

# Ballet

Specifically Outdoor Kite Ballet for Competition  
By Wayne Turner

While this outline will give you some of the rules at the time of this writing, this is not a definitive discussion of the rules. This is intended to give you some inspiration to think about factors that are not always obvious, but should help your enjoyment of competing. Reading the rule books, the ISK and AKA Appendix along with the ISK Judges Book will give insight that may help your understanding, and will lead you to ask better questions. <http://aka.kite.org/kite-genres/sport-kite/sp-rulebooks>

## I. Why fly Ballet?

- A. Because it is one more facet of kiting to try.
- B. The people you will hang out with are great.
- C. An excuse to get out (out of the house, out of chores, out of work) and kite fly.

## II. Music Selection

### A. Considerations

#### i. Something you like

- a) You will listen more than anyone
- b) From the AKA Appendix
  - ▲ “The term “music” is to be interpreted in the broadest possible way.”

#### ii. Timing and tempo changes

- a) Change-ups during the piece help keep things from being repetitive and show range
- b) Dramatic beginning and end can really boost your score if you pull them off.

#### iii. Lyrics

- a) Some judges won't like them, and have trouble considering the voice an instrument.
- b) If you are jumping back and forth from lyrics to instruments, you will lose some judges unless there is an obvious reason to change.
- c) Singers sometimes get “creative” and sing with music in the background rather than sing with the music. Just like a bad kite ballet. You at least have to convey the mood of the music somehow to the judges.

#### iv. Length

##### a) Rule Book

- ▲ 2-4 minutes individual
- ▲ 2-5 minutes pairs and team

##### b) Real life

- ▲ Leave a cushion on the time limits.
  - ▲ Players can be fast or slow.
  - ▲ if you are using a tone before the music, the stopwatch may get started.
  - ▲ Calling “Out” can make sure the stopwatch ends when you want it to.
- ▲ Longer pieces.
  - ▲ Give you more time to show your skills.
  - ▲ Can let you work in more change-ups of tempo and mood.
- ▲ Shorter pieces.
  - ▲ Reduce the chances of being too repetitive.
  - ▲ Shorten the amount time you expose yourself to bad wind or mistakes.

### B. Editing

- i. ISK Rule Book
  - a) “It is acceptable to have a signal prior to the beginning of the music. The music may be composed for the performance, an arrangement, or an existing piece. However, the music must be an entity and shall not consist of completely separate pieces just attached to one another. If different pieces of music are used, they must be combined to give the impression of one entity. The music should end naturally, not abruptly as if edited to meet time constraints.”
- ii. Software
  - a) Audio Editors – the staple since computers have been available and most can do more to the music than we would imagine.
    - ⤴ Audacity
      - ⤴ Free audio editor
      - ⤴ mp3 support is a separate download
  - b) DJ Software – often is easier/quicker for blending two songs that shouldn't go together since it is designed for a DJ to be able to do it on the fly.
    - ⤴ will let you speed one piece up while slowing a second piece down at the same time so tempos will be the same at the changeover.
    - ⤴ Will also let you change the pitch of the pieces for the blend

### C. Media

- i. AKA Competitions
- ii. Standard CD Only – No MP3 or WMA disks
- iii. If your CD doesn't play (at all or only partially) on the sound system being used then you are subject to a music penalty. Have YOUR CD played prior to the start of the event if anything has changed since your last event. Different CD brands, or burners, or software, or players may cause a problem.
- iv. A 2<sup>nd</sup> IDENTICAL CD can be submitted as a backup (you may be allowed a CD that isn't identical, but the rules state identical so don't cry if you are held to that standard).

### III. Choreography

#### A. This is your interpretation of the music, but someone else is judging it

- i. Hit the obvious melody highlights
  - a) the more obvious something is, the more likely a judge will want to see you do something with it

#### B. Show what you do well

- i. Don't forget to fly with precision
- ii. You can use the backing rhythm but you have to be careful not to fall into a repetitive rut. Best to limit it to transitions or just one verse or chorus.

#### C. Practice

- i. Learning a routine is easiest with a steady wind for UL or Standard kites.
- ii. It isn't any fun, but practice in crappy conditions if you can.
- iii. Fly your routine on different length line sets in practice at least. A shorter set can help if the field is undersized or the wind is light, a longer set helps spread things out and slow things down if the wind is up.

### IV. At the competition.

#### A. Fields

- i. Size Minimum in Rule Book
  - a) Team & Pairs = 360x360
  - b) Individual Dual-Line = 295x295

- c) Individual Multi-Line = 246x246
- ii. Real World
  - a) NWSKL always tries to make fields Team minimum sized. Even if we have to include obstacles like dunes and grasses, maybe even a logs and posts. Look over the field(s) and think about what that will mean to your routine for landings, ground passes, recovery if something risky goes bad.
  - b) Examples
    - ▲ Seaside, OR – AKA Convention
      - ▲ Dunes with grass in field 4
        - ▲ Team Ballet with light wind. Launched from dunes after making sure we had our lines running cleanly over the tops of the grass to get max space for the routine and needed it.
    - ▲ Ocean City, MD – AKA Convention
      - ▲ Wooden boardwalks on the beach with fingers extended towards the water, and signs scattered in the area. At least one field was narrow enough to fly your kite over the boundaries left and right using 140' lines with the flyer not moving. Had to be less than 280' wide.

## B. Setup

- i. Time / On Field Helpers
  - a) Individual - 3 minutes – 2 spotters max
  - b) Pairs - 4 minutes – 2 spotters max
  - c) Team - 5 minutes – 1 spotter per team member max
- ii. The Field Director is your friend
  - a) They should call you onto the field and start your setup time.
  - b) Listen to them if they suggest you should consider standing someplace else, or you might be close to one edge with kite. You don't have to follow their advice, but let them know you are aware of it and there is a reason if you aren't going to take it.
  - c) Don't worry them by waiting until the last 10 seconds to be ready.
    - ▲ They are supposed to call for the start of the music as soon as your time runs out. Even if you are not ready.
  - d) Don't be afraid to talk with them and tell them you would like time calls at certain points or warnings about something on the field you have seen.
  - e) Mistakes by the field director don't keep you from being penalized (ultimately you are the 'pilot in charge').

## C. Wind

- i. Range
  - a) Novice & Team Train Classes → 4.4 to 18.6 mph
  - b) Other Classes → 2.5 to 28 mph
  - c) These ranges can be amended by the Chief Judge, but safety should always be considered. The AKA Appendix sets max amended limits of 24 and 36 but an event sanctioned under the ISK could go higher.
- ii. Wind Check!!!
  - a) If at any time prior to the minimum time (2 minutes) into the routine you believe the wind is effecting or could affect your routine, yell it out to the Field Director but keep doing what you are supposed to be doing whether it is setting up or flying.

## D. Judges

- i. All the judges may not see the same things, both philosophically and literally. They are all different, just like people surprisingly. So don't let one or two judges upset you, it isn't worth it.

- a) If you are flying close to boundaries, or moving around a lot, the judges may miss something just because they are moving themselves, or trying to decide if you crossed/touched a line.
  - b) While judging has guidelines, some of those are rather vague, “originality (not necessarily meant to be spectacular), mood, creativity, variety, etc.”
  - c) Some judges have pet peeves they like or dislike that others ignore.
  - ii. Learning the judges can help you decide on which routine to fly or how aggressive you will be if you are not locked into a routine yet. If you have had a routine in mind and practiced, most of the time you will be better off sticking with it.
- E. Evaluation Afterwards
- i. How did it feel to you? Did you have fun?
  - ii. Judges’ opinions ask them what they remember of your routine, the good and the bad.
  - iii. People and views from the sidelines.
    - a) Sound and Timing
      - ⤴ Sight inside our atmosphere is practically instant, but not sound. The further from the flyer the observer was, the more they may think your timing was off.
      - ⤴ Sound travels 1000 Meters/Second
      - ⤴ The field has a 155 Meter diagonal, almost 0.2 of a second difference, and very noticeable if you ever watch a video of a routine you flew from a camera that next to the speakers and you weren’t, or the camera was across the field from the sound and you were near it.
  - iv. The most important evaluation is the first one listed. You will always be there, the rest of the people come and go. IF IT WASN’T FUN, try something different. It may only be flying in different wind conditions, getting a different kite to fly with, maybe try Field Directing, or helping with scoring. The NWSKL hopes your ‘different’ does not include an aversion to participating in some way at our events, but please, HAVE FUN!

In case you may be curious, judging indoor choreography can be just as arbitrary.

AKA Appendix Section IV.C.1 (Indoor Choreography)

“The composition or flow of the routine. How well transitions from one program element to the next are made. How well the routine interprets the music, it’s tempo and mood. The effectiveness of the music in the development of the routine.”