



## **The Championship Experience**

By Chris Casteel

Where has the season gone??!! It is hard to grasp that WGASC 2009 Championships are this weekend!! This year's championship tournaments are truly the culmination of a season that has been filled with amazing performers, staffs and audiences alike. We have much to be proud of and excited about in our circuit.

Considering this, championships weekend will be a time of both reflection and celebration. Championships should have a heightened atmosphere of enthusiasm from all the other tournaments throughout the season. Part of this impression is created by the WGASC and the manner in which things are run at championships. However, the true spirit of championships can be further embellished by the staffs of each color guard.

Hopefully this article will give instructors some ideas on how to make the championship experience truly one that will not be forgotten.

### **The Element of Surprise:**

Whatever you decide to do for your performers, it is always fun to surprise them.

### **Some Simple Ideas:**

- Make them feel special throughout the entire day. Take moments to let them know how much they are appreciated and how special they are as a team.
- Decorate the Band Room / Color Guard Room so that the performers feel extraordinary from the moment they arrive at school on the morning of championships.
- If you take district transportation/busses, hang a banner on the side of the bus that they can also use in the parking lot of the championship site.
- Decorate the performer's lockers at school a few days before championships.
- Make sure their performance at championships is in the school bulletin/announcements wishing them a good performance.
- Gifts!! Goodie bags for each performer filled with candy, food, small gift items, notes from the staff etc.

- The championship's awards ceremony is a full-guard retreat. This means that every performer of every team (in the competing division) will be lined up on the gym floor during the awards ceremony. Give them flowers, balloons, or any other fun item you can think of, that they can carry with them into the awards ceremony.
- Parent Fan Club: The following was taken from an article on Color Guard Educators website.  
 "Make sure the parents understand that their activities should not interfere with warm-up and performance. Ask them to run their ideas past you, so that you can catch anything that might unnerve the students prior to or during the performance.

Ideas:

- Cheer extra loud for the team
- Wear the team t-shirt (or special shirt designed for the day)
- Make spirit flags or signs to wave in the stands
- Crazy dress in unit colors or theme – Have fun with it!
- Wearing spirit buttons for the team"

While these are all fun things that add excitement to championships, you do want to keep some things the same for the sake of a good performance. Don't change the routine of warm-ups or focus at championships. While there should be an element of excitement, it is important to realize that there is an aspect of comfort in the established / normal routine. Because of this, stay away from the hype in the run through & warm up process. When adding the fun into the day, make sure it is done in a way that doesn't throw off the performers or add anxiety in any way.

One last benefit of championship activities = team retention for next season. If your performers are left with a final great experience at championships, they are likely to want to repeat the experience all over again next year. Before you know it, we will be discussing recruitment and retention for next season. But for now, enjoy the championship experience, soak it in, and allow your performers to celebrate their amazing season!!