

2026 ACHF National Championships



Tentative Schedule of Events

This year's National Championships will move to a single-stage format. This will create a different flow from previous years, so you should carefully review the tentative schedule below when making travel plans.

Friday, October 16

Friday's competition will include:

- Regular Choreographed Solo competition
- Choreographed Solo of the Year Dance-Off
- Regular Duo/Duet competition
- Duo/Duet of the Year Dance-Off
- All Tiny Tot and Pee Wee team routines
- All regular Freestyle Solo and Freestyle Short & Acapella Duo competition
- Regular Freestyle Dance-Offs
- Challenge Female & Male Soloist of the Year Dance-Off
- Flatfoot Soloist of the Year Dance-Off
- Short Duo of the Year Dance-Off
- Acapella Soloist of the Year Dance-Off
- Acapella Duo of the Year Dance-Off
- Dance of Champions Rehearsal @ conclusion of competition (make plans to attend if applicable)

*Start time TBD by entries - could be as early as 8am

Regular Freestyle Solo competition will award two Grand Champions in each eligible category—one for ages 15 & under and one for ages 16 & over:

- Challenge Female
- Challenge Male
- Elite Traditional Female
- Elite Traditional Male
- Elite Contemporary Female
- Elite Contemporary Male
- All ages for Flatfoot, Acapella, Short Duo, and Acapella Duo will dance off for one grand champion from the four age groups

Saturday, October 17

- 7:45am - Dance of Champions & Opening Convocation
- **8:00 a.m. — All-American Team Announcements (dancers must be present & competing with their team to receive this honor)**
- Team competition will begin immediately following the announcements.
- **3:00 p.m. — Opry Dance-Off followed by Special Awards & Recognitions**
- Team competition will resume following the special presentation and continue through the conclusion of the event.

This schedule is tentative and subject to change based on final registration numbers. A detailed competition lineup, including approximate performance times, will be released after registration closes. Directors should tell families to plan for competition to take place throughout both Friday and Saturday.

Important Notes

There will be no spectator fees this year, so families and guests will not need to check in at the door before entering the competition hall.

IMPORTANT: All Freestyle Solos, Short Duos, and Acapella Duos must be preregistered this year. There will be no registration table or additional competitor registration available at the door or past the deadline. If you compete with a team, you need to register for freestyle events through your team director. Information will be posted for independent freestyle dancers soon.

Only **one complete registration** - including team routines, solos, and duos - will be accepted from each team. Only dancers who are not affiliated with a team may register independently.

All competitors should have competed at an ACHF-sanctioned event earlier this season and should already have an assigned solo number. Reminder to bring your assigned number with you to compete. Numbers will not be provided.

Awards will be ordered according to the registrations received by the published deadline. Entries submitted after the deadline cannot be guaranteed an award and will not be accepted at the door. Thank you for helping us keep registration complete and accurate.

Grand Champions named during the regular Freestyle competition at Nationals will qualify for next season's applicable dance-offs in accordance with the **2027 ACHF Rules and Guidelines**.

Please also remember that entry into an "Of the Year" Dance-Off does not automatically register a Choreographed Solo, Duo/Duet, or freestyle solo/duo for the regular National Championships competition. Competitors wishing to participate in the regular competition must register for both separately.

All American Team recipients must be present AND competing with their team at Nationals in order to receive this award. Directors are made aware of this prerequisite before submitting nominations each year.

Nationals Awards Breakdown

SOLOS & DUOS

Nationals Solo & Duo "Of the Year" Dance-Offs (National Titles)

Choreographed Solo & Duo/Duet "Of the Year" Dance-Offs

- Choreographed Solo of the Year
 - Highest-scoring Regional Grand Champion Choreographed Solo from each sanctioned competition
- Duo/Duet of the Year
 - Highest-scoring Regional Grand Champion Duo/Duet from each sanctioned competition

Freestyle “Of the Year” Dance-Offs

- Challenge Female Soloist of the Year
- Challenge Male Soloist of the Year
- Flatfoot Soloist of the Year
- Acapella Soloist of the Year
- Acapella Duo of the Year
- Short Duo of the Year

Opry Solo Award

- Regional Grand Champion Elite Traditional Female Soloists
- Regional Grand Champion Elite Traditional Male Soloists
- Regional Grand Champion Elite Contemporary Female Soloists
- Regional Grand Champion Elite Contemporary Male Soloists

All qualifying Elite Traditional and Contemporary Grand Champion soloists compete for one overall honor: the ACHF Opry Female & Male Solo Awards. **By popular request, there are no separate Traditional or Contemporary Male or Female “Of the Year” dance-offs.**

Eligibility Reminder

All Choreographed Solo and Duo/Duet entries must compete at two sanctioned competitions to be eligible for the National Championships. They do not have to place at either competition to compete in the regular Nationals categories. Qualification for an “Of the Year” dance-off is earned by receiving the eligible Regional Grand Champion award.

TEAMS

All categories will be awarded 1st, 2nd, or 3rd place in each age division & level

Category grand champion awards will be given for each challenge category and each elite category

Age Division grand champions - Tiny Tot, Pee Wee, Elementary, Junior, Senior, Young Adult, Adult, Senior Adult - will be awarded across both levels (Challenge & Elite).

i.e. there will be one age division grand champion of the weekend for each age division. The grand champion may come from the challenge or elite level.

Grand Champion & National Titles

There will be a total of **4 National Champion titles** awarded this year as listed below. These four routines will earn the opportunity to be part of the opening ceremonies for the 2027 national championships as the 2026 National Champions.

Challenge Level

Junior (15 & Under)

- Age-division placements in each category
- 15 & Under Contemporary Grand Champion
- 15 & Under Traditional Grand Champion
- **Junior Challenge National Champion**

Senior (16 & Over)

- Age-division placements in each category
- 16 & Over Contemporary Grand Champion
- 16 & Over Traditional Grand Champion
- **Senior Challenge National Champion**

Elite Level

Junior (15 & Under)

- Age-division placements in each category
- 15 & Under Contemporary Grand Champion
- 15 & Under Traditional Grand Champion
- **Junior Elite National Champion**

Senior (16 & Over)

- Age-division placements in each category
- 16 & Over Contemporary Grand Champion
- 16 & Over Traditional Grand Champion
- **Senior Elite National Champion**

How the National Champions Will Be Selected

Within each level and age bracket:

1. The highest-scoring eligible routine from contemporary **and** open contemporary is named the ***Contemporary Grand Champion***.
2. The highest-scoring eligible routine from traditional **and** open traditional is named the ***Traditional Grand Champion***.
3. Those two Grand Champions advance into consideration for the top honor.
4. The higher-scoring of those two routines becomes the ***National Champion***.

For example:

- Elite Junior Contemporary Grand Champion: 97.4
- Elite Junior Traditional Grand Champion: 97.8
- The Traditional Grand Champion is crowned the **Junior Elite National Champion**.

This produces four National Champion titles:

- Junior (15 & Under) Challenge National Champion
- Senior (16 & Over) Challenge National Champion
- Junior (15 & Under) Elite National Champion
- Senior (16 & Over) Elite National Champion

Grand Champion is not the same as national champion. National Champion is an additional distinction earned by the winning Grand Champion. The winner would officially hold both titles, such as:

Junior Elite Traditional Grand Champion and Junior Elite National Champion