

## **INTRODUCTION SLIDE**

### **USING THE SICILIAN CIRCLE AT CLUB AND CLASS LEVEL**

#### **SLIDE – SIMPLICITY WITH A DIFFERENT FEEL**

There have been a lot of questions asked regarding the use of the Sicilian Circle at class level, and a club level, as opposed to using Squares for teaching and reviewing.

The truth is, both are great tools and very useable for teaching, dancing, and maximising participation.

Let's start at the beginning.

Square Dancing is a group of 4 couples arranged in a square that follow the prompts or calls of a caller. – dancers may work individually as a couple, in groups of 3, 4, right up to 8 dancers to perform the required movement.

**Most square dancing however**, is just one couple or two couple dancing and most complex movements in square dancing are performed with just two couples..

Dancing in formations other than the standard four couple square used to be, and in many places still is, common practice at square dances.

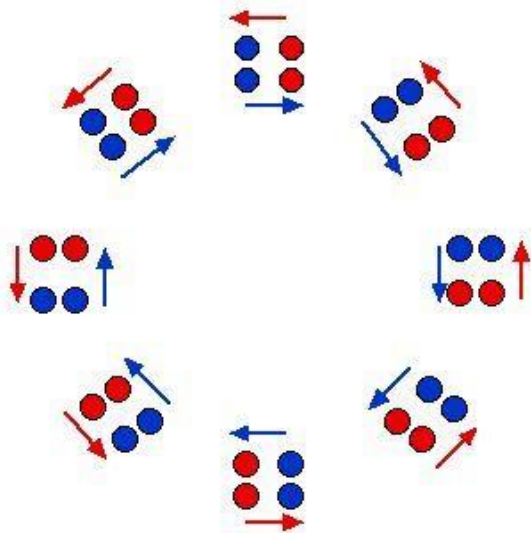
The most frequently used formations used were:

- Large circle movements and mixers
- Concentric circles
- Gendered lines
- Coupled lines
- And the Sicilian Circle.
- Hexagons
- rectangles

#### **SLIDE – SICILIAN CIRCLE**

The most practical and useful of all of these activities and alternate formations is of course, THE SICILIAN CIRCLE

**The Sicilian Circle.** A Sicilian Circle Formation is a big circle composed to facing couples of four. In the graphic shown, there are Eight pairs of facing couples. This number however can be as small as 5 and as large as you have room for in your hall. Odd or even numbers of couples do not matter.



#### Diagram of Sicilian Circle Formation

Each couple (coloured red) dances with a facing couple (coloured blue)

After dancing the figures once through the dance every couple moves on (progresses) one place to dance facing a new couple

Couples shown in blue are facing clockwise around the room and always progress (move on) in that direction

Couples shown in red are facing in the opposite direction and always progress in that anticlockwise direction

The principle is simply that of two couples dancing, using all your known movements and using the simple technique of passing or moving past the original facing couples to meet another couple moving in the opposite direction.

There are several advantages to using Sicilian Circles.

### SLIDE – DANCER ADVANTAGES

#### Dancer Advantages

1. Almost everyone dances all the time. Regardless of the number of dancers you have, only one dancer would be required to sit out, rather than 7, which is often the case with squares
  - *No one sits out.* All couples are on the floor during the teaching. Odd numbers of couples no longer have to wait for a fourth in order to join the dance
  - Starting a class level in a Sicilian Circle allows everyone to join in and is a great place for review, confirmation, social interaction and warm up. – even if they come in late, they can join the circle
2. Clique busting and playing field levelling: Because the couples and sometimes individual dancers, are continually mixing, this virtually eliminates the possibility of weaker couples being together throughout a whole dance.
  - You can also use it as a "real" mixer by changing partners throughout (separating troublesome partners – we have all been there)
  - Quickly Change couple pairings \ if there is a problem. By having facing couples pass thru and proceeding to the next couple to form other sets of four, the caller can mix and match dancers skills if needed

3. Dancers learn the square dance movement and individual couple formation mechanics as couples. Two couples working together is less confusing than four couples working in a square
4. About 80 Percent of the calls at Basic and Mainstream are commonly done as two couple movements however, with a little work and practice, **92 percent of the Basic and mainstream (63 / 68) calls can be done with two couples in a Sicilian Circle.** The exceptions are
  - Grand square
  - Ferris wheel – Although it can be introduced working with the oncoming couple when in two face lines
  - 8 chain 4 / 8 chain thru
  - Trade by
  - Spin chain thru
  - Variations and extended applications of a small amount of calls
    - All 8 circulate
    - Split circulate
    - 4 ladies chain
5. Sicilian Circles provide another form of variety in square dancing. They are fun to dance.

## **SLIDE – CALLER ADVANTAGES**

### **Caller Advantages**

1. Teaching and reviewing any facing couple square dance "basic" in a Sicilian Circle Formation, isolates the action to just the four dancers. This takes away any distraction from other dancers such as seen in the square formation.
2. Teaching with demonstrations is also easier as everyone can see the demonstration of two couples in the centre of the circle
3. It allows the caller to easily see what is happening to the entire dance floor much easier than in multiple squares.
4. There is very little standing or watching while others dance. The two-couple dancing has everyone moving at the same time. With odd couples a simple pass thru changes the two dances not participating.
5. Most important - It's also a great way for a newer caller to learn to control the movement of the dancers and even resolve with two couples
  - . This is a great way to drill on timing.
  - This is a great way to drill on focus movements

- This is a great way to practice two couple isolated sight
- This is a great way to practice formation management
- This is a great way to observe body mechanics and flow

## **SLIDE – DISADVANTAGES**

### **Disadvantage –**

1. **There is a tendency to take advantage of success for too long. Because the Sicilian Circle is so easy to use, so much fun for the dancers, makes them feel successful and social, it is easy to loose track of the time when flushed with success.**

Adhere to “tip Length” the same as normal square dancing. 10 minutes of activity nonstop is a lot of dance action. Be mindful of your dancers

## **SLIDE – PRACTICAL MANAGEMENT**

### **Practical Management of a Sicilian Circle**

There are only a few simple guidelines for using the Sicilian Circle as a practical teaching, dancing and management tool for square dancing. The Name refers to the shape of the formation and not the actual Sicilian Circle dances (traditional)

Remember – it is NOT a replacement for Square Dancing – It is just another tool in the tool box.

1. Educate your dancers on how to join in an active circle.
2. Use if frequently and make it part of your nightly club/class opening and teaching sessions
3. Think of the Sicilian Circle as a looped 8-chain thru formation.
4. Insides and outsides (where applicable) are the centre of the circle and the outside of the circle
5. Singing calls, 64 beat phrases, resolutions etc. do not apply. – . **Note: you can actually practice resolution techniquet on the 2x4 grid in the Sicilian Circle**

This is a tool for practical dancing and confirmation.

## **SLIDE – PRACTICAL MANAGEMENT CONTINUED**

Presently, the standard practice is to move from the square formation to an Eight Chain Thru Formation and run dancers back and forth across a 2 by 4 grid.

This is essentially two facing couples stacked.

Moving to a Sicilian Circle Formation just includes more facing couple sets in the stack, and the stack is in a continuous loop

The primary dance routines used with facing couples are called a Facing Couple Zero.

- At the end of each "two couple Zero Module", everyone is in the same geographical position where they started.

**COMMENT:** If the caller decides to not call a Facing Couple Zero, then the progression around the big circle mixes partners. This is the caller's choice. Keep everyone with their partner or mix and match.

As couples progress on to dance with other couples they get to dance with many more other dancers than can be done in the square formation.

Again, It is up to the caller to decide whether to return everyone back to the original set of four or end the dance with everyone mixed. I sometimes leave the couples mixed and move to squares for a singing call.

As with most of what I done with modules, I keep the Facing Couple Zeros short and progress the couples to new couples frequently.

## **SLIDE PROGRESSION IN A SICILIAN CIRCLE**

### **Progression in the Sicilian Circle:**

There are several ways to "progress". The most obvious is to Pass Thru the facing couple and move on around the set to a new couple.

A nice way to vary the feel of this progression is to use a Pass Thru Equivalent.

- One of my favourites is Right and Left Thru with a full turn and move on. Dancers like that action.
- Square Thru 3/4 and move on can be used to move couples to reverse the progression from CCW to CW.

Let them feel the impact of leaving the group behind them and moving forward to someone new but not doing anything until the caller calls it. This is an important skill in dancer development that really helps once they are in squares. They cease to worry about anyone else but their own group of 4 and they only worry about dancing their part of the movement.

Once your dancers have the idea of how "progression" in Sicilian Circles work, there are several other options for "progressing".

- **Veer Left/Right ... Veer Right/Left ...** and move on If you are willing to teach a little bit.
- **Veer Left ...Veer Right .move to the next.. Veer Right Veer Left ...** produces a weaving action that the dancers will enjoy. It progresses the dancers two positions in the big circle.

- **Swing Thru ... Men Run ... Couple Circulate** will move each couple to a new pair. Then Bend the Line ... Circle Left 3/4 will finish the module.
- **Pass the Ocean, Slide Thru, Right and left thru, ½ Sashay (or rollaway) Star thru..** – Move to the next - This sets up the half sashayed star thru/slide thru which lets the dancers know that they do not always end up turning in
- **½ sashay, Touch ¼, Scoot Back, Walk And Dodge** - this sets up two single file columns. It also opens up a lot of other options -
- **Using Stars.** Finally, if you are willing to teach something that the dancers may find is hard to do at first, Star 4 Right 1/2 ... Go onto the next couple and Star Left 1/2 ... Go onto the next and Star Left 1/2 ... Go onto the next and face them. Once the dancers learn to do this one, they really like dancing it.

## **Slide – Looking at the Principles**

### **Looking at the principles**

1. Work the dancers progressively with “pass thru” move to the next flow sequences
2. Make use of “Short” two couple Zero modules (partner keep)
3. Take advantage of Short mix and move on sequences (partner change)
4. Have odd couple out – pick a direction and wait for an oncoming couple
  - (alternatively: if in long lines, when you are on the end of the line facing out do a partner trade and wait)
5. When you can end (**10 minutes average – 15 minutes max if teaching**) in a big circle type movement like a right and left grand with everyone to say hello then take a break

## **SLIDE WHAT CAN'T YOU DO IN A SICILIAN CIRCLE**

### **Be aware of the can and cannot do**

As was said earlier About 80 Percent of the calls at Basic and Mainstream are commonly done as two couple movements however, with a little work and practice, **92 percent of the Basic and mainstream (63 / 68) calls can be done with two couples in a Sicilian Circle.** The exceptions are

- Grand square
- Ferris wheel – **Although it can be introduced working with the oncoming couple when in two face lines**
- 8 chain 4 / 8 chain thru – **8 chain 1 but I would avoid it**
- Trade by – **The concept can be done but I would avoid it**

- Spin chain thru - **Although the flow it can be introduced working with the oncoming couple when in two face lines, I would avoid it**

The following calls have variations which cannot be done in two couples. This applies also to only a small amount of calls

- Separate Around 2
- Four Ladies Chain(Reg. & 3/4)
- All Eight Circulate
- Split Circulate

### **Other calls that are useable but require callers to think and work a little harder**

- Circle to a Line (**requires direction on who will break**)
- Dive Thru (**insides and outsides**)
- Alamo Style (**too tight but you are already doing waves**)
- Double Pass Thru (**varied to single track**)
- First Couple Go Left/Right, Next Couple Go Left/Right (**Varied first dancer left next dancer right or inside outside tandems**)
- Pass to the Centre (**insides and outsides**)

### **SLIDE – SUCCESS TIPS**

#### **Success Tips**

1. Keep the sequences Short and simple
2. Progress to new couples quickly and frequently
3. Vary progression methods (pass thru = XXXX)
  - Veer left, Veer Right – move to the next
  - Square thru 3 – move to the next
  - Pass thru – move to the next
  - Spin the top, Turn thru – move to the next
4. Use circles, stars and direction changes often
5. Use ½ sashayed set ups for progression transition
  - Right and left thru, ½ sashay, star thru – move to the next
  - Half Sashay 1 ½, Double Pass Thru, Face Right, Chain Down the Line, Half Sashay, Slide thru – move to the next

## SLIDE – SMALL NUMBER OF DANCERS

### Modification with only 3, 5, or 7 couples

If you are short of dancers, the principle of Sicilian circles can still be used by stealing the idea of couples facing out doing a partner trade

- Make sure your progression is not half sashayed unless intended

LOOK AT THE SEQUENCE ON THE SCREEN. – The first sequence is the longest and also the simplest. It allows the dancers to identify 2 couple dancing and then move to the next

- You can use a dosaso any time you do a move to the next, to allow the dancers to adjust when necessary.
- Short sequences work well.
- Progression works well
- 10 minute maximum then finish.

### (Go to taminations)

Heads Square Thru

(this is the standard 8 chain principle and the Sicilian circle principle)

(facing couple zero)

Right and Left Thru

Veer Left

Girls Cross Run

Bend the Line

Square Thru 3

Partner Trade

Star Thru

California Twirl

Flutterwheel

Reverse Flutterwheel

(progression movement)

Veer Left

Veer Right

(move to the next - if odd couples at the end of the line have them trade)

Outsides Trade

(you will have one couple standing and everyone else will be paired with new couples)

(Think of everyone as the center couples now)

Centers Touch a Quarter

Centers Scoot Back

Centers Boys Run Right

Centers Right and Left Thru and a Quarter More

(partner change progression)

Centers Veer Right

Pass the Ocean



Spin the Top  
Spin the Top  
Turn Thru  
Boys Run Left  
Scoot Back  
Boys Run  
Star Thru  
(have the lonesome couple facing out automatically trade and wait for someone)  
Outsides Trade  
(pass thru and move to the next)  
Centers Pass Thru  
Pass the Ocean  
Girls Trade  
Recycle and Sweep a Quarter  
Pass Thru  
Centers Star Thru  
(remember the outside dancers automatically trade)  
Outsides Trade  
Centers Pass the Ocean  
Centers Girls Trade  
Centers Extend  
Swing Thru  
Boys Run  
Bend the Line  
Star Thru  
Right and Left Thru  
Pass Thru  
Outsides Trade  
Centers Right and Left Thru  
Centers Veer Left  
Centers Veer Right  
(keep going until you have about 10 minutes maximum to play with moving dancers around)  
(finish with a big circle movement)  
Allemande Left  
(come back and swing, all join hands and make a big circle)  
Right and Left Grand  
Promenade Home  
(promenade to find a chair and take a well-deserved break)

## **SLIDE HISTORY DANCE**

Sicilian Circles are not a new concept and they have been around for over a century at square dances and social dances.. We HAVE JUST FORGOTTEN HOW USEFUL AND HOW FUN THEY CAN BE.

## SLIDE MOST SQUARE DANCING IS JUST TWO COUPLE DANCING

The following is a transcribed sequence from a “2016 US Festival of “Hot Hash” Calling. With the exception of the trade by, and the right and left grand not being set up to a big circle, it is all two couple calling and can be done in the Sicilian circle by saying MOVE TO THE NEXT instead of TRADE BY

HEADS SQUARE THRU 4, EVERYBODY SQUARE THRU 4,  
BOY RUN RIGHT, SCOOT BACK, HINGE, LADIES TRADE, RECYCLE,  
SQUARE THRU 3, **TRADE BY**, PASS THE OCEAN, LADIES TRADE,  
BOX THE GNAT, PASS THRU, PARTNER TRADE,  
GIRLS LEAD REVERSE FLUTTERWHEEL, SLIDE THRU, **TRADE BY**,  
LEFT SQUARE THRU 4, PARTNER TRADE,  
LADIES LEAD DIXIE STYLE TO A WAVE, BOYS TRADE, RECYCLE,  
BOY WALK - GIRL DODGE, HINGE, LADIES TRADE, HINGE,  
IN YOUR BOX – CIRCULATE, BOYS RUN, SPIN THE TOP,  
BOYS TO THE LEFT -- CROSS RUN, LADIES TRADE,  
(LEFT) SPIN THE TOP, GIRLS CROSS RUN, RECYCLE, PASS THRU,  
**TRADE BY**, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, VEER LEFT, COUPLES CIRCULATE,  
TAG THE LINE, FACE RIGHT, BOYS TRADE, BOYS RUN (LEFT),  
CHAIN DOWN THE LINE, SEND HER BACK FLUTTERWHEEL, SLIDE THRU,  
**ALLEMANDE LEFT**, RIGHT AND LEFT GRAND, AND YOU ARE HOME .....

## SLIDE MOST SQUARE DANCING IS JUST TWO COUPLE DANCING

The Following sequence is a transcript from a mainstream floor called at the Adelaide State Convention in 2018. Just like the previous sequence, with the exception of **TRADE BY** and the use of the movement **SPLIT CIRCULATE**, this sequence too is all two couple calling.

**Note:** the **Split Circulate** needs to be changed to a **Box Circulate**, and the **Trade By** needs to be changed to a **Move To The Next** to work with the Sicilian Circle.

HEADS LEAD LEFT, SQUARE THRU4, BOY RUN RIGHT, SCOOT BACK,  
HINGE, LADIES TRADE, RECYCLE, SQUARE THRU 3 **TRADE BY**,  
PASS THE OCEAN, LADIES TRADE, BOX THE GNAT, PASS THRU,  
PARTNER TRADE, REVERSE FLUTTERWHEEL, SLIDE THRU,  
**TRADE BY**, LEFT SQUARE THRU 4, PARTNER TRADE,  
DIXIE STYLE TO A WAVE, BOYS TRADE, RECYCLE,  
BOY WALK - GIRL DODGE, HINGE, LADIES TRADE, HINGE,  
**SPLIT\*\* CIRCULATE**, BOYS RUN, SPIN THE TOP, BOYS CROSS RUN,  
LADIES TRADE, SPIN THE TOP, GIRLS CROSS RUN, RECYCLE,  
PASS THRU, **TRADE BY**, RIGHT AND LEFT THRU, VEER LEFT,  
COUPLES CIRCULATE, TAG THE LINE, FACE RIGHT, BOYS TRADE,  
BOYS RUN, CHAIN DOWN THE LINE, FLUTTERWHEEL, SLIDE THRU,  
ALLEMANDE LEFT.....

\*\* split circulate needs to be changed to box circulate

## **SLIDE – FACING COUPLE ZEROS – NOT SQUARE ZEROS**

### **Facing couple zeros**

The following are some simple Facing Couple Zeroes – Two couple zeroes) that you can use with the Sicilian Circle. They keep the partner relationship, but remember, the versatility of the circle as a teaching tool and review or warm up tool is that you do not have to keep the pairings if you do not want to.

#### Facing Couple Zeroes

- Square Thru 3, Boys Run, Girls Run, Square Thru 3, Boys Run, Girls Run, You're Home
- Touch 1/4, Box Circulate, Boys Run, Left Touch 1/4, Box Circulate, Girls Run, You're Home
- Right & Left Thru, Flutter Wheel, Veer Left, Chain Down The Line, Flutter Wheel, Veer Left, Chain Down The Line, You're Home
- Right & Left Thru, Ladies Chain, Square Thru 3, L.A., Promenade Home
- Couple #1 Half Sashay, Swing Thru, Girls Trade, Wheel & Deal, Zoom, Leaders Trade, Square Thru 3, Allemande Left, Promenade Home
- Box The Gnat, Square Thru 4, Partner Trade, Box The Gnat, Square Thru 4, Partner Trade, You're Home
- Right & Left Thru, Veer Left, Girls Cross Run, Bend The Line, Square Thru 3, Partner Trade, Star Thru, California Twirl, Flutter Wheel, Reverse Flutter Wheel, You're Home
- Swing Thru, Spin The Top, Nearest Boy Run Around 3, Nearest Girl Run Around 1, Wheel & Deal, Star Thru, Leaders Trade, You're Home!
- Touch 1/4, Scoot Back, Girls Stand Pat, Boys Run Right, wheel and deal, Star Thru, You're Home
- Half Sashay 1 & 1/2, (Boys lead) Dixie Style To A Wave, (Right) Swing Thru, Boys Cross Run, Swing Thru, Boys Run, Wheel & Deal, Sweep 1/4, You're Home
- Ladies Chain, Dosado, Swing Thru, Spin The Top, Swing Thru, Spin The Top, Recycle, You're Home
- Pass Thru, Girls Run, Single Hinge, Chain Down The Line, Flutter Wheel, You're Home
- Swing Thru, Girls Run, Couples Hinge, Girls Cross Run, Bend The Line, Flutter Wheel, You're Home
- Touch 1/4, Scoot Back, Scoot Back (again), Girls Run, Reverse Flutter Wheel, Veer Right, Boys Run, Boys Trade, Single Hinge, Walk & Dodge, Partner Trade

- Circle 3/4, Boy Walk, Girl Dodge, Single Hinge, Girls Trade, Spin The Top, Spin The Top (again), Recycle, You're Home
- Lead Right, Boys Run, Scoot Back, Single Hinge, Girls Trade, Swing Thru, Girls Run, Girls Trade, Girls Cross Run, Wheel & Deal, You're Home
- Pass The Ocean, Girls Trade, Swing Thru, Boys Run, Tag The Line, Face Right, Girls Run, Left Swing Thru, Boys Trade, Boys Run, Bend The Line, You're Home
- Right & Left Thru, Veer Left, Wheel Around, Girls Run, Swing Thru, Boys Cross Run, Recycle, Boy Walk, Girl Dodge, Girl Walk, Boy Dodge, U-Turn Back, You're Home
- Swing Thru, Hinge, Scoot Back, Scoot Back, U Turn Back, Scoot Back, Scoot Back, Hinge & Face that person, Star Thru, Partner Trade & face that person, Slide Thru, Wheel And Deal, Step To A Wave, Cast Off 3/4, Hinge, Recycle, Flutter Wheel You're Home

## **SLIDE – INNOVATION 2 COUPLE CALLING**

A little bit of work and effort by the caller can make for some really interesting two couple choreographic zeroes which are also useable in the Sicilian Circle.

The following sequences have been taken from some of the videos of two couple calling which has become popular on zoom. With simple modifications of:

- Only work this material after progressing to the next and doing a star thru to achieve facing couples with an inside circle of couples and an outside circle of couples
  - Changing couple number 1 and 3 to inside and outside couples
  - Promenades must be modified such as instead of Couple number 1 promenade half, use Pass Thru, Outside Couple Trade
  - Progression is a normal star thru, pass thru move to the next progression
- **\*Couple #1 Promenade 1/2**, Boys Only Cloverleaf, Girls Face In, Boys Split The Girls, First Left, Next Right Around 1 To A Line, Tag The Line, Girls U-Turn Back, Dosado, Step To A (Mini) Wave, Boys Run, You're Home
    - **\*Change to inside couple**
  - **\*Couple #1 Promenade 1/2**, Girls Only Zoom, Everybody Cloverleaf, Double Pass Thru, Leaders U-Turn Back, Dosado, Pass Thru, Centers Star Thru, Others Face The Music & Fold, All Square Thru 3, Allemande Left, **Promenade Home\*\***
    - **\*Change to Inside Couple**

- Change ending from allemande left to different ending
- Couple #3 U-Turn Back\*, Trailers In, Cast Off 3/4, Inside (Near) 2 Pass Thru, Cast Off 3/4, Centers Trade, Ends Fold, You're Home
  - \*Change to Outside Couple
- Couple #3 Split Couple #1\*, Around 1 To A Line, Tag The Line, Face The Music, Ends Trade, Boys Trade, Girls Trade, Centers Trade, Bend The Line, Star Thru, You're Home
  - Change to outside couple and inside couple