

## Planning Assumption

There will be Square, Round and Line dancing post COVID-19

## Challenges

1. We don't know when dancing will be able to start again.
2. We don't know under what conditions we will be allowed to resume dancing
3. Some dancers may be hesitant to return due to concerns about COVID-19
4. The "New Normal" might make it difficult to recruit new dancers
5. Higher fees
6. Possible loss of access to dance halls

## Analysis

### 1. Timetable for resuming dancing

- a) The earliest resumption date may be different for Line, Round and Square dancing due to differences in the degree of physical distancing and inter-personal contact.
- b) A decision on the earliest date on which dancing may resume is out of our hands since we do not control access to the dance facilities. That date will be determined by government based on public health and safety concerns.
- c) However we can control any delay in resuming dancing once the go-ahead is given by government.

### 2. Conditions for resuming dancing

- a) Until such time as a reliable vaccine can be developed, produced and administered to a large number of people. It is likely that government will impose restrictions on the nature of social gatherings and the conditions under which they may take place.
- b) These conditions could include *inter alia*:
  - i) Limits on the number of people who may gather in one location at the same time
  - ii) Requirements for physical distancing, including no hand contact
  - iii) Requirements to wear masks
  - iv) Provision for frequent hand washing or hand sanitization
  - v) Possibly testing for fever prior to being allowed to participate
  - vi) Submission of a written statement of health status
- c) These conditions will impact the three dance styles to varying degrees:
  - i) Line dancing will likely be the least impacted due to the ease of imposing physical distancing and the lack of inter-personal contact, but the wearing of masks would be difficult due to the level of aerobic activity. It is not unreasonable to suppose that whatever limitations are placed on exercise classes will also apply to Line Dancing;
  - ii) Round Dancing (CBD) clubs may have to insist that dancers only dance with their regular dance partners. In most cases this will not be a serious problem since for most Round Dancers that is already the norm. Physical distancing should be relatively easy to impose on Round Dancers but the wearing of masks will pose the same problem for Round Dancers as for Line Dancers;
  - iii) Square Dancing will be the most impacted by requirements for physical distancing and no hand contact. Until such time as any formal requirements are repealed it is difficult to see how Square Dancing can take place. The negative influence of these requirements may continue to be felt even after formal restrictions are lifted since for many people physical distancing and no hand contact will be the new norm due to many months of habituation.
  - d) In light of the above the start-up dates for the various dance styles may vary significantly with Square Dancing being the last to get back up and running.

### 3. Infection Concerns - Experienced Dancers

- a) We have a large number of older dancers who are in the demographic the most vulnerable to COVID-19
  - i) Many of these dancers may be very reluctant to return to the dance floor until such time as a reliable vaccine can be developed, produced and administered to a large number of people.
  - ii) While steps can be taken to reduce the possibility of infection, none of these measure can guarantee a risk-free environment.

### 4. Dealing with *The New Norm*

- a) Recruiting new dancers is one of our twin objectives (the other being retention of experienced dancers).
  - i) Over the past several weeks the general public has become used to the requirements for physical distancing, frequent hand washing, wearing masks etc this is often referred to as *The New Norm*.
  - ii) As already pointed out, the very nature of square dancing in particular, combined with whatever restrictions are imposed on us may make it very difficult to convince potential new dancers to take up the activity. What was often a very hard sell pre-COVID-19 may be an impossible sell for some time in the post-COVID-19 era.
- b) In light of the above, initially and for several months after square dancing resumes, it may be prudent to focus all of our energies on getting as many experienced dancers as possible back on the dance floor, leaving recruiting new dancers until a later date.
- c) Line Dancing and Round dancing might resume recruiting new dancers some time before Square dancing does, the problem with both being the lack of registered Dance Leaders.

### 5. Fee Increases

- a) There are a several factors that could result in per capita increases in costs
  - i) Restrictions on the number of people who may gather in a single place at the same time could result in smaller dance classes
  - ii) Any significant reduction in the number of returning dancers would spread the cost base over fewer dancers
  - iii) Failure to attract new dancers, combined with normal age-related attrition, will also spread the cost base over fewer dancers
  - iv) Municipalities could decide to raise their hall rental rates in an attempt to recover some of the losses incurred during the pandemic.
- b) Significant increases in the cost of dancing may further discourage some people from participating resulting in a downward spiral from which it might be difficult for a club to recover.

### 6) Loss of access to dance halls

- a) Generally speaking, current contracts for hall rentals expire this spring and require renewal prior to commencement of the new dance year in the Fall
- b) While renewal of these contracts is not guaranteed, for most clubs there is an unofficial “grand fathering” arrangement or understanding in place that gives them preference when it comes to renewing their usual time slots.
- c) Most of the halls we rent are popular venues. There are lots of other candidates for our usual time slots
- d) Given a choice between an empty hall and rental income, the hall owners will always opt

- for the latter, especially after such a long hiatus when they had no rental income at all.
- e) Thus any delay in renewing hall rental contracts could result in the loss of the desired time slot.
  - f) Clubs that do not sign rental contracts for this Fall may find it very difficult to obtain any suitable time slots at a later date.

There are two courses of action open to EOSARDA's Board of Directors.

- 1) We can sit back and wait for events to unfold organically leaving it up to clubs to decide if and when they should resume normal activities
- 2) We can take on a leadership role and begin working with our Member Clubs now to develop coordinated strategies for dealing with the challenges outlined above.