

A New Way To Teach *Relay the Deucey*

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In the fall of 2007 I invented a method to teach *Relay The Deucey*. Using it, we needed only one class session to get my students dancing Relay The Deucey from all positions of both Right- and Left-Hand Waves! The key idea is: *Let's make the call even longer!*



First, let's discuss my definition of *Relay The Deucey*, both as a caller and a dancer. *If you use my method, you must avoid telling your students this complete definition, or any other, at the start.*

1. Beginning: *Everyone Turn 1/2*, then *Centers Cast Off 3/4* while the others *do 1/2 of an All 8 Circulate*.
2. Middle: In the wave: *Six Trade, Four Trade, Six Trade*. Dancers not in the wave move up, drop off, hook on, etc. I'll spend most of this article discussing this middle section, which is where I extend the call.
3. End: *The Center 4 Cast Off 3/4*. Meanwhile, the others move up to the ends of waves, making sure they don't go too far.

Most experienced dancers know that there is a simple pattern for the middle of this call:

- Dancers keep doing Trades as they move down the wave.
- Dancers who reach the end of the wave drop off and begin circulating along the outside.
- Dancers who circulate along the outside and reach the end of the wave will hook on to the wave and begin Trading down the wave.

One reason that students have trouble with this call is that they only see a small part of this pattern each time they execute the call. That's why I extend the middle section.

Basically, I keep the wave going with endless *Grand Swing Thrus* (though I don't cue that way). As dancers reach the end of the wave, they drop off and circulate until they reach the other end and start going down the wave again. This continues for some time, to ensure that everyone sees the *whole* pattern, not just *part* of it.

Here are the details. First I walk them through only the beginning of the call:

Everyone Turn 1/2, and the Centers Cast Off 3/4 while the others 1/2 Circulate.

I emphasize that *now* they have a wave of six dancers, with two others alongside. I also believe that "freezing" the dancers in this (temporary) formation is a helpful technique, no

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matter how you teach *Relay The Deucey*.

Then I tell those in the wave: "*All Six Trade*."

Then: "*Center 4 in the Wave, Trade*."

Next, have the dancers at each end of the wave walk forward halfway towards the other end, and the lone dancers move forward to hook on the end in their place.

At this point, explain that those not in the wave will actually be moving as those in the wave do their Trades, but that we won't do that yet.

Now, unlike doing a "real" *Relay The Deucey*, I repeat: "*All Six in the wave Trade and then Center Four Trade*", and then the outsides move ahead with one dancer going off and another coming on to the wave.

On perhaps the next repetition, have the outsides move at the same time that the center wave moves, although I tell them that I only cue for the wave: "*Six Trade, Center Four Trade*."

Then more repetitions. And more. Somewhere in here I usually give the helpful hint that they always alternate hands as they go down the wave.

Important: *never cue with "Right" and "Left,"* because otherwise it becomes harder for the dancers to later adapt to Left-Hand Waves.

Instead, cue using the terms, "*Six Trade, Four Trade, Six Trade*," etc. I explain that "*Six Trade*" is where *all six dancers in the wave Trade*, and "*Four Trade*" is when *only the center four Trade*. Meanwhile the others drop off and come into the wave.

Also, never cue "Girl Off, Boy On"; you want them to focus on the Trades in the wave for now.

As I cue "*Six Trade, Four Trade, Six Trade*," I stop at random. They need to stay with me, and to stop when I do. Slowly I build up to the point of continuous motion: dancers repeat Trades down the wave until they drop off one end, circulate around the outside, and begin going down the wave again. It's important that the continuous motion helps them learn how fast to walk along the outside so that they reach the other end of the wave at just the right time. I'm still cuing "*Six Trade, Four Trade, Six Trade, Four Trade...*" throughout.

Remember that at this point they've never done the ending of the call, and have only done the beginning once.

Eventually the dancers really get the hang of this pattern, which has begun to feel very smooth, and should be at about dance speed. (In fact, the dancers should be getting pretty tired of the pattern at this point.) I stop after "*Six Trade*" and teach them the end of the call: *Centers Cast Off 3/4 while the others move up just a little, to become ends of waves*.

At this point they've only begun and ended the call once, so we do everything again, with an

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extended middle section. Remind the dancers of how to *begin* the call, stopping before the middle section to recognize the formation ... *then* dance the middle section, which by now is easy, as you continue to cue "*Six Trade, Four Trade, Six Trade, Four Trade, etc.*" At some point, stop after some "Six Trade," and tell them that now we're going to end the call, and remind them of how to do that.

This is a good time to show them something about the ending position. A normal *Relay The Deucey* is equivalent to *All 8 Circulate Twice*, so you always end next to the same partner that you began with. (This is true no matter how much you extend the middle of the call.)

However, be aware that when you extend this call in this way, the arrangement (where the Boys and Girls are) may change. If Boys start as Ends, they will finish either as Ends, Centers, Leaders, or Trailers.* Still, it's a good idea to mix arrangements, so that everyone can start the call from any position.

Give them lots of practice with these extended *Relay The Deuceys*, sometimes extending a lot and sometimes only a little. Tell them to not worry about how long the middle part really is—because they need to get the feel of the middle before shortening it to the correct length.

Don't be in any rush to do an actual *Relay The Deucey*! It's even a good idea to take a break between tips before finishing teaching this call.

Eventually, tell your students that in an actual *Relay The Deucey*, the middle part is simple: *Six Trade, Four Trade, Six Trade*. Then end the call. Your students will all be surprised at how short the call really is! (Who would have thought this call is short?)

Not too long after they've learned *Relay The Deucey*—probably later the same day or, at latest, a week later—teach *Relay The Deucey* from Left-Hand Waves.

The first time through, extend the middle section a long time—enough so that they can get on and off the wave several times. The Left-Handed setup feels different to them, but after they've practiced the middle for a while, they'll get the idea. Of course, you'll use the same cues "*Six Trade, Four Trade, Six Trade*" for the middle of the call as you did earlier. With the left-hand version, you can probably shorten the middle section to the proper length more quickly than you did when teaching the right-hand version.

There's one more tip you can share with your students at some point, if you want. Not only do you end with the same partner that you begin with—no matter how much you extend this call—but you can follow that person along as you go through the call. As you go down the wave, that person is the last hand you touch before you drop off the end of the wave. As you

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*Technically, each added "*Six Trade, Four Trade*" has the effect of *Ends Circulate* and *Centers Un-Circulate* (i.e. *Spin Chain The Gears*) plus having two pairs of dancers *Trade*: the resulting Trailing Ends and the adjacent Lead Centers.

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Circulate around the outside, you should be more or less alongside the same person as they *Trade* down the wave. When you reach the other end, that person will be the first person in the wave whom you'll touch. And as you *Trade* down the wave, they'll be walking in the same direction alongside you.

I have enjoyed great success with this method. By teaching the call in this manner, and by avoiding cues and terms such as "Boys Off, Girls On" or "Right/Left" my students were easily dancing *Relay The Deucey* from any starting position from both Left- and Right-Hand Ocean Waves, all in a single class— and I even taught the calls *Roll* and *Track II* that same day!



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