

# Vanguard maintains winning streak

by Sue Johnson

July 14, 1989—Stockton, California . . . Another cool evening saw California power corps collide once again after having gone their separate ways for more than a week. While the Concord Blue Devils' spent time doing battle with Star of Indiana in their Northwestern U.S. swing, the Santa Clara Vanguard and Sacramento Freelancers performed on a short SoCal tour; and the corps came to Stockton to clash for the final weekend before heading to the Midwest.

Santa Clara took first place tonight, with a score of 83.10. This performance was not one of SCV's sweeping victories; an errant announcer and several other minor snafus contributed to what audience members

thought was a less-than-average SCV show. Strong GE (including 0.6 over Blue Devils in GE percussion and 0.7 in GE visual) was enough to save Santa Clara tonight, but the strength and the delicacy of their show requires total cooperation on the part of everyone in order to come across to both the crowd and the judges. Rest assured that SCV has very few "off" nights like this, and they are more than back on track as you read this article!

Blue Devils, although the door was opened for them tonight by SCV, did not take that final step necessary to snatch the first-place award. The Concord machine came on strong, sweeping the performance captions with high horns, percussion and visual for a final score of 82.70. BD continues to add new visual

touches to beef up GE scores; particularly with more new equipment work by the guard which was well received by the large audience tonight. Devils have not given up this fight by any means; and being only 0.4 behind SCV tonight will fuel their fire even more!

Always the crowd pleaser, the Sacramento Freelancers came in third tonight with a score of 70.80. Freelancer members were pumped up after their short Southern California tour last week where they came oh-so-close to Velvet Knights; and their performance tonight mirrored that enthusiasm, particularly in their horn show. Beautiful flags for the guard that start out as blue sky and expand to include a bright sun add a burst of color in contrast to the black and red uniforms. Freelancers are definitely on a successful path to Kansas City.

In division II competition tonight, the Santa Clara Vanguard Cadets demonstrated to the California crowd what they accomplished in their successful Northwest tour, by taking first place with a score of 69.30. The audience acknowledged a new found confidence in the young Cadets, evidenced in well-performed visuals by the fine color guard and a strength in the horn line not seen before.

Blue Devils "B" took second place with a score of 62.90. Although BDB broke the SCV Cadets' winning streak in Modesto, the lack of competition for BDB on their SoCal tour may have made it hard to maintain the level previously achieved. BDB's color guard looked particularly good tonight, and can be proud of the progress they made this year. The horn line was true to form, taking GE brass caption by 1.5 over SCV Cadets.

The Sacramento Mandarins came in third place with a score of 62.60, only 0.3 behind BDB. Mandarins have been working hard at home in the past two weeks, overcoming summer school schedules on the part of dedicated students/members. The color guard uniform is coming together, with white tights and shoes now; and the horn line dominates in brass performance on its climb toward Kansas City. Tonight 0.6 over BDB, the closest competitor.

A new entry for this summer's California competition was the Strutters from Edmonton, Canada. The Strutters captured fourth place with a score of 41.40. Known since 1976 as the First Canadian Regiment and under new staff and management for the second year, the Strutters' 1989 repertoire includes *Car Wash Blues*, *Bad Bad Leroy Brown* and *It's a Wonderful World*.

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July 15, 1989—Concord, California . . . It was a hot time in Concord tonight as the Blue Devils launched past the Santa Clara Vanguard to take first place in front of family and fans at their own home show. Blue Devils scored an 84.50 to bring SCV's winning streak to an abrupt halt at the last West Coast show of the season. The crowd went crazy as horn instructors Jack Meehan and Wayne Downey unleashed the horn line tonight to overtake SCV in both GE brass and brass performance captions by half a point each. Fueled by last night's close second-place finish (0.4), members of BD excitedly said, "It just felt right tonight!" Tonight's victory definitely injected a large dose of adrenaline and excitement into BD members and staff, who are more than ready to take on the second half of the 1989 drum corps season!

The Santa Clara Vanguard, with 84.00, was stunned by the judges' decision. After last night's mediocre show, SCV had come back on track, performing in the vein that has led them to be undefeated thus far in the 1988 season. Even so, the large overall GE cushion that SCV has enjoyed was cut by 0.4 by BD, and although SCV took the GE percussion caption by half a point, it was not enough to pull out the victory. Members took the night in stride and with dignity, however, reminiscing about what has happened at DCI nationals in past years when SCV has gone undefeated in early-season competition. Never a corps to be complacent, Santa Clara boarded their buses after the show to leave on tour with a steeled air of determination.

Third place went to the Sacramento Freelancers with a score of 70.60. The corps performed beautifully for parents and fans in

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their California sendoff, with the visual performance score up 1.3 points over last night. The Freelancers are looking forward to more and different competition on their 37-day tour. DCW columnist Bob Fields has again arranged this year's tour schedule for Freelancers, sending the tour "bibles" just in time to leave tonight for the second half of this summer's schedule. We wish Charlie Anderson, staff and members of the Freelancers every success on the road!

The Santa Clara Vanguard Cadets finished their field show competition season with an impressive 11-1 record, taking first place again tonight in division II with a score of 68.20. Spectators wondered aloud how much longer the lid can be kept on this corps before they will be allowed to burst onto the DCI finals show. Cadets' director, J. W. Koester, just grins and says "We'll see." Let's hope for next year?!

Blue Devils "B" wound up their season with a score of 64:30 for second place. Director Dixie Glover bemoaned the fact that the season seemed much too short for BDB this year. The corps made such excellent progress through the summer in their horn line, percussion and guard, that it seems a shame to have it end so soon! Hats off to all the BDB staff and members for all their hard work and dedication in 1989!

Sacramento Mandarins are the only California division II corps whose show is still alive after tonight. They finished the California season with a third-place score of 62.30. The corps will leave on tour on July 29 to fly into the Midwest to join the competition in midstride on the way to Kansas City. With another month of practice and competition, the show you see in

Kansas City will be much changed, and Mandarin's strength will increase with each day on the road. We wish Ray and Nancy Mar, the Mandarin staff and members, as the sole California division II representatives at DCI finals week, all the best in their quest for a third consecutive championship title!

Also on hand were the Edmonton Strutters (20H/10P/12CG), in fourth place with a score of 36.20. With their laid back Velvet Knight style they performed admirably with Drum Major Don McDougall well in charge. The corps is looking forward to traveling and competing at DCI finals in Kansas City next month.

Although it is hard to realize that the overall season is only halfway over, so ends the California drum corps season for 1989. It has been exciting, exhilarating and an important stepping stone for corps on their way to both regional and final competitions. We in California send our corps to you in the rest of the United States for the next month of what will surely be fabulous competition for drum corps members and fans. We hope you enjoy their efforts as much as we have, here in California. See you in Kansas City.