Education Support

American Dance

What it Takes to be Number One

By Vince Lombardi, Revised for dance/drill teams by Joyce E. Pennington

Winning is not a sometime thing; it's an all the time thing. You don't win once in a while. You don't do things right once in awhile. You do them right all the time. Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing.

There is no room for second place. There is only one place in my mind and that is first place. In college football there is a second place bowl game. But it is a game for losers played by losers. It is, and always has been, an American seal to be first in anything we do and to win and to win and to win.

Every time a dancer goes to apply their talents, they've got to dance from the ground up and from the soles of their feet right up to their head. Every inch of them has to dance. Some dance with their heads, and that's OK. You have got to be smart to be number one in any business, but more importantly, you've got to dance with your heart--with every fiber of your body. If you're lucky enough to find a dancer with a lot of brains and a lot of heart, they're never going to leave a competition in second place.

Running a dance/drill team is no different from running any other kind of organization --a football team, an army, a political party, a business. The principles are the same. The object is to win--to beat the other guy. Maybe that sounds hard or cruel. I don't think it is.

It's a reality of life that dancers are competitive and the most competitive contests draw the most competitive dancers. That's why they are there--to compete. They know the rules and objectives when they enter the "game". The objective is to win--fairly, squarely, decently, by the rules--but to win.

And, in truth, I've never known a dancer worth their salt who in the long run, deep down in their heart, didn't appreciate the grind, the discipline. There is something in good people that really yearns for, needs, discipline and the harsh reality of head to head competition.