

enough. Maybe they are thrilled following SCV, but perhaps a wee-bit intimidated. Oh, their show included *Blue Skies* and *Round Midnight*.

Here comes Santa Clara's score ... (wait, wait, wait) 96.80! That's going to be hard to top.

8:48 PM—Florida Wave ... explosive off-the-line to *El Congo Valiente* from Kenton's "Cuban Fire" album, setting the stands on fire with a hot, hot, hot production, just like Miami itself. If they beat Boston Crusaders, they will probably advance to semifinals. *Malaga* was more vigorous and intense than I expected from them. Love the parrot flags in the closer. This may be a difficult performance for Boston to top.

Railmen—61.50.

Florida Wave—78.00. That leaves room for Boston to go into tomorrow's show. Blue Knights scored an 81.40, 3.4 higher. Last night the spread was only 2.0.

9:22 PM—Madison Scouts ... *Make His Praise Glorious* blasts-off with that wonderfully dramatic statement of *Doxology*. It's always nice to hear an old chestnut like *Slaughter on Tenth Avenue* to bring back these memories of great Madison corps of the past. I still wonder about *Three Blind Mice*, but the show is certainly fun to listen to. Lately, Madison hasn't presented any great threat to break into the top five, but so many corps have ended up where I didn't expect them today that I wouldn't be surprised at anything.

9:39 PM—Blue Devils are the only corps to beat Santa Clara this year. Although many think they'll be fifth or sixth, the only time I'll count them out is if they fold. *Ya Gotta Try* is a blast from the past in one of my favorite BD openers. Those buglers can sure finesse those horns. Zowie! What a neat way to get into a wedge in *If We Were In Love*. Soprano soloists ... double zowie! (Are twelve pit mallet instruments really enough?) *Johnny One Note* ... articulate ... invigorating ... scalding hot. They made me a believer out of me. They are certainly better than I've been lead to believe. (Devils and Suncoast were the only two corps in the top 25 I did not see prior to tonight.)

Madison Scouts—93.90. They beat Star by 0.2 ... quite a surprise no matter where your loyalties lie.

9:56 PM—Boston Crusaders—always a favorite of anyone who's been around for some time. But I've noticed younger fans getting "into" this corps the past few seasons. They accomplish wonders with a smaller corps. *Cast a Giant Shadow* is a film I never heard of, but which has a fascinating musical score, tailor-made for Boston ... gutsy and full of bravura. Nobody obviously told them a smaller horn line can't put out a wall of sound. Throughout the closer, you just knew

people were waiting for *Conquest*. It pulls them out of their seats like a magnet attracting thumb tacks. They may just make it to tomorrow.

Blue Devils did as well as I thought ... 95.00; over Cavaliers by 0.1, and in second place ... but then, Phantom Regiment is next.

10:13 PM—Phantom Regiment has been marvelous all season. They are the most interesting I've ever found them. *New World Symphony* is really selling well. The fact that the corps has had fun with it certainly helps, since they felt free to interpret it in a style not restricted by the confinement of the original structure ... they do some of it in a bluesy style, some in a "music box" fashion. Most unique. The drill is more free-flowing than it's been previously. I've absolutely loved Phantom since they decided to have fun with their music. They've made it so much easier for me to love them.

Boston was awarded an 81.10. Barring a super performance by Troopers, Boston is in tomorrow's show ... Wave is out. Boston beat Wave by 3.1. Yesterday, Wave beat Boston by 0.5.

10:30 PM—L'Insolite ... class A last year, open class on their own merits this year. *Take the A Train*, with its hard-driving jazz and life-sized dancing puppets, let us know that we can probably expect to see this corps in semifinals some year soon. The corps has a nice knack for swing. Drill could be more innovative ... but that will come with time. They are only at their third DCI World Championship, and they are stuck in a section of Quebec that doesn't offer much competition. For being alone, they're doing quite well.

Phantom Regiment ... this score is really being awaited with great anticipation. Here it ... 96.90!!! My God, that's 0.1 above Santa Clara! Folks, we have ourselves a contest! Now this is excitement.

10:47 PM—It's almost a shame for Troopers to have to come on after that bombshell, but they've never been accused of being wimpy, so I'm sure they can handle it. Tradition and an identity they wholly own are two things they still have going for themselves. And, of course, the sunburst. How the West Was Won is the theme this year ... appropriately enough. They've had a challenging season so far. Still, they sell a lot of tickets to local shows. Hopefully, they will move up in the ranks in the future to where Troopers belong. They still have a very good corps, but so many other corps have made such an improvement that being very good will only take you so far.

L'Insolite—73.90.

Troopers—78.00, tied with Wave.

As it stands, going into semifinals:

1. 96.90 Phantom Regiment—A bit of a surprise.
2. 96.80 Santa Clara Vanguard—Still time to regroup.
3. 95.00 Blue Devils—Great, considering where many expected them.
4. 94.90 Cavaliers—Close enough to go up or down
5. 94.70 Cadets of Bergen County—Many predicted in first, but now in danger of not being on PBS broadcast.
6. 93.90 Madison Scouts—Doing better than expected.
7. 93.70 Star of Indiana—Lower than anticipated.
8. 88.10 Velvet Knights—Sitting in a good position.
9. 87.90 Freelancers—Welcome back.
10. 87.00 Bluecoats—Thought they would be in eighth all season.

11. 86.90 Suncoast Sound—Scrappy survivors wouldn't die. Bravo.

12. 85.40 Dutch Boy—On the bubble. May make it after all.

13. 85.30 Crossmen—This is going to be close.

14. 83.90 Spirit of Atlanta—Got to be sweating this. ??? They've been in every finale since 1978.

15. 83.80 Sky Ryders—May not repeat last year's miracle surge.

16. 81.40 Blue Knights—Glad to be able to see the drill again.

17. 81.10 Boston Crusaders—Made the cut. Nice going.

18. 78.00 Florida Wave—Missed the cut. Ouch.

19. 78.00 Troopers—Troopers are Troopers, and that's good enough for me.

20. 73.90 L'Insolite—Can only improve with age.

21. 73.60 Colts—A nice new style and direction for 1989.

22. 71.40 Ventures—Proof that "the weaker sex" is a fallacy.

23. 68.70 Glassmen—Can be proud.

24. 68.20 Limited Edition—Welcome on board.

25. 61.50 Railmen—Got to be happy just being here.

HOLD THE PRESSES! Some big changes were just announced. Four corps had pit percussion penalties removed, and the audience was not aware of this until the announcement of tomorrow's lineup.

Most importantly, Santa Clara's score went up to 97.00, putting them in first, 0.1 over Phantom. Blue Devils' score went up to

95.20 from 95.00, but they're still in third. Velvet Knights stay in eighth, but their score went up to 88.30 from 88.10.

Of extreme interest is Suncoast Sound's score, which rose to 87.10 from 86.90, placing them in tenth place, 0.1 over

Bluecoats, who dropped to 11th. The corps that had eighth place locked up all season now finds itself staring at the same placement they held for the past two years.

Just when you thought things couldn't get any more interesting ...