

## Capital City Squares

Sacramento, California

<https://www.capitalcitysquares.org>

Version 4 – 9/9/2023



## For Our Beginning Square Dancers

Welcome to Capital City Squares! Here's some information to help you get started on this new adventure!

We're an LGBTQ+ square dance club that is welcoming to everyone.

CCS is proud to be a founding member club of the International Association of Square Dance Clubs (a Gay and Lesbian Organization), also known as the IAGSDC. (<https://www.iagsdc.org>)

We are also proud to be a member of the Associated Square Dancers of Superior California (ASDSC), a straight but welcoming local association. (<https://asdsc.org/>)

We dance what's called "Modern Western Square Dancing" (or "MWSD" for short).

This is a contemporary form of traditional square dancing that is defined by CALLERLAB, the international association of square dance callers. (<https://www.callerlab.org>)

MWSD is taught sequentially as a series of calls that are grouped into "programs" or "levels". They are:

- Basic (no abbreviation)
- Mainstream (MS)
- Social Square Dancing (SSD) (an easy-learn combo of Basic+Mainstream)
- Plus (no abbreviation)
- Advanced 1 (A1)
- Advanced 2 (A2, also terms)
- Challenge 1 (C1)
- Challenge 2 (C2)
- Challenge 3A (C3A)
- Challenge 3B (C3B)
- Challenge 4 (C4)

Each progressive level includes all the calls from lower levels. (For example, Advanced 1 includes all the calls in Basic, Mainstream, SSD, and Plus.)

### ***What level does CCS dance?***

Capital City Squares (CCS) dances Social Square Dancing through Advanced. Our sibling Sacramento club, Prime 8's, focuses exclusively on Advanced dancing.

## ***What is Social Square dancing?***

Social Square Dancing (SSD) is a combination of the 50 most frequently used calls from the Basic and Mainstream levels. Our initial class will graduate you at SSD level.

SSD takes approximately 12 weeks to learn, and maybe one or two weeks extra for finishing touches such as LGBTQ+ flourishes and some of the finer points of dancing.

## ***How much does it cost to participate in the SSD level class?***

The cost for the class is \$75.00 for the 12 weeks to learn the entire SSD level. This includes paying for the caller, hall rental that we dance in each week, insurance with the two associations we are members of.

Class membership for 2023 includes club membership until the end of 2023. After that, students will need to begin paying club dues.

You will have the option at that time to become either an Affiliate member and pay a weekly dues of \$8.00 per night for dancing or a full Voting member and pay monthly dues of \$25.00 per month (includes unlimited club dancing during the month).

## ***Where can I dance SSD level after I graduate?***

When a class isn't running at CCS, we'll provide an hour and a half each club night of SSD full-level dancing and workshoping.

The second hour of the evening will be used for either Plus dancing or Plus class, occasionally with an Advanced tip.

Other clubs in the area also provide SSD dancing, and as of mid-2023, all IAGSDC club fly-ins (square dance weekends) and conventions provide SSD dancing.

## ***Where do I go once I'm comfortable dancing at SSD level?***

We love having comfortable SSD dancers! Some dancers want to keep learning and move up to higher dance levels, and we happily support both types of dancers.

SSD omits several calls from the Mainstream program, which has led to that program being rarely danced these days. The next full level "up" is Plus.

Accordingly, CCS is planning to offer classes that will take experienced SSD dancers up to the Plus level, including teaching the "missing" Mainstream calls.

Plus is often considered a "destination level", where dancers stop learning new calls for a while. There is usually plenty of Plus dancing in the area, both at CCS and other local clubs.

## ***Can I dance at other clubs?***

Yes! Because CCS is using CALLERLAB definitions, once you've achieved proficiency at any CALLERLAB defined level, you can go to any club night or dance event anywhere in the world and be able to dance!

The clubs in the Sacramento region regularly offer dances where there is SSD level dancing. We suggest you attend as many of those dances as possible, both to get lots of “floor time” as well as get experience with many different callers.

### ***Is there square dancing outside of the USA?***

Yes! Square dancing is an international activity, and you will find square dance clubs in Canada, Europe, Japan, and Australia, among other places.

And everywhere square dancing is offered, it is always called in English.

### ***What resources are available to help me learn?***

During class, we will have “angels” (experienced dancers) on-hand to provide students with a more comfortable dance experience.

On our website, we have downloadable SSD flash cards, along with SSD definition handouts.

Our website (<https://www.capitalcitysquares.org>) has a great deal of other useful articles and information under the Resources page, including:

- [Square Dance Terminology](#)
- [Etiquette & Courtesy](#)
- [Knowing Your Opposite](#)
- [Karen’s Tips for Being a Better Dancer.](#)
- Lists of calls for each level and the order that we teach them.

There is also a website called Taminations (<https://www.tamtwirlers.org/taminations/>) which provides animations illustrating each call’s definition.

### ***How can I make learning square dancing easier?***

Just as you do with an introductory session, you’ll learn the calls just a few at a time as you build up the list of calls that you know.

It’s important that you attend class as regularly as possible, to avoid missing the teaching of new calls.

Obviously, we understand there may be times when you can’t make it, and we’ll do everything we can to help you learn the calls you missed.

As with any instruction, it is important to listen to the caller and not hold side conversations during instruction. You can easily miss a key part of the instruction which will impact your understanding of the call when danced.

Also look for our emailed newsletter that has lots of club information and up-coming dances in the area.

As a reminder, dancers are always free to ask the callers about any dance-related issues, and any member of the Board can answer club-related questions.

Keep in mind that dancing with a more experienced dancer (angel) is a great way to enhance your learning, as they will assist you as needed during dancing.

It's our goal that every dancer be helped in any way needed so that they can enjoy to the fullest all the wonderful benefits of square dancing.

### ***What happens at the end of class?***

We always have a party to celebrate when a class graduates at SSD level. It is then that you are presented with your club badge.

At that time, you will also have the opportunity to purchase a club vest or polo shirt at a significantly reduced rate, should you wish to do so.

### ***What events should I be aware of?***

There are annual events that you will want to have on your calendar.

- We usually kick off the fall with our (non-dancing) annual Spaghetti Dinner Social.
- Our annual club dances are usually held on Saturdays in November and February.
- The regional square dance association (ASDSC) has its fun weekend, called "Harvest Hoedown", in Yuba City in October.
- We also participate in the Bay Area LGBTQ+ clubs' annual Interclub Holiday Social Dance, which is usually held between Christmas and New Year's.
- In the past, we've had our own fantastic fly-in (weekend event), called "Stumptown Stomp", which was held in May in Guerneville. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, we haven't staged a fly-in, but we're in the middle of planning to revive the event with a new name, right here in Sacramento, starting in 2024!
- Finally, many of our members attend the annual convention of the International Association of Gay Square Dance Clubs (IAGSDC) held in different cities in the USA and Canada, usually over the 4th of July or Memorial Day weekends.
- The IAGSDC website calendar lists all kinds of events by gay-style clubs all over the USA and Canada. Many fly-ins and IAGSDC conventions offer reduced rates for new dancers!
- CCS also has a party night on the 5th Wednesday of the month (when they occur). Those nights, we set aside teaching and all dance together. Often there are themes with special dancing, sometimes there are prizes for costumes or food. Each time it's something new and fun.
- Our local clubs in the ASDSC offer a 5<sup>th</sup> Saturday dance in selected months, as well as their own dances many times throughout the year.

There's a lot to learn and this is just a start. We welcome you to Capital City Squares and look forward to dancing with you! As always, if you have any questions, just ask!

The Board of Capital City Squares