

## Competition Review: Utah DanceSport Championships, Saturday February 4th at Thanksgiving Point

It will be a night to remember for those of us who were at Thanksgiving Point this last Saturday. The 10th Annual Utah Dancesport Championships had it all. The audience was packed in the barn with a sold out crowd & the dancers were at their best. Brent Mills from Music4Movement was in town as the music director & special lights were setup to give the barn a look & feel that you just don't get here in Utah. What a classy affair, the event had rotating colors of tablecloths with real goldfish in fish bowls for each of the sixteen reserved tables. The banners were beautiful throughout the event. The ballroom arch was a nice touch for all competitors to enter onto the dance floor. The backdrop curtain on stage matched the color theme of Gold and Black for their event. The disco ball and intelligent lighting brought especially for the Utah Dancesport Championships was a big hit, along with two spotlights following dancers on the floor. Even the programs printed for the event were first class. With full color covers front and back with glossy print pages, and all the details such as competitor's names, heats, etc. included, it sold for only \$3! You can't buy quality like that anywhere else! That was a nice touch on the organizer's part to enable the spectator to follow the heats and get all the other information in the program without paying a small fortune at other comps for lesser programs.

The competition throughout the day was everything you would expect ending with an amazing Youth Open Latin Championship. After the dinner break though, the house lights went off and the disco ball came down. Due to some clever promotion of the event, there were many in attendance that had never been to a ballroom competition before. The dancers did us all proud and we overheard many comments about it being the most exciting competition in years.

After the Open Amateur Standard event the Open West Coast Swing competition started. With many of Buddy Schwimmers students up from 5-6-7-8 studios in California it was sure to be an incredible event to watch. After the first two competitors had danced, the power suddenly went out!

Confusion only lasted a few seconds before the MC got the crowd under control.

The flash lights came out and a few of the kids started dancing, more joined and pretty soon everyone was on the floor. So with no music and no lights, the floor was packed with kids & adults doing the electric slide while counting aloud to stay on rhythm. Eventually a circle was formed and everyone watched as the dancers did everything from cabaret lifts & ballet, to break dancing & gymnastics. After a little while they had the results of the Open Amateur Standard division ready and got the crowd quieted down to announce them when the kids started chanting, "We wanna dance!, We wanna dance!" So the MC relented and the dancing went on for about 20 more minutes before the results were announced.

After the results were given there was an announcement that the pizza had arrived and everyone was welcome to help themselves. They also announced at the time that the power may not come back on so the cake was to be cut & eaten and then we would all go home. Just as people were getting ready to go, the power came back on with a great cheer from everyone in the ballroom.

Host organizer, Alex Murillo announced on the microphone that "The show must go on!" and that we would pick up right where we had left off. The Open West Coast Swing division finished up with Buddy's students really winning the crowd. We had an incredible Open Exhibition by 5-6-7-8 who did their team west coast swing. It was awesome; I can't even explain it in words. (Utah Ballroom will have video streaming on the site for those of you who missed it) After that came the team show dance division which is always entertaining followed by a performance of ABC's "Dancing with the Stars" Andrea Hale and her dancing partner Tony Pututau.

The grand finale was when Jared Murillo & Lacey Schwimmer did a stunning floor show of Latin Dancing & West Coast Swing.

The event culminated with the much anticipated and exciting 'balloon drop". With over 700 balloons cascading to the floor and all competitors scrambling to catch them, the whole building was rocking to the event's traditional closing song, 'YMCA", it was truly magical. What an exciting finale to an extraordinary day!

No doubt, this event is quickly becoming "the" event to compete and attend in Utah. I can't wait for next year!! Center Stage would like to thank all who attended and they hope to see you next year, February 3rd, at Thanksgiving Point for the next Utah Dancesport Championships!

Article Submitted by Teresa Grant

-----

Utah Ballroom has 1,000's of pictures that were submitted from the competition and several hours of video footage. We will let you know when we have it all organized and edited. You will be able to watch the best of the competition in a few days.

Just a reminder, you can find any information on the UVSC competition and Nationals at BYU by clicking the links on the front page of our site.

Thank You,

Micah  
Utah Ballroom.com