

Call of the Month: All Eight & All Four Couples by Barry Leiba

Concepts are ways to modify familiar calls by doing them in less familiar ways. We learn the first bits of two concepts at the Mainstream and Plus levels when we learn COUPLES CIRCULATE (Mainstream) and ALL EIGHT SPIN THE TOP (Plus), but we don't truly get into the general concepts until the Advanced level. This month we'll talk about the general ALL EIGHT concept and compare it with the ALL FOUR COUPLES concept, and we'll see the similarities and differences.

Both concepts apply to four-dancer calls, and both require all eight dancers to do the call. The differences lie in the philosophies of the concepts. For ALL EIGHT calls, the square does the figure as a unit, working together in the formation in which it starts. Let's take a look at the most familiar ALL EIGHT SPIN THE TOP. From a squared up set, have everyone PARTNER HINGE. We're now in a (wrong-way) THAR, which we'll treat as two waves that cross in the center. To do the ALL EIGHT SPIN THE TOP, the ends trade with the centers (their partners), and then the centers CAST $\frac{3}{4}$ while the ends "move up". The two things that make the ALL EIGHT version different are

- ♫ the CAST $\frac{3}{4}$ becomes STAR $\frac{3}{4}$ and
- ♫ the "move up" changes from moving around your half of the square to moving concentrically around the whole square.

Those two differences are characteristics of all ALL EIGHT calls. In order to work with everyone in the square to do what is normally a four-dancer call, you turn stars through the middle and you move concentrically around the outside. But you *work with all eight* dancers to complete the call.

In fact, it's common for callers not to bother saying "ALL EIGHT" always. From our wrong-way THAR, let's SWING THRU. Well, this is actually ALL EIGHT SWING THRU, but it's often not called that way. You can see what to do: turn $\frac{1}{2}$ by the right, then star left $\frac{1}{2}$. Doing an ALL EIGHT QUARTER THRU from here will show how we're clearly working with all the other dancers: CAST $\frac{1}{4}$ by the right to form an ALAMO RING, then turn $\frac{1}{2}$ by the left to end in an ALAMO RING. Here we've involved dancers from the "other wave" to finish the figure.

And that's the principal difference between the two concepts. In ALL FOUR COUPLES calls, you start in a squared set and you do the calls with the opposite couple, *not involving* the other two couples. If you're in a head position, you do not work with the sides except to pass them to avoid collisions. In this discussion we'll look at things from the perspective of couple #1, a head couple.

One of the most commonly-called ALL FOUR COUPLES calls is ALL FOUR COUPLES RIGHT-AND-LEFT THRU. As couple #1, we look at doing the call with couple #3, just as if the caller had said HEADS RIGHT-AND-LEFT-THRU, except that we walk around the outside of the square, passing the side couples whenever we encounter them. So we'll walk past our corners, RIGHT PULL BY with our opposites, walk past another side dancer, and COURTESY TURN with our original partner. Note that the traffic pattern avoids collisions, but otherwise does not involve the side couples.

Let's try ALL FOUR COUPLES SPIN THE TOP and see how it differs from ALL EIGHT SPIN THE TOP. Well, first, we're starting in a squared set, not in a THAR. Again, think of doing the call with the opposite couple. Pass your corner and meet your opposite with right hands. Trade with your opposite, then STAR $\frac{3}{4}$ in the center while the ends move up. Very similar to ALL EIGHT SPIN THE TOP, no? But the difference is philosophy. We started in a squared up set, not in a THAR, and we arranged the traffic pattern to ignore the side couples, doing the call (conceptually) only with our opposites.

There's another important rule, which is a historical one, governing the ending positions in ALL FOUR COUPLES calls. If the call ends in a box of four (as with RIGHT-AND-LEFT THRU, but not with SPIN THE TOP), then if you're facing a head wall you must end in a head position. Similarly, if you're facing a side wall you must end in a side position. We can most easily demonstrate this with ALL FOUR COUPLES PARTNER TAG. At first glance you might think you only need do a PARTNER TAG and you're done. But let's look what happens as couple #1: we PARTNER TAG and now we're facing the side walls. That means we must slide over to the side positions (while the sides slide into the head positions), so that boy #1 is in position #2, facing out of the square with girl #3 on his left. Girl #1 is in position #4, facing out of the square with boy #3 on her right. Note how different that is from ALL EIGHT PARTNER TAG (which would be no different from a simple PARTNER TAG). It's important to remember to make that adjustment. Try ALL FOUR COUPLES SQUARE THRU 2 (or 4) for another example.

One final note: the distinction between ALL EIGHT and ALL FOUR COUPLES is often fuzzy, and not all callers make very much of the difference. Let's finish by having the girls U-TURN BACK in a squared-up set, and think about ALL EIGHT WALK AND DODGE (girls dodge while the boys star through the middle to their opposite positions) and ALL FOUR COUPLES WALK AND DODGE (well... it's the same; it's up to the caller how to call it).

The Advanced dancers might want to look at
ALL EIGHT SWING AND MIX and ALL FOUR COUPLES
SQUARE CHAIN THRU, and see why they're
Challenge calls!
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