

Standard Etiquette for Scottish Country Dancing

Madison Scottish Country Dancers

1. Arrive on time whenever possible.
2. An invitation to dance may be extended by any dancer. It should be worded in a clear and friendly way. A friendly hand should be extended to the partner.
3. If someone says “no, thank you” to an invitation, respect their decision and do not pressure them to dance.
4. Once you have a partner, always join a set at the bottom, but avoid walking through the set to get there or to another set. Also, don't pass a set in need of a couple, or leave a set once you have joined it. (Except under the direction of the MC or teacher, in order to allow more people to dance--such as a fourth couple leaving to join two couples, making two 3-couple sets.)
5. Stay in lines and places while sets are forming, as it is hard to count if everyone is moving about. At an event other than class, the first couple in a set traditionally counts off the number of couples lined up.
6. Listen quietly during all instructions. If you have any questions, ask the instructor, MC or briefer, not other dancers. The question may also be of interest to others.
7. At the end of every dance, you should thank your partner and your set and clear the floor. If there is live music, also thank the musicians.
8. At an event do not form new sets until the next dance is announced by the MC. This allows for a better exchange of partners and distribution of ability in sets, which is so important for a sociable evening.
9. It is more flexible and friendly NOT to line up partners for all of the dances ahead of time.
10. Be sure to ask a variety of partners to dance. Remember especially:
 - the person you came with
 - dancers frequently sitting out
 - beginning dancers and visitors
 - the party MCs, briefers, and class teachers, as a way of showing your appreciation for the evenings they have planned for your enjoyment
11. Notes or "cheat sheets" should be studied off the floor. The dance floor is a place for sociability and to listen to instructions.
12. At an event (as opposed to a class), it is most courteous not to join in a set if one does not know the dance, especially if it is a more difficult one. The catastrophes that result are embarrassing to the dancer and irritating to the set.
13. Friendliness is a part of the good manners which Scottish Country Dancing promotes. A pleasant smile, a friendly word, general mixing, and good spirits are the hallmarks of a successful evening.

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