



# Sam West

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Sam was born in 1972 in Pinehurst, NC, the son of Barbara and Tommy West. He began taking shag lessons in 1982 at age 9 at Fat Boys in Hamlet, along with fellow Hall of Fame inductee and big sister, Sara West Kemp. Sam is known for his smooth style and beautiful basics. He also has one of the most innovative minds in the shag world creating such steps as “the stretch”, “the scoot”, and dozens of others.

When the National Shag Dance Championships were established in 1984, Sam entered as a junior and competed every year from 1984 to 2020. His titles include two Junior 2 Championships with partner Terri Alberty and the 1994 Non-Pro title with Melissa Sharpe Johnson, which was also his first Overall Championship. Following that, he teamed up with his sister, Sarah, winning 9 Professional Division titles and 5 Overall Championships in 11 years. In 2001, shortly after Sarah gave birth to twins, Sam partnered with Jackie McGee to capture another Professional and Overall Title. Since then, Sam has won many more Championships with some very talented ladies including his daughter, Sydney.

Jessica McAlhane - Overall Champions, 2006, 2007, 2008

Leslie Melton Jennings - Overall Champions 2010, 2011, 2013, 2017

Krystal Taylor Davis - Overall Champions 2014, 2016

Sydney Kemble West - Overall Champions 2020

In 1998, Sam and Sarah became the first inductees into the Keepers of the Dance, an honor bestowed upon former junior dancers who continue to support and promote the Carolina Shag.

Sam married Lisa Davis on September 30, 2000. Together they teach and promote shag in the Carolinas, across the US, and even in Europe. They are 3-time US Open Sophisticated Swing Dance Champions and 2019 Grand Nationals Masters Champions.

Sam is most proud of his three children, Sydney, Mack and Billy. Not only did they inherit his love of dance and music but they inherited his dance skill. All three have become junior national shag champions. In 2004, Sam and Lisa began the Shagtime Dance Team. Shagtime was the first full time junior team to

compete and perform exhibitions to promote Carolina Shag. In 2010, Shagtime 2 was created. Sydney, Mack, Billy and nephews Jonathan and Bradley Kemp danced on these teams.

Supporting junior shaggers has always been an important part of Sam's life. Sam was a long-time member of the Junior Shag Association, even serving as president. In 1999, Sam established the Shad Alberty Memorial Scholarship to honor his friend, mentor, and teacher, Shad Alberty. The scholarship fund is now run by the Shagtime Youth Foundation, a non-profit organization.

Sam is honored to have had several opportunities to showcase the Carolina Shag. He spent a summer as a featured dancer for *Shag, the Movie*, at age 15. He and Lisa starred in a TV commercial for [kayak.com](http://kayak.com) where he uttered his famous line, “Tip Tap Time”. Sam was featured in a commercial that aired in Europe for Swisscom. Finally, he was a special guest instructor for Denmark's Dancing with the Stars. What could be next??