More Than The Catch
By Christine Clayton

Like most instructors I know, I am typically pretty focused on getting my students to catch their equipment. In my early days of instructing I offered incentives for "drop-free" shows and my kids would count drops in order to determine the success of their run. However, I'm here to tell all you performers that a good performance is more than the catch.

The focus for an equipment judge, especially if you are in a Regional "A" or "A" colorguard, is on training. Even if you manage to get both of your hands on that gun and prevent it from hitting the ground, they are looking at "how" you caught, not just the fact that you caught. They are looking for hand placement on the gun, pitch of the gun in the air, application of strength in the upper body on the catch. Even the movement judge cares how you catch. Did you drop your left shoulder? Did you have consistent free hands and body positioning while the equipment was in the air?

Catching shouldn't be pure luck. Count your rotations, maintain strong upper body posture and don't let yourself try to toss a "5" before your quads are solid.

I had an instructor who used to say that a poor catch was the same as a drop. I'm not saying that it isn't better to grab that saber vs. letting it slide across the ground into the audience but as performers you must practice perfection which goes way beyond simply avoiding the drop.