

The third corps in this pack, the Cadets of Bergen County, experienced a few noticeable performance problems, such as a dropped flag. The Cadets gave a very expressive program performed with confidence and grace, and with the idea that there was something to shoot for—in finals. Scoring 94.40, the Cadets of Bergen County found themselves still in fifth place.

The Star of Indiana and the Madison Scouts, close together in quarterfinals, were still close in semis—but they switched rankings.

This year the Star of Indiana expanded and advanced the British motif developed in the past by other corps with just a hint of Santa Clara in their bearing. A well-balanced corps, Star took high drums and scored 93.30 for sixth.

The defending champions displayed every characteristic that made them famous—powerful horns, a great guard, and an entertaining, emotional show. The Madison Scouts fell to ninth in brass and eighth in drums, but offset this with a strong second place in visual, ahead of the Vanguard. The corps scored 92.90 for an unpopular seventh place.

The Canton, OH, Bluecoats leaped up from 11th place in quarterfinals to eighth place in semifinals, ahead of Suncoast Sound and the Freelancers. These three corps had been close in quarterfinals, but it was still a surprise to see such a change. The Bluecoats had a very clean presence on the field, with an energetic, absorbing show that had interest in every measure. The corps scored 90.30 for its eighth place showing.

Suncoast Sound capped a season marked by a difficult start and long climb by making finals and breaking 90. *Florida Suite* brought the romance and blaze of the tropics to the field, with a particularly interesting primitivist section working well at Arrowhead Stadium. Suncoast scored 90.20, a very close ninth place.

The Sacramento Freelancers vaulted back into the top 12, ending the year with a surge. With a spectacular drill and a well-focused presentation, the Freelancers scored an impressive 87.40 for 10th place.

The Velvet Knights dropped behind the Freelancers, with whom they had been seeing all season. Their drop from eighth

place was a surprise; 17th place in visual performance did not help VK's cause. Well-balanced elsewhere and especially strong in drums, the Velvet Knights scored 86.30 for 11th place.

The fight for the last spot in finals had been the subject of much speculation all year, and it came to a head tonight. After quarterfinals, Dutch Boy and the Crossmen found themselves locked in contention for the spot: 12th and 13th respectively, only one-tenth apart, and with no one close to them above or below.

The Crossmen moved up to take the last spot, making up for their bitter disappointment in this situation the year before. The caption scores between the two corps were close all the way across the recap, with the spreads changing only slightly—just enough for the Crossmen to move ahead.

The West Chester corps gave it all they had for this highly competitive situation, with a bright and speedy show and wonderful jazz phrases coming out of unique white-belled horns. The corps scored 85.80 for the spot in finals.

Dutch Boy's sparkling color guard gave the flash that completed the Cole Porter thought, and with excellent brass made for a combination that the crowd loved. Though having a little trouble in drums—seventeenth place both tonight and in quarterfinals—Dutch Boy's show was a pleasure to watch. Dutch Boy was understandably quite disappointed with such a close 13th place, 85.50.

The Sky Ryders and Spirit of Atlanta, both finalists last year, tied for 14th tonight. The corps had been only one-tenth apart in quarterfinals.

The Sky Ryders had started the season hot and were very competitive, but did not rise fast enough in the final weeks to achieve finalist status. Most in the audience felt the Sky Ryders had performed so well that it might have pulled out another surprise 12th place, but it was not to be. The corps' show, a lively march and selections from *Carmina Burana*, seemed much more serious than the show music of past years but was really a light-hearted repertoire that had fun and living as its subject matter. Frustrated with their August scores, the Sky Ryders scored 82.20 for the 14th-place tie.

Spirit of Atlanta interpreted the moody and exciting *Interstellar Suite* stylishly. A strong rifle line and attractive guard helped express the range of views this music presented. Like the Sky Ryders, Spirit was frustrated with its placement and needed great intensity to try to retain finalist status. It was a good try, and with a long final note and culminating blast Spirit went out for the year with a standing ovation, 82.20, and the tie for 14th.

The Blue Knights of Denver, CO, assured of at least equalling last year's 17th place finish, hoped to improve upon their 16th place standing from quarterfinals. With a clean and spectacular drill—12th in visual performance—the Blue Knights gave it a good shot and were quietly happy with the results. A strong organization on and off the field, the corps has made a name for itself over the past few years and achieved an upward-pointing 16th tonight, scoring 81.20.

The Boston Crusaders opened semifinals with a strong dose of pride, precision and tradition. The old, loved maneuvers (head-choppers, ripples down a file, climactic fronts), plus music that worked so beautifully for the corps, placed the Crusaders in this elite 17 and gave them a strong starting point for 1990, their 50th anniversary season. Bringing the house down with *Conquest*, the Boston Crusaders scored 78.80 for 17th place.

This was DCI's first-ever 17-corps semifinal contest and it provided the judges an opportunity to pinpoint the 12 elite, and for the corps in contention for finals to get one last shot at that honor.

The scores were read at a drum majors-only retreat after all 17 corps had marched. Solo and ensemble awards were also presented after the contest.