

# Quarterfinals pares down field to 17

by Michael Boo

August 17, 1989—Kansas City, Missouri . . . As it happens.

**1:50 PM**—The first corps on the field in DCI quarterfinals steps off-the-line in 50 minutes. This is the first year for quarterfinals, and many of us are waiting to see how it



**Blue Stars of LaCrosse, WI, proudly took home class A-60 medals.**  
(Photo by Orlin Wagner)

works out. The top 12 from last year have an additional day of competition going into semifinals. I'm excited about seeing many shows one extra time. This show is an answered prayer for fans.

The top seven corps from class A/A-60 finals advanced yesterday to meet the 13th-through 26th-place corps from last year. (There was a tie last year at the bottom of the corps which advanced into semifinals; hence 26 instead of the traditional 25 corps. Since Marauders took the year off due to financial considerations, we ended up with 25 corps coming back.) The top 13 corps from the Wednesday open class prelims show advanced to today's show to meet last year's top 12. The top 17 corps from today's clash of these 25 corps advance to semifinals.

From yesterday's show, two corps from last year's top 25 fell out of this year's top 25: (Washington) Spartans and the Quad City Knights. Two new faces moved into the DCI top 25: Railmen and Limited Edition. Railmen have been on an upward spiral all week. They were fifth in class A prelims, moved up over Kiwanis Cavaliers to take fourth in class A finals, then moved up over Black Gold (who was third in class A finals) to capture the final available spot in today's show.

Three of the corps in the top 25—Railmen, Limited Edition and Ventures—came out of class A. Two other corps in tonight's show (Glassmen and L'Insolite) came out of class A last year. Make no mistake—class A does not mean lesser quality. The corps are just smaller, usually younger, but incredibly spirited. They work just as hard as the "big boys." Many even find them to be more innovative, since they are trying to create an identity and are more willing to explore uncharted territory, especially when it comes to humor. (Why must most drum corps be so serious all the

time?) Watching the class A/A-60 finals was quite refreshing. These groups are a lot of fun.

The performance times for all 25 corps in today's show were drawn at random. The top 12 from last year were thrown in a hat with first through 13th places from open class prelims. (The placements from prelims were assigned slots in today's show, though nobody knew what corps would occupy those positions until after last night's show.)

**2:40 PM**—Ventures are the first corps on the field, having placed 10th in prelims. Only 27 horns, but what a sound. The mannequin dance routine is a gas! Mannequin exchanges instead of flag exchanges. Hysterical. Serving as male dance partners in *Whatever Lola Wants*, the routine is easily one of the most memorable acts on the field. These girls deliver one of the spunkiest shows of any corps.

**2:57 PM**—Crossmen are on next, having placed second in prelims. They have made a remarkable recovery from near obscurity just a few years ago, (along with Freelancers). Blasting off with *Wind Machine*, the corps lets you know they are out to become THE crowd favorite. Fun music, fun (and fast) drill, and nothing deep and meaningful. Drum solo in *The Waltz* provides the eyes with quite a visual workout. I've overheard many people say how badly they want the Crossmen to be in finals. Everybody loves them. Massive flags and magically-appearing capes in *How High the Moon* are great visual

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touches. Bravo!

Ventures score was just announced as 71.40.

**3:14 PM**—Cadets of Bergen County get an early performance slot. Their score will be revealing. How much room will the judges allot for corps to place higher? Attempting to convey the emotion and distress of *Les Miserables*, the show works on several levels—some profound and others just plain drum corps. It's a unique production, exploring a musical for its ability to reach the soul as well as its entertainment value. As expected of Cadets, there are some "how did they do that" drill evolutions. Pathos is an oft-used emotion visually, especially with the guard. The two melodies played simultaneously by two different "mini-corps" are absolutely chilling. I'm drained. This show may be a bit too intense for younger fans, but I'm sure they'll never forget it.

**3:31 PM**—Bluecoats took the field before Crossmen's score was announced. If we get Crossmen' and Garfield's score at the same time, we'll know instantly where the judges' tolerance scale is today—so I think. (Okay, so I called Cadets "Garfield" ... so sue me. It's going to take more than one season to get over that.)

Anyhow—Bluecoats. Same corps, more pizzazz, much more colorful. Very nice . . . won't offend anyone. Still jazzy. *Johnny One Note, Sing, Sing, Sing*, etc. Always entertaining, and always easy to write about in short, concise sentences. Flags are beautifully coordinated in the color scheme. Maybe not the most memorable of corps, but boy, do they ever sell seats at corps shows. I know fans who think, "I go to shows to see some of the big name corps for stimulation, but with Bluecoats in the show, I know I'll at least enjoy one corps," . . . or something like that. All season, they appeared to be locked into eighth place, in a class by themselves.

Crossmen got an 85.30, down 3.7 from last night. Still, the other corps they are fighting for a finals position could come in lower. It's awfully hard to tell where the tolerance level is yet. Last night, an 85.30 would have been in fifth place rather than second (under Freelancers). Cadets scored 94.70. I'm not going to speculate yet.