

# SWEETHEART WALTZ

Presented by [Nick and Melissa Enge](#)  
at Texas Camp 2024

**Music:** [Nick & Melissa's Waltz Playlist #1 \(Cross-Step Waltz Tempo - Slower\)](#)  
[Nick & Melissa's Waltz Playlist #2 \(Rotary Waltz Tempo - Faster\)](#)

Sweetheart position, also known as Shadow position, Varsovienn position, Cape position, or Horseshoe position, is a common position in many dances, particularly traveling dances like Rotary Waltz and Cross-Step Waltz. In this class, we gave you a variety of different waltz variations in Sweetheart position. If you know Rotary Waltz or Cross-Step Waltz, these variations can be added to your repertoire in those dances, but Sweetheart Waltz can also be danced on its own, without requiring any knowledge of a turning waltz.

- **Sweetheart Position:** Stand side-by-side facing along LOD with the Lead in the inside lane and the Follow in the outside lane. Take right-in-right hands and left-in-left hands at shoulder level, with the right-in-right hands passing behind the Follow's shoulders. The Follow's fingers are usually more vertical, and the Lead's fingers are usually more horizontal. The hands are comfortably in front of the Follow's shoulders, not pinning her arms back. The Follow can feel more connected to the Lead in this position by pressing her hands forward into his.
- **Sweetheart Waltz:** Simply walk forward along LOD in this position, taking one step per beat. Which foot you start on will depend on the dance. In Rotary Waltz, you'll start with the outside feet (Lead's left, Follow's right), and in Cross-Step Waltz, you'll start with the inside feet (Lead's right, Follow's left). When dancing Sweetheart Waltz as a standalone dance, we recommend starting on the outside feet, since that's the starting foot that most people are used to. But it doesn't really matter.
- **Side Slips:** While continuing to walk forward, the Lead can pass behind his partner to shift into the outside lane before passing behind her back again to return to the inside lane. It works best when both partners share the action of trading places (i.e., as the Lead passes from the inside to the outside, the Follow also passes from the outside to the inside), rather than having only one partner move. Leads, be sure to do this move with a playful, collaborative style, not a creepy, looming one.
- **Sweetheart Wheel:** Continuing to step in time with the music, but remaining on the spot, turn CCW as a couple, which means that the Follow walks forward while the Lead walks backward, with the axis of rotation directly between them. If the Lead is on the outside lane for the start of the wheel, it will turn CW (i.e., the Follow always goes forward and the Lead always goes back).

- **Lasso to Lead's Sweetheart:** Raise the left hands CW around the Follow's head and use both hands to guide her to walk forward around the Lead in a CW path, ending up with the Lead in Sweetheart position on the outside lane (meaning that the right-in-right hands are now passing behind his shoulders).
- **Flip to Follow's Sweetheart:** Bringing the left-in-left hands through between you and the right-in-right hands up and around in front of the Lead, the Follow turns CW under the right-in-right hands as she passes in front of the Lead to the outside lane, ending up in the original Follow's Sweetheart position.
- **Mixmaster:** This is simply a continuous combination of the Lasso and Flip moves.
- **Sweetheart to Hammerlock to Skaters to Hammerlock to Skaters:** If you lower the right hands as the Follow passes behind the Lead's back during the Lasso transition, you'll end up with the Lead's right hand low behind his back, in Hammerlock position. From here, you can disengage the right hands and bring the left hands between you and behind the Follow's back to her left waist as she rotates CW, then take the right hands low in front, in Skaters' position. (Hammerlock and Skaters' are basically the same except that Hammerlock has the rear hands directly behind the Lead's back, and Skaters' has the rear hands on the Follow's waist.) Then use the right hands to Lasso the Follow behind the Lead's back to Hammerlock on the other side, and bring the right hands between you and behind the Follow's back to her right waist as she rotates CCW, then take left hands low in front, in Skaters' position on the other side. To exit back to Sweetheart, do another Lasso transition, but bring the hands up to shoulder level to end up in Lead's Sweetheart, then do the Flip to Follow's Sweetheart. Or, more commonly, something will go "wrong" and you'll naturally end up in Sweetheart again. Our predecessor at UT, Campbell Miller, has a sign in her living room/ballroom that reads "We don't make mistakes; we do variations." That perfectly sums up the philosophy of Sweetheart Waltz.
- **Invitational Leading:** For all of these Sweetheart variations, we recommend the Leads use a strategy of invitational leading, which means clearly initiating the movement, but being flexible about when the Follow responds to it. This will allow the Follow to turn when her feet are ready to turn, as opposed to feeling like she's going to stumble.
- **Follow's Turn Theory:** For either role, if you want to know when the Follow is ready to turn in either direction, she can comfortably:
  - Step forward with her right foot into a right (CW) turn,
  - Step forward with her left foot into a left (CCW) turn,
  - Step backward with her left foot into a right (CW) turn, or
  - Step backward with her right foot into a left (CCW) turn.

In Sweetheart Waltz, she'll usually be going forward into the turn, so the first two lines above are the most relevant. This means that if a Lead wants to do even better than invitational leading, he can use his peripheral vision to sense when she is going to have her right foot free to be led into a right turn, or her left foot free to be led into a left turn. And either way, Follows can wait until they have their corresponding foot free for the turn they're being led into.