

Les Gotcher
On
Sight Calling

The Four Basic Positions In Square Dancing

1. The Static Position
2. Lines Of Four, facing IN, or OUT
3. Double Pass Thru or Completed Double Pass Thru
4. The Eight Chain Thru Position

The first thing to learn is that there are **two** positions for each of the four basic ones. When you are working from Lines of Four you will find the second position by having dancers Bend The Line.

When working from the Double Pass Thru position, keep in mind that when you have the dancers Double Pass Thru, first couple go left, next couple go right you are immediately forming lines of four. At this point the dancers are IN sequence. However, after the Double Pass Thru, have first couple go RIGHT, next couple go LEFT, you are still forming lines of four but the dancers are now OUT of sequence.

One of the most important things a caller should learn right from the beginning is the fact that a Right & Left Thru will always — no, not always, but *almost always*, change the sequence. There is always an exception to any rule.

One other thing a caller should learn from the beginning is **sequence**. Sequence is determined by the position of the man. The ladies are not involved at all where sequence is concerned. I will be the first to admit that this is very chauvinistic but, *please* don't blame that on me. It was decided many, many years before I happened to come along. The ladies can be with opposites, or corners, or right hand man, but when they promenade HOME, they always go to the man's home position. That's just a fact of life and if you are a square dancer, accept it.

Now let's go back to that Static Position. If we have the heads do a Square Thru Four Hands everyone will be facing their corner. From this position we never call the Left Allemande because the dancers have just used the Left Hand. Instead we usually do a Right & Left Thru, then a Dive Thru, then a THREE QUARTER SQUARE THRU, leaving the Left Hand free for the Left Allemande.

If, from a Static Square we have either the heads or sides do a Pass Thru we have changed the sequence.

This is the one thing that threw me in the beginning. I knew that a Pass Thru would change sequence from the Static Square and I knew it would change sequence from Lines Of Four, but from the EIGHT CHAIN THRU position a Pass Thru did NOT change it

at all. I learned this at my club dance one night but of course I did not mention it to the dancers. I waited until I got home from the dance, then got my little figures out. They were magnetized so they would stay on the board, and I started working with the figures, determined to find out for sure. I couldn't believe it at first because I was sure that a Pass Thru would change the sequence of the dancers.

Here is the way I set it up, and the results, to my amazement: From Lines of Four, I had the dancers do a Star Thru. This, of course, changed the Sequence. They were now OUT of sequence. I had them do a Dive Thru (same as a Pass Thru) and stopped and checked it. They were still OUT of sequence. Now I had the Center Four Pass Thru — and I stopped again and checked. They were still OUT of sequence. At this point I had them do a Star Thru and to my amazement they are still OUT of sequence.

I kept asking myself, "Why?" I went over it time and time again to be sure. There was no doubt about it. This was something I was going to have to deal with. I needed answers and there was no one I could turn to because no one had been interested enough to even run into this fact, or to even care why it worked if they did know about it. It worked and that was all they cared about.

I needed answers and I had to have them before I could continue with my research. I knew that sequence was determined by the men's positions. I knew that the #4 man had to be on the Left of the #1 man if they are IN sequence and I knew that if he was on the Right of the #1 man they were OUT of sequence, regardless of what lady they had for a partner at the moment. I could easily see that the Star Thru from the Lines of Four put the #4 man on the Right of the #1 man. Again I checked it. I had the outside couple Dive Thru. I looked the board of dancers over and could see that the #4 man was still on the Right side of the #1 man. I had the Center Four Pass Thru — no change. The #4 man was still on the Right of the #1 man. Then came the Star Thru and the #4 man was still on the Right of the #1 man. This practically blew me away. I couldn't understand it at all. I went through it so many times I knew it was a fact. I had to accept it and get on with my job. And once again, I would never say, "*always.*"

There's one thing I did find out that night. I learned that after the Dive Thru, Center Four Pass Thru, then Star Thru the men had the opposite for a partner at this point. This was interesting. It meant that it could be used to get the same results as a Four Ladies Chain Across. Everyone now has opposites. So while I was still sitting there, I used it like this — After the last Star Thru they had opposites, still OUT of sequence. I had them Pass Thru, putting them back IN sequence and then I had them Bend The Line. Again I had them Star Thru, putting them OUT of sequence again. Now I had them Dive Thru,

Pass Thru and Star Thru. I looked to be sure that they all had partners back again, OUT of sequence, so I called Cross-Trail Thru and Find Corner, Allemande Left, and from then on I used this time after time, knowing how it was going to work from the beginning.

Earlier I said that there is always an exception to the rule, even in a Right & Left Thru. The Right & Left Thru, when used in any standard set up, will ALWAYS change the sequence. The exception is like this: From a Static Square have the two head gents FACE YOUR CORNER and Box the Gnat, SQUARE YOUR SET, WE'LL DANCE LIKE THAT. Now have the ladies do a Right & Left Thru and nothing has changed as far as sequence is concerned. The GENTS are all still in place.

Still working with the EIGHT CHAIN THRU position, we have Lines Of Four, IN Sequence. Again we will do the Star Thru and now we have the dancers in a position where they can Square Thru Three Quarters around to a Left Allemande. Take a good look at this set-up. The dancers did the Star Thru from Lines. The #1 man is what we will call the outside looking into the center. His partner is in front of him, his CORNER, the #4 lady, is on his right. This is the set-up you will look for to know that you have it right — #1 man is outside looking in, partner in front, corner on his right. That's easy. You simply call Square Thru Three Quarters and Find Corner, Allemande Left.

We said that there are two positions for each set-up. We said to get the second position you Bend The Line. Now look at that set-up. We have dancers, after they Bend The Line, do the Star Thru. Now look at the set-up. The #1 man is now inside looking OUT. He still has his partner in Front of him but his corner, instead of being on his Right, she is standing Back to Back with him. This is the set-up you will be looking for to be ready to Square Thru Three Quarters, Left Allemande.

This might sound like I just tried things out at home on my board, and after a couple of tries I jumped right into them. Actually, it took a lot of months of hard work and sleepless nights. I spent many an hour at home trying them out on the board, then putting them on paper, then going back the next week and trying them again. In all it took me a couple of years. I found that the most important thing a caller had to learn is **Sequence**. You had to learn how to read Sequence instantly, when they were IN or when they were OUT. Sight calling helped me to determine Sequence because I knew that the #4 couple had to be on the Left of the #1 couple to be IN, and, if they were on the Right side I had to do something to get them back on the Left side.

Of course as I went along the little light became brighter and brighter. I was scared to death of it at first. I wondered what I would, or could do if I were to get lost and get the dancers all mixed up. It finally became easier and easier until I found myself deliberately

trying to lose myself. In those days the dancers were my guinea pigs. I did not tell this to them, of course. If I lost myself I would just keep calling something, and everything, until I found myself. It became very enjoyable and somewhat of a challenge to me.

Eventually, of course, it occurred to me that everything on the floor was a pattern and that many different things could be used to get INTO and OUT OF any predicament that I could get myself into. This led me into **Equivalents**, and this became a very large part of my Sight Calling Method.

This would be a good place to take a look at some of the first Equivalents that I used back in those days. How I put them together and how Equivalents are still a BIG part of everything that the Callers are using today.

Equivalents

We will begin with something that is fairly easy. Let's take the "Four Ladies Chain." Starting from Lines Of Four, IN sequence. From Lines of Four a caller MUST make two chains, once with each of the side men, to equalize the square. For instance, if we have two ladies chain straight across, head gents will now have their corner lady, side gents will have their right hand ladies. Now we have them chain Down The Line, or you could call "Bend The Line, Two Ladies Chain." Now each gent has his original opposite lady for his partner. This is equivalent to Four Ladies Chain.

There are a lot of Equivalents for Four Ladies Chain and a caller should learn all of them so that he can change them around and never allow your dancers to figure they know what you are going to call. That was my main reason for coming up with so many Equivalents. I did not want the dancers to anticipate and jump ahead of me. I like to keep them guessing, that's the name of the game. Don't ever allow them a choice. Make them listen and that makes better dancers of them.

I mentioned earlier that I arrived at one of these equivalents simply by accident. That was when I had the dancers Star Thru from Lines Of Four and a Dive Thru, Pass Thru, Star Thru put each gent with his opposite lady.

*Promenade now and don't slow down
Keep on walking these girls around
Ladies roll out and skip one man
Promenade the next around the land
Heads wheel around and Star Thru*

*Dive Thru, Pass Thru, and Star Thru
Now Cross-Trail Thru, watch it man
Here comes old corner, left allemande.*

We could put a couple together, using one and then using the other. Something like so:

*Promenade now and don't slow down
Keep on walking these girls around
Heads wheel around, two ladies chain
Turn those girls and Bend The Line
Two ladies chain, you're doing fine
Turn these new girls and Star Thru
Dive Thru, Pass Thru, And Star Thru,
Cross-Trail now across that land
Hunt out old corner, left allemande.*

There are any number of these that will give each gent his opposite for a partner. Here is another one that just might slow them down a tad. Try this:

*Promenade now and don't slow down
Keep on walking those girls around
Heads wheel around and Swing Thru
TURN THRU, walk straight ahead -
Bend the line and Swing Thru
TURN THRU, walk straight ahead
Bend the Line (Everyone with opposites)
Star Thru, Dive Thru, Pass Thru - Star Thru
Then Cross-Trail across the land
And find the corner, left allemande.*

You can carry these on just as far as you want to. There is no limit.

From the Static Square, when we want to chain TWO Ladies, not four, we MUST do the same Ladies Chain Rule. There MUST be two chains to equalize the square. For instance, if we have head ladies chain to the Right, the head gents will have their right hand lady as his new partner, side gents will have their corners for partners. Now have New Head Ladies Chain Left and each gent will have the opposite lady.

The above can be called several different ways. You will have to use the ladies to Sight Call this. The gents are not going anywhere.

Head Two Ladies Chain Right

New Side Ladies Chain Right (With opposites)

New Side Ladies Chain Left

New Side Ladies Chain Right (With partners)

Head Two Ladies Chain Across

New Head Ladies Chain Right (With right hand ladies)

New Side Ladies Chain Across

New Head Ladies Chain to the Right (With partners)

Way back when, I was using everything I could get my hands on and there was no such thing as a "Trade By." Now, by using Trade By, we can come up with many more equivalents. Here is a good one and I use it often:

Heads right and circle to a line

All eight roll a half sashay

Star Thru across the way -

Trade By - and Star Thru -

Pass Thru and Bend The Line

All eight roll a half sashay

Star Thru and - Trade By -

Star Thru, Cross-Trail Thru

Find corner, left allemande.

Incidentally, did you notice that after that first sequence, Roll A Half Sashay, Star Thru, Trade By and Star Thru, everyone is with the opposite? So there's another one that will replace the Four Ladies Chain Across. There are many more of them and you will be running into them as time goes by. When you do, jot them down before you forget them and they will be good for future use.

Sight Calling is not something that you will use 100% of the time. Every caller should learn sight calling so that it is handy if you happen to need it. You just might forget where you were in something, or something interrupted your train of thought for a second and while you were distracted you failed to do something that you intended to do, or you were not sure that this or that happened, so you take a quick look at the dancers (sight