

From David Brankley the Developer of the Easycomp Software:

From: David Brankley
Date: 13 October 2021 at 17:31:55 GMT+1
To: Peter
Subject: Ten Dance Error

Hi Peter,
The following is a summary and explanation of the software error which occurred recently. If you need any further information please don't hesitate to ask.
Regards,
David

The 2021 WDO Amateur Ten Dance Championship was held earlier this month, and 14 couples entered the competition. The scrutineer was using Easycomp which is the most widely used scrutineering program in the UK.

When the competition results and marks were published on the Internet, it was noticed that the result for 5th and 6th positions was incorrect. The couple who was awarded 5th place should actually have been placed 6th, and the couple who was awarded 6th place should have been placed 5th.

As the developer of the software, I was informed of the incident and immediately investigated. I was able to reproduce the problem by using the marks from the competition, and very quickly discovered the cause.

Although every final consisted of six couples, a total of seven couples danced in at least one final. The positions of 1st to 4th were awarded under rule 9, but two couples (numbers 22 and 32) tied for 5th place under rule 9. Rule 10 was applied and both couples had the same number of 5th place or better positions (5), so they were still tied. The software then applied the second part of rule 10 in an attempt to resolve the tie, whereby instead of counting the number of 5th place or better positions, it adds them up, with the couple having the lowest total taking the position.

The software correctly calculated the totals, with couple 22 having a total of 25, and couple 32 having a total of 18, meaning that couple 32 should be awarded 5th place. However, when it came to read the totals which it had just calculated, an error in the software caused it to read the wrong data, and instead of reading the totals, it actually read the number of 5th place or better positions a second time, causing it to incorrectly believe that the couples were still tied.

In ten dance competitions where a tie cannot be resolved using rule 10, before resorting to rule 11, the software will attempt to award the place to the couple who has danced in the most finals. In this case couple 22 danced in all 10 finals, while couple 32 danced in only 8, so it incorrectly awarded 5th place to couple 22.

The software error was discovered and corrected within the hour, the new version was made available to download from the website, and all scrutineers who currently use Easycomp were informed by email of the issue and encouraged to update their program before their next scrutineering job.

I developed the program in 2007 and prior to this case there has only ever been one other case of an incorrect result, many years ago. The vast majority of ten dance competitions are resolved without needing to use rule 10, and of those which do require rule 10, the majority are resolved without needing to use the second part of it. A situation such as this one is very rare indeed, which explains why the software error has remained undetected for such a long time.

I offer my sincere apologies to everyone who has been affected by this very unfortunate incident, especially the two couples involved, and I can assure everyone that this error cannot happen again.

From Jan Holloway the Scrutineer:

Subject:	WDO 10 dance
Date:	15.10.2021 5:32 pm
From:	janet elsbury
To:	Peter Nash Ballroom President

I can confirm that there was a software problem at the recent WDO 10 dance where the wrong rule was used to calculate the 5th and 6th placings.

I understand that the software has now been updated to correct the fault.

I personally apologise for any inconvenience and upset that this has caused.

Regards

Jan Holloway