

SNURRBOCKEN
The Whirling Buck Goat
(Traditional couple dance from Sweden)

Pronunciation: Snerr' - Book-en (not schnerr!: oo as in "Book").

Source: As learned in Stokholm and danced in various parts of Sweden (1947-48, 1950-51) by Gordon E. Tracie, and taught at Skandia Folk Dance Club, Seattle.

Recording: Musica R-505 (import). Domestic U.S. recording not recommended.

Formation: For any number of couples: LOD, CCW.

Position: Closed shoulder-waist: Open shoulder-waist: Hands, when free, on hips, thumbs back, fingers forward.

Steps: Delsbo-Polska (described below): Running step.

Meas. Pattern

- A. Closed Partner Turn (omdansning)***
- 1-8 In closed shoulder-waist pos, cple turns CW with 8 Delsbopolska steps, as described below, progressing fwd in LOD.
- B. Open Run Forward**
- 9-16 In open shoulder-waist pos, starting on outside ft, cple runs fwd in LOD with small, light running steps (not kick-steps), one step to each beat of the music.
- C. Exchange of bows (Komplimang)**
- 17 M & W turn slowly twd each other, M on inside of ring, W on outside, and bow to one another.
- 18 M & W each turn slowly half about CCW (to own L) and bow away from one another.
- 19 Cple turns to face each other once more, taking closed pos.

Whereafter the dance begins again at A (closed ptr turn).

Sequences repeated in order to end of music.

Step-pattern chart:

Delsbo-Polska step

Music	Counts	1	2	3
	Man	L	Both	R
Step:	Woman	Both	R	L

*Note: As danced in Sweden, Snurrbocken properly begins with the turn, not the bow!

The Delsbo-Polska Step is danced without a "dip" such as usually found in the Hambo-polska, but employs a smooth "bounce" with even emphasis on each beat of the music. It thus resembles - though at a faster tempo - the Stockholm Hambo. It is very important to keep the feet close to the floor so as to maintain proper balance during the great velocity of the turn.

Comparison of the above Delsbo-Polska step-pattern with that of the Hambo-Polska (Previously described) will reveal a decided relationship. Projecting a series of M's Hambopolska steps, thus: R-L-Bth-R-L-Bth-R-L-Bth, it will be seen that by starting the 3-count polska music on the second step-movement (L), instead of the first (R), a pattern of L-bth-R results - which is the Delsbo-Polska step precisely. In the case of the W's Delsbo-polska step, the pattern is started on the third step-movement of the above sequence, thereby becoming Bth-R-L. This "follow-up" principle is typical of many polska and pols type dances throughout Norway.

The Delsbo-Polska step derives its name from the districe of Delsbo (pronounced DALES-boo) in the province of Helsingland, Northern Sweden, where "Left-ft Polskas" of the type such as the Snurrbocken have long been known. The name Snurrbocken, literally meaning "The whirling buck-goat," sometimes appears as "Snurrbottjen" or "Snurrebocken," depending upon the dialect.

--presented by Gordon E. Tracie
Folk Dance Camp, 1957

Errata over →

Snurrbocken

Line 8 should read: Recording: RCA(import) R-506. Domestic US recording not recommended.

Lines 32 and 33 should read:

Note: As danced in Sweden, Snurrbocken begins with the turn, not the bow. This is because the dance is actually no more than a straight polska, into which have been thrown humorous interruptions. In the old days it was not uncommon to find the music for the bowing sequence (Part C) irregular, varying with the imagination and capricious nature of the fiddlers. In effect, this became a "game" between dancers and musicians, where the latter would try to outdo the former.

Add the following notes:

Regarding tempo: As is the case with most "popular" dances (i. e. those done widely by many people) including folk and old time dances, Snurrbocken may be danced within a wide latitude of tempo. The above recommended Swedish recording has purposely been recorded rather slowly so that the step can be learned properly before being attempted at a fast pace. When the turn is fully mastered, and if the dancers so desire, the record may be speeded up to any reasonable tempo.

Oftimes dancers will not revert to the simple run fwd during meas 9-16 but will continue the polska turn. The run is, after all, nothing more than a "rest step."

Though never prescribed, the bowing away from ptr (meas 18) can without much difficulty or imagination result in a "boomp-a-daisy" routine. To avoid Dispensing with all dignity (which is an essential part of the Swedish nature) this should not be overdone. But of course accidents will happen!