner and fellow dancers** in your set. When the dance is finished, thank your partner and the other dancers in your set before leaving the dance floor.
14. If you are **dissatisfied with another dancer's performance**, level of proficiency or lack of self-awareness, **keep it to yourself.** A ball is not the time and place to criticize or lecture. We all started out as beginners once.
15. The point of a ball is to **have fun together.** A ball is not an exam in etiquette – but as always nice manners make it a more agreeable experience for everyone.