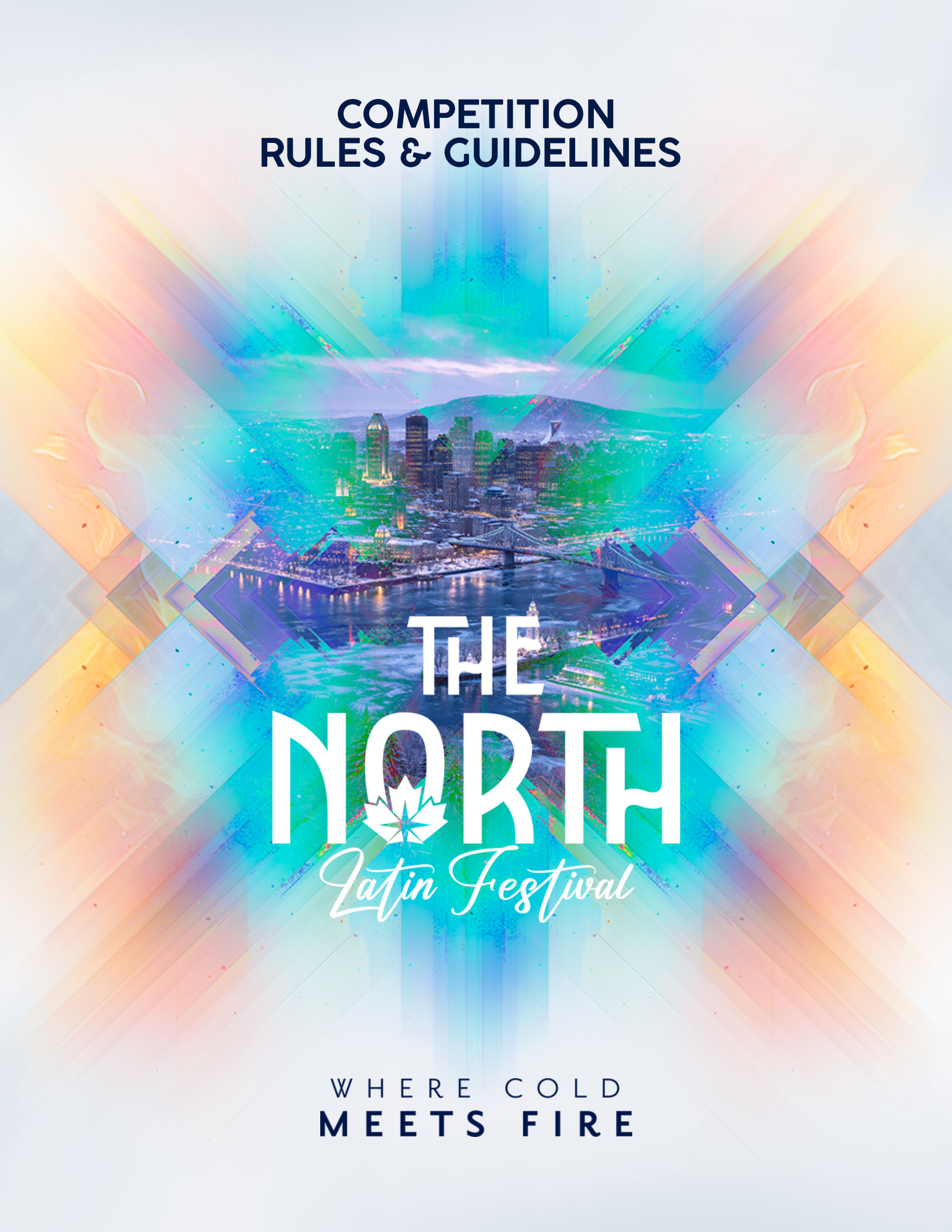


COMPETITION RULES & GUIDELINES



THE NORTH

Latin Festival

WHERE COLD
MEETS FIRE

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1. GENERAL INFORMATION

The North Latin Festival is a two-day celebration of Latin dance, culture, and artistry rooted right here in Canada.

Created to support the growth of Latin Performing Arts across the country, the festival brings together dancers, studios, companies, teams, artists, and the community through workshops, performances, social dancing, and competition.

The North Latin Festival Competition invites dancers of all backgrounds and experience levels to participate in its first edition, taking place on August 28 & 29, 2026, in Montreal, Canada, and to share their artistry, passion, and dedication on stage while contributing to the continued growth and international recognition of Latin dance in Canada.

2. GENERAL DEFINITIONS

Professional Dancer

A Professional dancer is anyone who earns financial compensation through dance-related activities such as teaching, performing, choreographing, judging, directing, or competing professionally.

Any dancer who has competed in professional categories nationally or internationally will be considered a Professional dancer.

If a dancer is considered professional in any dance genre or discipline, including Salsa, Bachata, Ballroom, Ballet, Contemporary, Jazz, Hip Hop, or other dance styles, that professional status carries over to all categories at The North Latin Festival.

Amateur Dancer

An Amateur dancer is any dancer or competitor who practices dance as a passion or hobby and does not make a living as a dance instructor, performer, competitor, choreographer, or adjudicator receiving no compensation.

An Amateur competitor must not have already competed in professional categories nationally or internationally and may only act as an Amateur in ProAm categories.

An Amateur dancer may be part of a professional company while continuing to compete within Amateur categories.

The number of years of training or experience does not automatically affect Amateur eligibility.

ProAm

The ProAm category consists of one Professional dancer partnered with one Amateur dancer, or a team formed by both Professional and Amateur dancers competing together, in which the Professional dancers may not represent more than 50% of the total members.

Competing in ProAm categories as an Amateur does not affect the Amateur status of the competitor.

ProAm Ladies

A Professional dancer partnered with an Amateur female dancer. Only the Amateur competitor will be judged.

ProAm Men

A Professional dancer partnered with an Amateur male dancer. Only the Amateur competitor will be judged.

ProAm Over 65

A Professional dancer partnered with an Amateur dancer aged 40 years or older. The combined age of both competitors must total a minimum of 65 years at the date of the event. Only the Amateur competitor will be judged.

Open

The Open categories are open to all levels, ages, and dance styles unless otherwise specified in the category title. For the 2026 edition, Open categories remain limited to Salsa and Bachata styles.

Amateur dancers do not lose their Amateur status by competing in Open categories.

Couples

The Couple category consists of a choreography primarily focused on partnerwork and performed by one Lead and one Follow. It may include mixed-gender or same-gender partnerships.

Duos

The Duo category consists of a choreography primarily focused on shines or a side-by-side routine without continuous partnerwork emphasis.

Continuous partnerwork may not exceed 2 Bars / 8 Beats / 1 Count of 8 during the totality of the routine.

Team

The Team category consists of choreography primarily focused on partnerwork. A minimum of 2 couples is required.

Team Shines

The Team Shines category focuses primarily on shines, footwork, synchronization, formations, and side-by-side choreography rather than continuous partnerwork.

Continuous partnerwork may not exceed 2 Bars / 8 Beats / 1 Count of 8 during the routine. A minimum of 3 dancers is required.

3. SHOWCASE COMPETITIONS

Overview

Showcase Competitions are choreographed performance divisions designed to evaluate artistry, technique, musicality, creativity, stage presence, and overall performance quality.

Competitors perform prepared routines in front of a judging panel according to the selected division and dance style.

Dance Styles & Category Structure

All Showcase categories are limited to Salsa and Bachata styles.

Amateur, ProAm, Team, and Team Shines Showcase categories are separated by dance style and will be presented as independent Salsa and Bachata divisions.

Open Showcase categories are unified divisions that allow competitors to perform either Salsa or Bachata routines within the same category.

Open categories are not separated by dance style unless otherwise specified by the organization.

Divisions

Solo

- Amateur Ladies Solo Showcase
- Amateur Men Solo Showcase
- Open Solo Showcase

Couples / Duos

- Amateur Couple Showcase
- Amateur Duo Showcase
- ProAm Ladies Showcase
- ProAm Men Showcase
- ProAm Over 65 Couple Showcase
- ProAm Duo Showcase
- ProAm Over 65 Duo Showcase
- Open Duo Showcase
- Open Couple Showcase

Teams

- Amateur Team Showcase
- Amateur Team Shines Showcase
- ProAm Team Showcase

- ProAm Team Shines Showcase
- Open Team Showcase
- Open Team Shines Showcase

Rules

Routine Duration

All Showcase routines must be a minimum of 1 minute and 30 seconds and may not exceed 2 minutes and 30 seconds.

Music Requirements

Competitors must perform at least 80% of the selected dance style category.

Music mixes are permitted provided they remain primarily within the selected category style.

Continuous Turns

A maximum of 8 Bars / 32 Beats / 4 Counts of 8 are permitted for continuous turns.

Exceeding this limit will result in a deduction of up to 10% from the final score.

Tricks & Acrobatics

A trick is defined as any movement requiring the support of another dancer to maintain or execute the movement.

Tricks and acrobatic elements are permitted; however, competitors are reminded that this is a dance competition, and routines should maintain an appropriate balance between dance content and acrobatic elements.

Props

Props are permitted provided they remain attached, held, or controlled throughout the performance. Props may not be discarded or left on stage before, during, or after the routine.

Failure to comply with this rule may result in a deduction of up to 10% from the final score.

Costumes

All costumes must provide appropriate coverage and remain suitable for a professional performance environment. Costumes are not required but are highly encouraged.

Penalties

Failure to comply with competition rules may result in deductions of up to 10% from the final score depending on the severity of the infraction.

Judging Criteria

Timing - 20%

Competitors may perform Salsa On1 or On2 but must remain consistent throughout the Salsa sections of the routine.

If the routine includes clearly identifiable sections of established rhythms such as Cha-cha-cha, Rumba, Son, Pachanga, Bomba, Plena, or other Afro-Caribbean or Latin dance styles, competitors are expected to respect the traditional rhythmic structure and timing of those sections.

The majority of the routine must clearly demonstrate recognizable Salsa or Bachata timing according to the selected category.

Failure to respect the timing or rhythmic structure of the selected style or clearly identifiable rhythm sections may result in point deductions.

Musicality - 15%

Judges will evaluate the dancer's interpretation of the music through movement quality, footwork, accents, body movement, tricks, dynamics, and overall connection to the music.

Technique - 15%

Technique includes posture, body lines, balance, placement, control, clarity of movement, execution, partnerwork technique, and overall movement quality.

Movements should appear clean, controlled, and effortless.

Difficulty - 15%

Difficulty is reflected through the complexity and successful execution of partnerwork, turns, shines, footwork, tricks, lifts, drops, flares, acrobatics, transitions, and overall choreography content.

Higher difficulty does not automatically result in a higher score if movements are not properly executed.

Connection / Coordination - 15%

This category evaluates the connection, synchronization, coordination, and overall cohesion between competitors throughout the performance.

Judges will evaluate lead and follow abilities, visual connection, synchronicity during partnerwork or shines, and the ability of the dancers to project confidence, unity, and engagement with the audience.

Choreography & Originality - 10%

Judges will evaluate creativity, originality, staging, musical interpretation, use of space, transitions, and overall choreography composition.

Visual Presentation - 10%

Visual Presentation includes costume, styling, showmanship, and overall visual impact.

4. HEAT COMPETITIONS

Overview

Heat categories are divisions where competitors dance together on the floor to music selected by the organization or DJ.

These categories are designed to evaluate timing, musicality, creativity, stage presence, technique, connection, and overall dance quality rather than choreography.

Depending on the category, Heat divisions may be presented as lead/follow partner dancing or solo performance formats.

Divisions

Salsa

- Amateur Just Salsa Solo
- AmAm Just Salsa Beginner
- AmAm Just Salsa Intermediate
- AmAm Just Salsa Advanced
- ProAm Ladies Just Salsa Beginner
- ProAm Ladies Just Salsa Intermediate
- ProAm Ladies Just Salsa Advanced
- ProAm Ladies Over 65 Just Salsa Beginner
- ProAm Ladies Over 65 Just Salsa Intermediate
- ProAm Ladies Over 65 Just Salsa Advanced
- ProAm Men Just Salsa Beginner
- ProAm Men Just Salsa Intermediate
- ProAm Men Just Salsa Advanced
- ProAm Men Over 65 Just Salsa Beginner
- ProAm Men Over 65 Just Salsa Intermediate
- ProAm Men Over 65 Just Salsa Advanced

Bachata

- Amateur Just Bachata Solo
- AmAm Just Bachata Beginner
- AmAm Just Bachata Intermediate
- AmAm Just Bachata Advanced
- ProAm Ladies Just Bachata Beginner
- ProAm Ladies Just Bachata Intermediate
- ProAm Ladies Just Bachata Advanced
- ProAm Ladies Over 65 Just Bachata Beginner
- ProAm Ladies Over 65 Just Bachata Intermediate
- ProAm Ladies Over 65 Just Bachata Advanced
- ProAm Men Just Bachata Beginner

- ProAm Men Just Bachata Intermediate
- ProAm Men Just Bachata Advanced
- ProAm Men Over 65 Just Bachata Beginner
- ProAm Men Over 65 Just Bachata Intermediate
- ProAm Men Over 65 Just Bachata Advanced

Rules

Music

All music will be selected by the organization and DJ.

Each heat will generally last between 1 and 1.5 minutes.

Music tempo and complexity may vary depending on the division level.

General Rules

The selected dance rhythm and timing must remain consistent throughout the performance. Lifts, tricks, overhead movements, and acrobatic elements are not permitted in Heat categories.

In partner divisions, shines and side-by-side movements are permitted from the Intermediate level and above; however, Heat categories must remain primarily lead and follow social dancing.

Solo Heat divisions are exempt from lead and follow requirements.

Competitors must perform recognizable Salsa or Bachata according to the selected division.

Callbacks

Depending on the number of competitors registered in a division, callbacks may be used to determine finalists and placements.

The organization and judging panel reserve the right to modify callback structures depending on scheduling and competition needs.

Level Guidelines

Beginner

The Beginner division is intended for dancers with limited competition and social dance experience. Basic lead and follow technique, timing, connection, and foundational movements are expected.

Shines, side-by-side movements, multiple spins, advanced patterns, tricks, and complex musical interpretations are not permitted.

Intermediate

The Intermediate division is intended for dancers with stronger social dance experience, improved technique, musicality, body movement, and partnerwork.

Double turns, syncopations, shines, side-by-side movements, and more complex combinations are permitted while maintaining clear lead and follow technique.

Advanced

The Advanced division is intended for experienced dancers with strong technique, musicality, partner connection, styling, and overall dance quality.

Advanced partnerwork, musical interpretation, spins, shines, side-by-side movements, styling, and dynamic movement are encouraged while maintaining clear lead and follow technique.

5. ONE VS ONE COMPETITIONS

Overview

One vs One is a solo freestyle competition based on improvisation, musicality, timing, creativity, and individual expression.

The competition is designed to highlight each dancer's ability to interpret music in real time while maintaining a clear connection to the selected style, rhythm, and movement vocabulary.

No prepared choreography is permitted.

Format

The competition may consist of preliminary rounds, elimination rounds, semi-finals, and finals, depending on the number of registered competitors.

Each battle will feature two competitors performing one against one, without gender separation. Competitors may be matched against another participant of the same or a different gender.

The order of competitors will be determined by a draw before the battles. The competitor who begins each individual battle may also be determined by a draw at the time of the battle.

Competitors will perform individually in alternating rounds.

Each competitor will generally have two rounds of approximately 40 seconds each.

The winner of each battle will be selected by the judging panel and will advance to the next round.

The organization reserves the right to modify the number of rounds, round duration, or battle format depending on the number of competitors and event schedule.

Music

All music will be selected by the organization or DJ.

Competitors must improvise in real time to the music provided.

Songs may include different styles and expressions within the selected competition style. For Salsa, this may include Salsa Dura, Timba, Son, Guaguancó, Salsa Romántica, Mambo sections, or other Salsa-related musical variations. For Bachata, this may include traditional, moderna, sensual, Dominican, or other Bachata-related musical variations.

Competitors may interpret rhythm changes freely, provided their choices remain musically coherent and connected to the essence of the selected category.

Rules

Competitors must demonstrate recognizable Salsa or Bachata timing, rhythm, musicality, and movement vocabulary throughout the battle according to the selected category.

If the music includes clearly identifiable sections featuring established rhythms such as Cha-cha-cha, Rumba, Son, Pachanga, Bomba, Plena, or other Afro-Caribbean or Latin dance styles, competitors are expected to respect the traditional rhythmic structure and timing of those sections.

The majority of the improvisation must clearly demonstrate recognizable Salsa or Bachata timing, according to the selected category.

Tricks, jumps, and acrobatic elements are permitted; however, they are not the focus of this competition and should not replace dance content, musicality, or style vocabulary.

Intentional physical contact with the opponent is not permitted.

Competitors must respect the opponent's space throughout the battle.

Props are not permitted.

Competitors must wear appropriate dance attire and safe dance footwear.

Judging Criteria

Timing

Ability to stay on time and maintain a clear rhythmic foundation throughout the performance.

Musicality

Ability to interpret the music, accents, breaks, rhythm changes, and dynamics in real time.

Style Vocabulary

Use of recognizable shines, body movement, rhythm, timing, styling, and traditional movement vocabulary according to the selected category.

Creativity & Freestyle

Originality, personal expression, improvisation, and ability to respond naturally to the music.

Stage Presence

Confidence, energy, charisma, audience connection, and overall battle presence.

Technique

Control, balance, clarity of movement, body coordination, and quality of execution.

Final Decisions

All judging decisions are final.

The organization reserves the right to modify formats, rounds, or judging procedures when necessary to ensure fairness and proper event execution.

6. REGISTRATION FEES

All competitors must hold a valid Dancer Pass, Full Pass, or Launch Pass for The North Latin Festival 2026 in addition to paying the corresponding competition registration fees listed below.

Category	Fee	Notes
Solo Showcase	\$40 CAD	Per competitor
Couple / Duo Showcase	\$70 CAD	Per couple or duo
Team Showcase	\$25 CAD	Per dancer
Solo Heat	\$30 CAD	Per heat
Amateur Heat	\$50 CAD	Per heat
ProAm Heat	\$40 CAD	Per heat
Salsa One vs One	\$30 CAD	Per participant
Bachata One vs One	\$30 CAD	Per participant

7. GENERAL NOTES

Competitor Check-In

All competitors must be present and checked in a minimum of 1 hour before the start of their scheduled competition time.

Competition schedules are subject to change at the organization's discretion.

Minimum Registration Requirement

A minimum of 3 registered competitors, couples, duos, or teams is required for a category to officially take place. If fewer than 3 registrations are received, the organization reserves the right to merge categories, cancel the category, or proceed without awarding the advertised prize.

Music Submission

All routine music must be submitted during the registration process through the Podium platform.

Competitors are responsible for ensuring that they have access to a backup copy of their routine music if requested by the organization.

Rules Acceptance & Media Release

By registering and participating in The North Latin Festival Competition, all competitors acknowledge and accept the official rules and regulations of the event.

All participants also authorize The North Latin Festival to use photographs, video recordings, and other media content captured during the event for promotional, marketing, and advertising purposes before, during, and after the festival.