

## FORMATION to FORMATION

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FORMATIONS: CALLERLAB has a list of Formations for the Mainstream and Plus Programs that number over 70. The number is high because they list each Formation in the six possible Boy-Girl Arrangements. Without the six Arrangements being listed, the number is considerably shorter.

What are these Formations? Well, just looking at them I'd say mostly they are **lines or boxes of four dancers, with variations in facing directions**. If I have Two Lines of four Dancers facing each other, they are nothing more than "Facing Lines." If those Lines have dancers facing alternating directions, it's called a "Wave." If I have two end to end conjoined Couples, facing opposite directions, they are, "Two Faced Lines."

All Formations, their placement, and facing directions, are directly relative to the Eight Dancer Grid (page 2).

FORMATIONS for MAINSTREAM AND PLUS:

Eight Chain Thru: As a Movement refers to 8 dancers, as a Formation it refers to two conjoined boxes of 4 dancers.

Lines Facing in or out:

Columns, Right or Left-Handed:

Trade By:

Right or Left-Hand Parallel Ocean Waves (or Half Tag Waves):

Right or Left-Hand Two-Faced Lines:

Right or Left-Hand 1/4 Tag (Wave in the center. Outsides facing in.):

Right or Left-Hand 3/4 Tag (Wave in the center. Outsides facing out):

Right or Left-Hand Diamonds:

Double Pass thru & Completed Double Pass Thru:

Inverted Lines with Ends or Centers facing In or Out (not Standard):

Tidal Waves & Tidal Two-Faced Lines:

Discounting Arrangements, and the differences in Hand contacts, there are about a dozen Formations which we apply for the use of calls (named movements) in the programs. Case in point, you can't do a Swing thru (a named Movement), without an "Ocean Wave," (Formation).

NOTE 1: Notice, the listed Formations, for the most part, refer to at least four dancers each.

NOTE 2: The “details” of each of these Formations could include Sequence, Arrangement and Relationship. They could also be described as “Standard” or “Extended Application.”

NORMAL: Each Boy has a Girl on his Right side. That’s normal, as opposed to Half Sashayed, or any other symmetrical Boy / Girl Arrangement. Of which, there is a total of six.

STANDARD APPLICATIONS: That’s material that you could expect most dancers to do or understand, without a workshop or extra help.

EXTENDED APPLICATIONS: aka, DBD (Dancing by definition) or APD (All Position Dancing): That would be material like a Right-Handed Swing Thru, from a Left-Hand Ocean Wave.

BOXES: (This is **not** necessarily CALLERLAB vernacular). There are Three boxes of four dancers each, which make up the Grid.

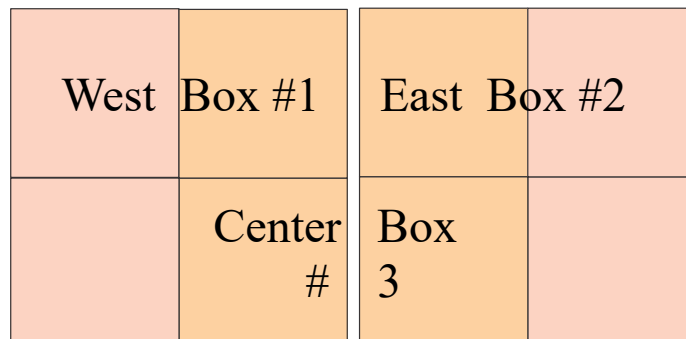
They all comprise the “Grid” of 8 individual small box locations, one for each dancer. And can be defined as two conjoined boxes of four dancers each or, one box of four dancers in the Center Box with individual couples at each end of the Grid.

Box 1: “West end or Corner Box”, or Eight Chain Thru Box, depending on Sequence, Arrangement and Relationship.

Box 2: “East end Box” aka Right-Hand Lady Box, aka “Across the Street Box” depending on Sequence, Arrangement and Relationship.

Box 3: Center Box. The Center Box remains relative to the East and West Boxes of which they are a part.

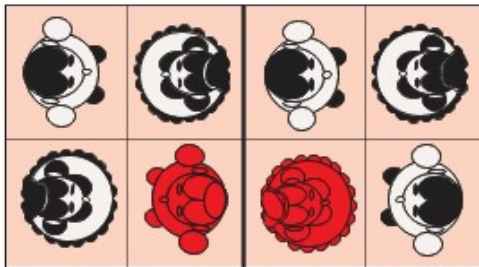
### THE GRID



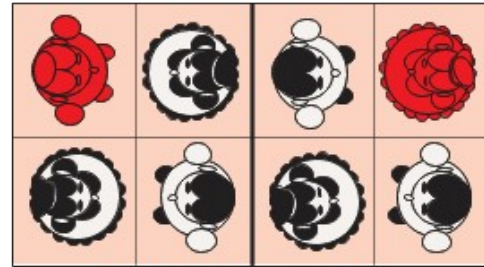
TRAFFIC: It's pretty limited to going back and forth across the Grid. The variations come in what's called to move the dancers from one Grid Box to the other, changing the direction of the Grid from East/West to North/South, and calling smooth combinations while occupying any of the three Grid Boxes.

(8ch-) is Eight Chain Thru Formation)

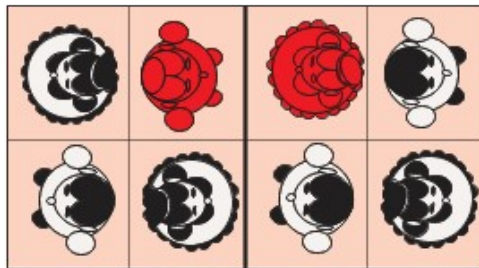
## CHICKEN PLUCKER IN "FORMATIONS"



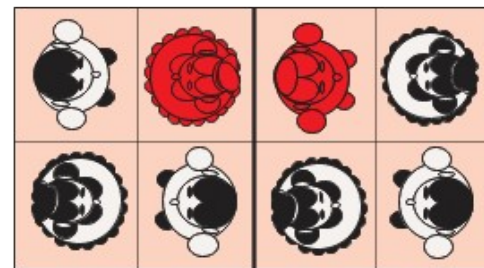
1. Heads Square Thru



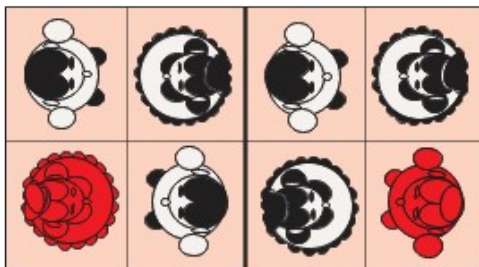
2. Right & Left Thru



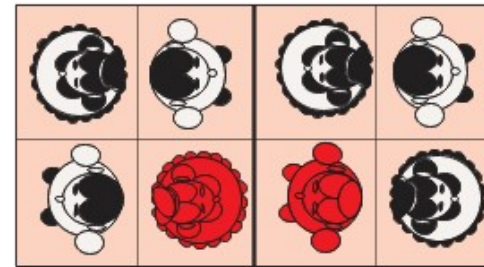
3. Pass Thru



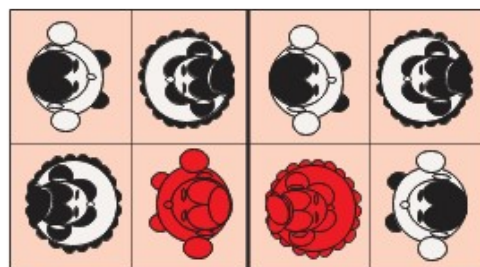
4. Trade By



5. Right & Left Thru



6. Pass Thru



7. Trade By Allemande Left

Amazing isn't it? All that dancing and only two actual Formations.

## CHICKEN PLUCKER

It's hard to think or talk about Formations without at least referencing the most Basic of Traffic Patterns, "Chicken Plucker." Of course, the real Chicken Plucker included the not too frequently used today, "Dive Thru." Today's Chicken Plucker uses Pass Thru, Trade By, instead of, Dive Thru, Pass Thru. By doing that, the Double Pass Thru Formation of the original is lost. With use of the original, the dancers occupy every one of the 8 individual boxes of the 3 Grid boxes. These days everything we call, with the exception of "Circle Figures," is relative to placement within this Traffic Pattern and the Grid Boxes.

## "FORMATION AWARENESS"

My Definition of Formation Awareness: It's not a whole lot different from my definition for a Module. "One or more movements called with a specific purpose (Formation) in mind."

How do we develop Formation Awareness? Answer, Study & Practice. On the first page of this document, you'll find a listing of the Formations. The exercises suggested, will be going from one of these Formations in the Grid to another. In no particular order.

Part of definition for any move, is its' starting and ending "Formations." Earlier, I said, "You can't do a Swing Thru without an Ocean Wave." That begs the question, "How do I get to an Ocean Wave? Then, after the Swing Thru, what is the ending Formation? Then, what can I call from that ending Formation? Then ? .... and so it goes. Being able to answer those questions is called having "Formation Awareness."

Having Formation Awareness and being able to deliver the combinations of moves at least two beats ahead of the dancer's reaction, is necessary for nice continuous flow. There is no time on the stage for research, or to analyze with dancers on the floor. Decisions and delivery must precede dancers' actions.

It's one thing to know that a Swing Thru begins and ends in an Ocean Wave. It's something else to know that from a static square if you call a Slide Thru, you are in the center position of a Double Pass Thru Formation, and if you want to do a Swing thru with the couple that's behind you, how are you going to get there? First, turn around to face them. How are you going to do that? Right & Left Thru & Pass Thru? Maybe a Circle four halfway, Veer Left & Veer Right? Or Maybe, Star Thru, Pass the Ocean & Extend. perhaps a California Twirl. There are many ways to get from one existing Formation to another desired Formation.

From a Static Square, if you call Slide Thru, the resulting Formation is a Double Pass Thru. The starting Formation of the desired Swing Thru is an Eight Chain Thru Corner Box, Right-Hand Wave, behind you. From here to there. Hmmm? Does that make the ending Formation a destination? Is it a desired destination with a purpose? How many formations do you use to get to the Right-Hand Wave? Does that make the combination of moves to get there very much like Modules? I'd say it does.

### FORMATION TO FORMATION MODULES

Destination: Right-Hand, Corner Box Wave.

1. Heads Slide Thru. (Formation? Double Pass Thru, out of Sequence. The wave you want to reach is behind you).
2. Right & Left Thru. (Formation? Double Pass Thru, in Sequence and the desired 8 Chain Thru Box in which to make the Wave, is ahead of you but there is someone in the way).
3. Pass Thru. (Formation? Corner Box, in Sequence).
4. Dosado to a Wave. (of course, we could just "step to a Wave" but the Dosado is a movement with Zero change to the Formation).
5. Step to a Wave. (The destination acquired, Right-Hand, Corner Box Wave).

There are four changes in Formation to go from this Static Square to the desired "Corner Box Wave" Formation. Do we think of these changes as we're calling? No. It's a composition of calls that took us from where we were to another particular place. The original purpose may have been to get to "Corner Box Two Face Lines" in Sequence, in order to do a "Chain Down the Line." Well, from a Corner Box Wave, you might Swing Thru & Boys Run and your "Right-Hand, Corner Box, Two-Faced Lines" are achieved. If it's used as a Module, there is no change of Sequence.

The bottom line is, controlling the movement of dancers.

## HOW TO MAKE THE EXERCISES WORK FOR YOU

### MEMORY:

I wish I could say that having a good memory is not important, but that's not true. If you are going to deliver continuous, smooth flowing choreography, you will need to know what to call ahead of its' time to be executed.

The use of Modules does require memorization. Fortunately, the memorizing of words is not nearly as important, or as easy, as memorizing their meaning.

As you work your way through the exercises, mentally track yourself going from location to location, Formation to Formation. Mentally convert everything from words (lyrics) to traffic.

TRAFFIC: Yes, traffic. It's the same as knowing the different routes that you might take to get to the grocers, school, work or maybe where the dance is this Saturday night. How long would it take you to learn all the directions and possible destinations in an area similar to 8 city blocks? There would be a variety of turns and distances to traverse and get you to the same desired destinations within that area. If you travel those 8 blocks enough, you'll be able to tell others how to reach destinations without a map, GPS, or Siri.

These are "Mental Exercises." Do them in your head. It's the same as what happens when you are receiving directions from someone else. If they tell you enough times, you'll remember. Repetition is a great teacher.

If you want to become an extemporaneous caller, what's most commonly called a "Sight Caller" or a "Mental Image Caller," Formation Awareness is a necessity.

The following exercises are just examples. You should refer to page one of the document and put yourself to the task of learning how to move from any one of the listed Formations, to any of the others, and back again.

You can apply the same type of exercises to Arrangements, Sequences and Relationships. How can I get from Normal Lines to Boy, Boy, Girl, Girl Lines and then back to normal Lines?

Relationships. What moves will or won't result in Partner Changes?

Sequence? Maybe not as important as the others. It's a necessary component of resolution, but if handled correctly solves itself. It's helpful to know what will and won't change sequence.

### **Exercise #1** FORMATION to FORMATION: Double Pass Thru (DPT)

All beginning and ending, in Double Pass Thru Formation (DPT). We are looking for “Formations only.” We don’t care about Allemande Lefts, Sequence, Arrangements (keep them “normal”) or Relationships. Just Formations.

Here’s an example: DPT to 8ch-and return to DPT.

Set up to DPT: HEADS PASS THRU, SEPARATE AROUND ONE TO A LINE, STAR THRU (DPT Formation). Head for an Eight Chain Thru Formation and then, to a DPT). CENTERS PASS THRU (Eight Chain Thru Formation) RIGHT & LEFT THRU, DIVE THRU (Back in a DPT Formation). Not the original DPT. Just the Formation.

1. DPT, to 8ch-Box and return to DPT.
2. DPT to Facing Lines, and return to DPT.
3. DPT to Parallel Right Hand Waves, and return to DPT.
4. DPT Thru to Out-Facing Lines, and return to DPT.
5. DPT to Parallel Left Hand Waves Boys in Center, and return to DPT.
6. DPT to Right Hand Columns, and return to DPT.
7. DPT to Right-Hand 2 Faced Lines, and return to DPT.
8. DPT to Parallel Half Tag Waves, and return to DPT.  
(As an explanation: they are Waves you get if you Touch 1/4 from an Eight Chain Thru Formation). They are a closer in proximity than the Waves experienced from an 8-Chain Thru Box, Dosado to a Wave.
9. DPT to completed Double Pass Thru, and return to DPT.
10. DPT to Left-Hand Two-Faced Lines and return to DPT.

**Exercise #2** FORMATION to FORMATION, Eight Chain Thru Box (8ch- Box):

1. From 8ch- Box to Right-Hand 2 Faced Lines (RH2FL), return to

8ch- Box.

2. From 8ch- Box to Left-Hand Two-Faced Lines (LH2FL), return to (8ch- Box).
3. From 8ch- Box to Parallel Half Tag Waves,
4. From 8ch- Box to Facing Lines and return to 8ch- Box).
5. From 8ch- Box to Parallel Left Hand Waves Boys in Center, return to Eight Chain Thru 8ch- Box
6. From 8ch- Box to Double Pass Thru and return to 8ch- Box.
7. From 8ch- Box to Parallel Right Hand Waves and return to 8ch- Box).
8. From 8ch- Box to Out-facing Facing Lines, and return to 8ch- Box
9. From 8ch- Box to completed Double Pass Thru and return to 8ch- Box.
10. 8ch- Box to 2 Faced Lines and return 8ch- Box.

### **Exercise #3** FORMATION TO FORMATION Right Hand Columns (RHC)

From Static Square: Heads Lead Right, Veer Left, Bend the Line, Touch One Quarter, (Right Hand Single File Columns, RHC).

Everything from here: #1 results in the set up for #2 and 2 results in the setup for #3, etc..

1. RHC to Facing Lines of Four.
2. Facing Lines of Four to RHC.
3. RHC \*Half Tag Waves.
4. Half Tag Waves to RHC.
5. RHC to Right-Hand Ocean Waves.



6. Right-Hand Ocean Waves to RHC.

7. RHC to Right-Hand Two-Faced Lines.

8. Right-Hand Two-Faced Lines to RHC.

9. RHC Thru to Double Pass Thru.

10. Double Pass Thru to RHC.

**KISS. Keep It Short and Simple**, for yourself and at the same time, try to make it as simple, short, and “normal” for the dancers. This is all about using a variety of Moves and Formations to intentionally get the dancers from one Formation to the others. Do your best to keep Arrangement (Normal) and Sequence out of consideration. There will be plenty of time to gradually add “non-Standard” material.

The more time you spend on exercises such as this, the more capable you’ll be at moving the dancers. As you work through the exercises and they start to become familiar, Start thinking about Flow, Hand usage and other details. This is work that will become the foundation for whatever Method of Choreographic control you choose.