



Conducting Your Team Try-Outs

By: Stephanie Raciak

Stephanie is a graduate of the University of Illinois. She is the former captain/coach of the competitive University of Illinois Dance Team and a member of 3spot dance troupe. She has been a member of the Universal Dance Association staff for the last three years.

It's that time of year again: dance team try-outs. There are many different ways to organize and conduct a try-out for your team. Before you start, you must get the approval for the event at your school from the administration. Along these same lines, it is crucial that you reserve a space to hold the audition on the approved date. Once those tasks are completed, it's all about the advertising! The more dancers that attend your try-out will give you the greatest odds of recruiting the best team overall! These are some creative methods for advertising your dance team try-outs:

- Morning/End of the day announcements at school
- Posters/Flyers
- A flashy add on the school's website
- A Facebook Try-Out Page (Include information and Invites)
- Put information on the school's main outdoor sign a week before try-outs
- Announce try-out information at basketball games
- Deliver informational flyers to middle schools in the district that feed into the high school
- "Chalk announcements" Entrance to the school, chalk boards in classrooms
- Encourage old team members to promote the team to their friends and younger siblings

Once the advertising is complete, you need to be prepared for the actual try-out day. There are many materials you will need to have to be prepared for the try-out:

- A plethora of pens/pencils
- Numbers to identify the dancers
- Safety Pins for the numbers
- Score Sheets
- Try-out Application
- Calculators
- Permission Slips/Medical Waivers
- Judges

Now, there are different ways to conduct the try-out. You can conduct a 2 or 3 day clinic where dancers who are auditioning learn a try-out routine and review technical skills. On the day of the try-out, judges can watch girls individually or in small groups.

Another option is learning the try-out routine in a single day and then judge the dancers on same day. Additionally, there is the option of adding skills that can be judged individually (splits, pirouettes, toe touch, etc.). It all depends on what you feel is a necessity when looking for the perfect team.

Interviews are also a good option to consider; they will help determine whether there will be any personality or attitude conflicts on the team. Decide which attributes you feel are most important for your team: quick memorization, technique, personality or showmanship. Then when hosting try-out, pick a method that will display the characteristics you want to see that will make the best team possible!

Prior to the try-outs you will want to decide how you will announce who made the team. Make all of the candidates aware of this process before the try-out begins. There are many different ways to communicate who made the team. You may choose to announce who made the team that night, post numbers on a door later on, post the results to the school website, or even send home letters with the results.