

SCV holds lead over BD by .7

by Bob Yeager

July 17, 1989—Ogden, Utah . . . Beautiful sunny skies and great weather greeted seven of the western United States and Canadian drum corps for the ninth annual *Corps Encore* at Weber State College. Taking only the GE caption, the Santa Clara Vanguard also captured this year's first-place trophy, while the Blue Devils came in a close second by taking the visual and brass captions. With a distant but rapidly closing gap were the Velvet Knights, who also took the drum trophy home tonight, for the third time this year. Rounding out the lineup were Allegiance, the Freelancers, Rocky Mountain Magic, and the Spartans.

Several nights ago, the Vanguard experienced their first defeat of the 1989 season in Concord, CA. It must have humbled them a little, for they marched and played their best show of the season tonight. Their final score of 85.50 was boosted, in part, by the win in GE with an overall GE score of 48.00. With a little more time in the percussion/marching area, the Vanguard's score will certainly climb higher.

The Blue Devils have their work cut out for them, and they are certainly not taking this laying down. They have massively rewritten all areas of the show, and even with the execution level a bit down right now, they are only 0.7 behind their arch rivals. As usual, the brass line is flawless and the percussion section is getting stronger with each show. Final score was 84.80.

The Velvet Knights, from Anaheim, CA, is another corps that has had to undergo big changes in their show. First tour comments ranged from "I don't get it" to "It's not VK." Several staff changes and lots of design changes have altered the show to the point where many fans are now saying "Welcome back, VK!" Visual technicians Alan Cox and Matt Adams are putting in a lot of overtime to make the marching show as good as the brass and percussion performances are, and it's paying off. With their third win in the percussion caption (12.20) and a final score of 76.30, the Velvet Knights are definitely pushing their way back into top form.

Coming in another close fourth behind the VK, the Sacramento Freelancers put on an excellent marching show tonight. The

large brass line has the crowd on their feet many times, and the color guard add just the right visual touches to the John Williams book. Final score was 75.40.

The Vancouver, WA, Spartans have changed their uniforms and their style, going back to the jazz-oriented program that put them into the top 25 several years ago. I get the feeling they have had a tough winter; they are smaller than usual and the horn book has uncharacteristic weak spots. But, I can see potential in the show, if they just clean it up. Their score of 48.00 is not indicative of what their overall show is like; they are much better than that.

Coming in all the way from Calgary, ALB, was the Allegiance, a strong competitor in the A-60 class last year in Kansas City. This year's corps is much stronger and they put on a much more refined performance. They are headed for great things at KC this season. Final score, 36.10.

The Rocky Mountain Magic from Denver, CO, have a smaller corps this year, but they haven't skimped on the entertainment factor one bit. The second half of their show is a great performance of music from the movie *The Little Shop of Horrors*, and I can't remember when I've had so much fun watching a corps perform. I don't know how they do it, but they even march their show without a drum major. Way to go, Rocky Mountain! Final score, 32.60.