

Catch It!



Savannah Miller, Kansas City, Missouri



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MEET USTA COUNCIL PRESIDENTS

JUMP AHEAD TO JACKSONVILLE



United States Twirling Association

75 James Street
Saco, Maine 04072
Phone: 321-206-3242
Fax: 509-275-3242

Website: www.ustwirling.com

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USTA ATHLETES HONORED FOR PARTICIPATION IN WBTF EVENTS

Every year at the World Baton Twirling Championships or International Cup, a special group of athletes are recognized by the World Baton Twirling Federation (WBTF). They are athletes who have competed in the World Championships and/or International Cup for 5, 10, 15 or more years.



USTA is proud to announce that several U.S. athletes reached the five-year milestone this year and we want to make sure all of them are applauded and recognized. Congratulations to:

- ▶ **Curt Burrows, Boynton Beach, Florida**
- ▶ **Hilary Denison, Chino Hills, California**
- ▶ **Kristina Terwilliger, Seattle, Washington**

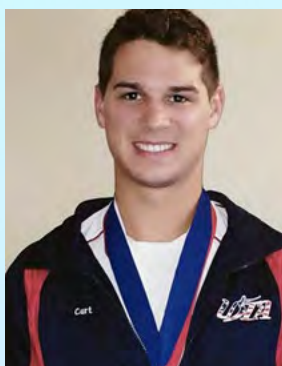
▶ **Cassidy Tse, Alhambra, California**
USTA is proud to announce this U.S. athlete has reached the 15-year milestone in recent years and we want to make sure all of them are applauded and recognized. Congratulations to:

▶ **Emery Harriston, Alexandria, Virginia**

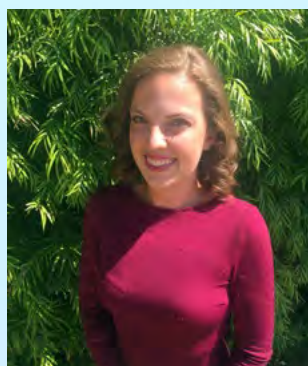
USTA is proud to announce this U.S. athlete has reached the 25-year milestone in recent years and we want to make sure all of them are applauded and recognized. Congratulations to:

▶ **Jenny Hannah, Hixson, Tennessee**

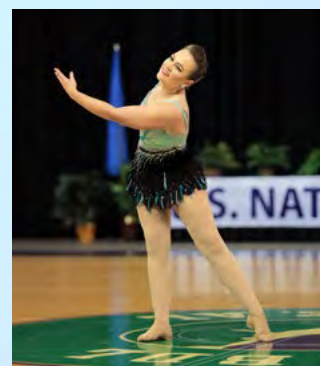
Both USTA and the WBTF want to congratulate these athletes and acknowledge their five or more years of participation in the World Baton Twirling Championships and/or International Cup. Congratulations to these athletes for their contributions to the sport of baton twirling on an international level!



Curt Burrows



Hilary Denison



Kristina Terwilliger



Cassidy Tse



Emery Harriston



Jenny Hannah

59TH ANNIVERSARY U.S. NATIONAL BATON TWIRLING CHAMPIONSHIPS

Honoring athletes and coaches at the 59th Anniversary U.S. National Baton Twirling Championships

Who will follow in the footsteps of 2016 Grand National Champions Kurtis Hubbell (3-Baton), Lexi Duda (2-Baton), Adaline Bebo (Strut), Savannah Miller (Women's Solo and Dance Twirl) and Michael Lopez (Men's Solo) as the 2017 Grand National Champions?

We'll find out next month as athletes from across the country take the floor at the Alliant Energy Center for the 59th Anniversary U.S. National Baton Twirling Championships. This premier event begins with the prestigious U.S. PreTrials (for athletes working toward the U.S. Trials) on July 10 and wraps up with the Festival of the Future (a national com-

petition for beginner and intermediate athletes) on July 15. In between are two days of National Championship events that culminate with the thrilling National Finals Show on July 12, when the top two Jr., Sr. and Adult finalists compete for Grand Champion honors. July 13 and 14 feature exciting group events and the Collegiate Event, showcasing some of our nation's best college twirlers.



2016 Grand National Champions

COACHES OF THE YEAR



2016 FOF Coach of the Year Kathy Wisner of Ohio, left, and 2016 Nationals Coach of the Year Linda Peters of New York, right, with then-USTA President John Chamberlain.



2016 Team Choreography Award recipient Glenn Bittenbender of Maryland, left, after receiving his award from then-USTA President John Chamberlain.

During the National Championships, USTA also recognizes outstanding coaches, the people who are the very foundation of our sport. These dedicated professionals introduce new athletes to baton twirling. They help them learn and grow and in many cases, develop not only their twirling skills, but also a

lifelong passion for our sport. They are creative and innovative and keep twirling moving forward.

During the Team Retreat on July 14, USTA will present \$250 awards to the following coaches:

FOF Coach of the Year Award – to

the coach who enters the most teams in Festival of the Future

Nationals Coach of the Year Award – to the coach who enters the most teams in Nationals

Team Choreography Award – to the coach responsible for the best team choreography

“The coaches’ awards are just one of the ways that USTA promotes the outstanding talent we have amongst our professionals,” said Lori Perkins, a member of USTA’s Board of Directors. “We sincerely appreciate the journey you take with your athletes and hope to show that appreciation through this recognition of your outstanding achievements!”

Whether you’re in Madison or not, be sure to follow the 59th Anniversary U.S. National Baton Twirling Championships on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram!

CONGRATULATIONS 2017 STATE CHAMPIONS!



ARIZONA STATE GRAND CHAMPIONS:

Andrea Romero, Dance Twirl; Izaiah Perez, Men's Solo; Alexandra Spenik, Women's Solo, 2-Baton and 3-Baton.



CALIFORNIA STATE GRAND CHAMPIONS:

Kurtis Hubbell, Men's Solo and 3-Baton; Sophia Barden, Women's Solo, 2-Baton, Strut and Dance Twirl.



COLORADO STATE GRAND CHAMPIONS:

Madelaine Schmidt, 3-Baton; James Koehler, Men's Solo and 2-Baton; Sativa Harker, Women's Solo.



DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA GRAND CHAMPION:

Na'Kiya Butler, Women's Solo, 2-Baton.



FLORIDA STATE GRAND CHAMPIONS:

Curt Burrows, Men's Solo and 3-Baton; Amanda Trujillo, Dance Twirl, Women's Solo, 2-Baton and Strut.



ILLINOIS STATE SOLO CHAMPION:

Precious Nickerson.

CONGRATULATIONS 2017 STATE CHAMPIONS!



ILLINOIS STRUT GRAND CHAMPIONS:

Ava Migliazzo.



ILLINOIS JUV. PAIRS CHAMPIONS:

Natalie Smith and Lakiyah Tillman.



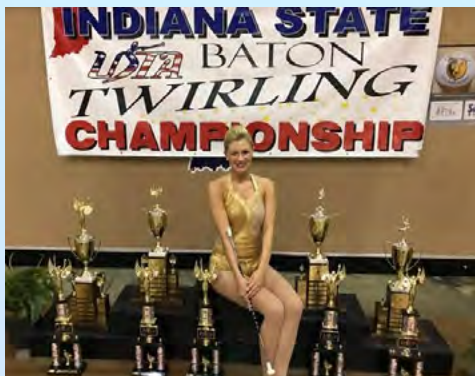
ILLINOIS STATE TRIO CHAMPIONS:

Precious Nickerson, Jonnetta Walton and Summer Perkins with Amelia Mugavero, former University of Illinois feature twirler and current Miss Central Illinois.



ILLINOIS PRIMARY TWIRL TEAM CHAMPIONS:

The Twirling Bears.



INDIANA GRAND CHAMPION:

Alicia Dennie, Solo, 2-Baton, 3-Baton, Strut and Dance Twirl.



KANSAS STATE GRAND CHAMPIONS:

Kelsey Graves, 3-Baton; Brianna Tayfel, Solo and 2-Baton.



KENTUCKY STATE GRAND CHAMPIONS:

Lou Willis, 3-Baton; Nicholas Howard, Men's Solo; Tara Howard, Women's Solo, Strut, Dance Twirl and 2-Baton.

CONGRATULATIONS 2017 STATE CHAMPIONS!



MAINE STATE CHAMPIONS:

Left to right: Danielle Hersom, Juv. 2-Baton and Juv. Dance Twirl; Reyna O'Brien, Juv. Solo; Brianna Adams, Jr. Dance Twirl; Alaina Heseltine, Jr. Strut; Amanda Cameron, Jr. 2-Baton; Lindsay Pitts, Jr. Solo; Saraphina Birtolo, 3-Baton; Kaila Thomas, Sr. Dance Twirl and Sr. Strut; Desiree Saucier, Sr. Solo; April Woodman, Sr. 2-Baton.



USTA NEW JERSEY STATE CHAMPIONS:

Bottom row, left to right: DiPietro/Daniels, Primary Dance Twirl Pairs; DiPietro/DiPietro, Primary Pairs; Delaney Higgins, Primary Women's Solo, Primary 2-Baton, Primary Dance Twirl. Top row, left to right: Emily Cooper, Adult Women's Solo, Adult 2-Baton, Adult 3-Baton; Kailey LaPooh, Juv. 2-Baton; Jaclyn Villafuerte, Sr. Dance Twirl, Sr. 2-Baton, Sr. Women's Solo; Villafuerte/Alvarez, Sr. Pairs; Ashley Norman, Jr. Women's Solo, Jr. Dance Twirl, Jr. 2-Baton; Norman/Higgins, Juv. Dance Twirl Pairs; Rosen/Rosen, Jr. Pairs; Nicole Ray, Juv. Women's Solo, Juv. Dance Twirl.



OREGON STATE CHAMPIONS:

Zoe and Hana Yamaguchi, Solo Pairs; Maggie Salter, Sr. Dance Twirl, Sr. 2-Baton and Jr. Dance Twirl Pairs; Ami Hawley, Sr. 3-Baton, Sr. Strut and Sr. Solo; Tristan Gardner, Jr. 3-Baton, Jr. 2-Baton, Jr. Men's Solo and Jr. Dance Twirl Pairs; Makenzie Elliott, Jr. Strut, Jr. Dance Twirl and Jr. Solo.



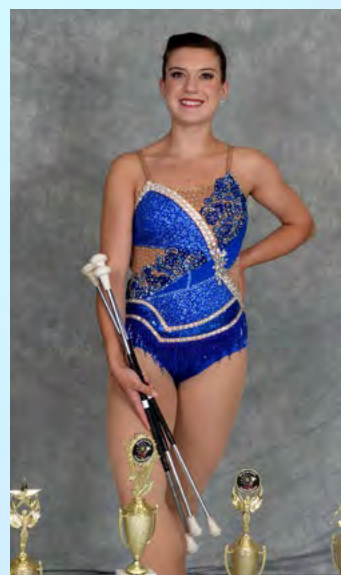
MARYLAND STATE GRAND CHAMPIONS:

Emily R.C. Cooper, Solo, Strut, 3-Baton, Dance Twirl; Hannah Winslow, 2-Baton.



OHIO STATE GRAND CHAMPIONS:

Emily Harmon, Strut and Dance Twirl; Madison Eis, Women's Solo; Kimberly Lewis, 3-Baton; Claudia Swauger, 2-Baton; Kyler Jump, Men's Solo.



PENNSYLVANIA STATE GRAND CHAMPION:

Megan Bradley, Women's Solo, 2-Baton, 3-Baton, Dance Twirl.

CONGRATULATIONS 2017 STATE CHAMPIONS!



TENNESSEE STATE CHAMPIONS:

Front row, left to right: Claire Decent, Juv. Solo; Kaitlin Malone, Sr. 2-Baton and Strut; Madison Brode, Jr. 2-Baton and Dance Twirl; Caitlyn Sullivan, Jr. 3-Baton and Solo. Back row, left to right: Ryleigh Templeton, Juv. Dance Twirl; Jayden Deaver, Jr. Strut; Rachel Moffett, Sr. 3-Baton, Solo and Dance Twirl; Adeline Rucker, Juv. 2-Baton, Strut and 3-Baton.



TEXAS STATE GRAND CHAMPIONS:

Emily Perkins, Women's Solo and Strut; Michael Lopez, Men's Solo, Dance Twirl, 2-Baton and 3-Baton.



VIRGINIA STATE GRAND CHAMPIONS:

Olivia Lough, 2-Baton; Emery Harriston, Men's Solo; Jessica Weatherley, Women's Solo, 3-Baton.



WASHINGTON STATE GRAND CHAMPIONS:

Kirsandra Welsheimer, 2-Baton; Katiana Welsheimer, Solo, Strut; Welsheimers, Pairs and Dance Twirl Pairs; Selah Johnson, Dance Twirl; Kristina Terwilliger, 3-Baton.

BRUMIDI TWIRLERS CELEBRATE 40 YEARS AND FOUNDER ANN MASTROCCO

In 1969, Ann Mastrocco was watching a Memorial Day parade in Deer Park, New York when she was bitten by the baton twirling bug. Shortly thereafter she registered her eight-year-old daughter (current New York State Council President Linda Boss) with a local twirling group. In 1977, Mastrocco was approached by her fellow members of the Constantino Brumidi Sons of Italy Lodge of Deer Park and asked how they could start a twirling group. Mastrocco knew how important it was to keep young people involved in positive activities and their communities, and so, forty years ago, the Brumidi Sunshine Twirlers were formed.

In the beginning there was mostly just practice and parades. Then Brumidi Sunshine started participating in



the local contests affiliated with USTA. In 1982, after graduating from college, Boss took over fulltime coaching responsibilities while Mastrocco continued directing the organization.

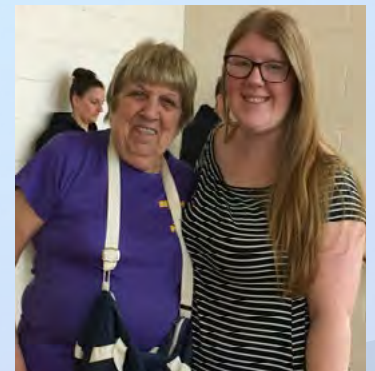
Forty years is a long time to do any one thing. Literally thousands of batons have been tossed and caught, with a few misses in between. It is hard to believe that in 1977 the average home cost about \$49,000 and Charlie's Angels action figures were a hot commodity along with portable 8-Track cassette players. Technology and the times may have changed but the commitment and dedication that Mastrocco has shown over the past forty years has not.

In order to say thank you, former Brumidi Sunshine members spanning the decades returned to the annual Brumidi-sponsored contest and surprised Mastrocco with a plaque, beau-

tiful roses and a gift commemorating the founding of the Brumidi Sunshine Twirlers.

Thank you Ann for the vision and exposing hundreds of young athletes to the wonderful sport of baton twirling.

Thanks to Linda Boss for this article and photos.



USTA'S PRETRIALS PROGRAM: BUILDING BETTER TWIRLERS

Congratulations to the athletes and coaches who are participating in the 2017 PreTrials program! Designed to prepare athletes, coaches and judges for the rigorous and prestigious U.S. Trials program, PreTrials is one of the most exciting and challenging programs offered by USTA.

PreTrials is available to individuals, who compete in compulsories or short program and freestyle, and to pairs and teams. It has four levels of competition: A, AA, AAA and Elite. The first three levels have content restrictions to ensure that athletes are utilizing the proper skills by performing movements that are of their ability level.

The A Level is offered only at USTA regional competitions. AA, AAA and Elite Level athletes must receive a qualifying score at a regional competition in order to continue to the U.S. PreTrials, held each July during the U.S. National Baton Twirling Championships.

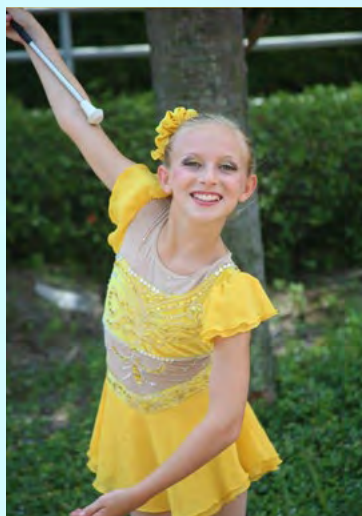
It's our pleasure to introduce you to some of the athletes participating in PreTrials this year!

A LEVEL



Lauren Anthony, 12
Bowie, Maryland
Second year in PreTrials
Coach: Glenn Bittenbender

"I participate in PreTrials because it allows me to push myself harder and express my love towards twirling."



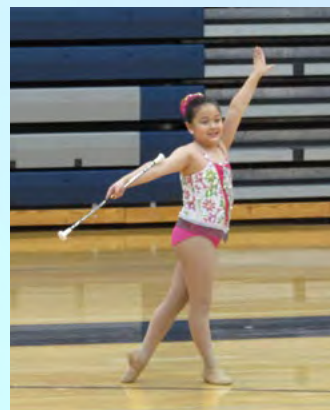
Sevonei Brown, 12
Urbana, Ohio
First year in PreTrials
Coaches: Holli Brown and Dale White

"I participate in PreTrials because it's fun and it helps me learn how to twirl by myself on the floor."



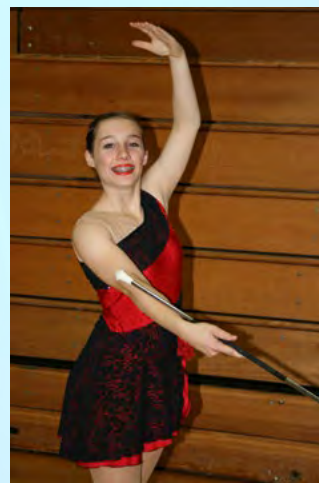
Ciarra Carter-Henry, 12
Crofton, Maryland
Second year in PreTrials
Coaches: Glenn Bittenbender and Angela Quidley

"I participate in PreTrials because I like being able to show my personality and love of twirling through music that I enjoy."



Marie Kershaw, 10
Cincinnati, Ohio
First year in PreTrials
Coach: Cindy Harmon

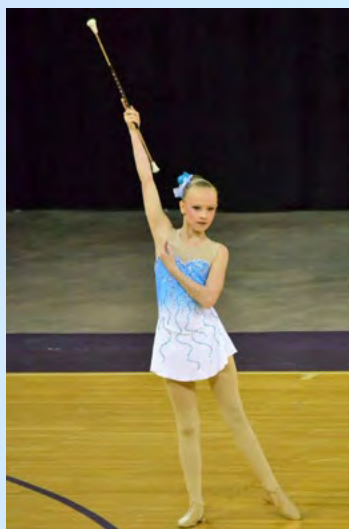
"I participate in PreTrials because I think baton twirling is fun and I dream of being a world champion one day."



Alexa Lytle, 14
Englewood, Colorado
First year in PreTrials
Coaches: Ashley Dolan, Anna Dolan, Michelle Dawson

"I participate in PreTrials because I'm determined to be a better athlete and performer."

USTA'S PRETRIALS PROGRAM



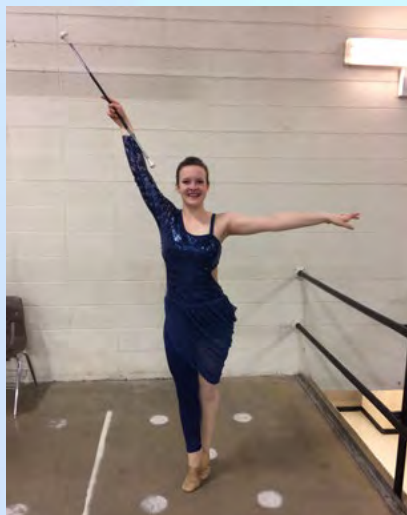
Kylie MacDonald, 11

Miller Place, New York

Second year in PreTrials

Coaches: Lorraine Siar and Stephanie Spaulding

"I participate in PreTrials because I have a lot of fun expressing myself in a creative way while twirling to my choice of music."



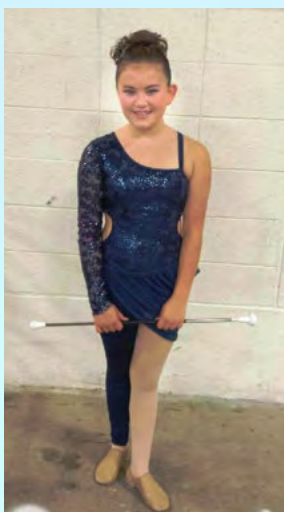
Lydia McDonald, 15

Colorado Springs, Colorado

First year in PreTrials

Coaches: Krissy and Carlie Andersen

"I am in PreTrials because I think it would be a great experience and I'm excited to see where it will take me."



Kianna Pilling, 14

Peyton, Colorado

First year in PreTrials

Coaches: Krissy and Carlie Andersen

"I participate in PreTrials because I like that you can pick your own music and almost become someone else."



Brooke Randall, 9

Portage, Michigan

First year in PreTrials

Coach: Kyle Keiser

"I am doing PreTrials because I've watched my idols (Brianna Bolinger and Savanna Miller) do them for a couple years at Nationals. I want to be as good as them someday. If I keep working hard one day I will be."



Bella Sebree, 10

Madison, Tennessee

First year in PreTrials

Coaches: Christy Malone and Jackie Stewart

"I participate in PreTrials because I love twirling and dancing! Doing Movement Technique, Compulsories and Freestyle will help me sharpen my skills and become a better twirler."



Gina Zarcone, 14

Tallman, New York

Second year in PreTrials

Coach: Patti Wojtowicz

"I participate in PreTrials because I enjoy twirling and performing my freestyle routine. I like meeting twirlers from all over the country. Learning from other twirlers helps me strive to become a better twirler."

USTA'S PRETRIALS PROGRAM

AA LEVEL



Kansas Makenna Crawford, 9

Redding, California

First year in PreTrials

Coaches: Irene Mazzini, Kellie Perelman, Berta Lane, Kathy Forsythe

"I participate in PreTrials because I worked hard to reach my goal of getting to this level. And I look up to my friends who already participate in PreTrials and I want to be like them. I also really wanted to wear the warm up suit."



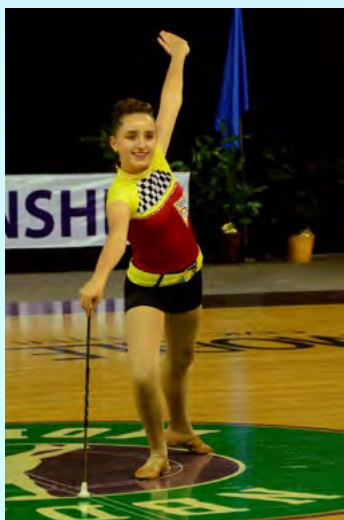
Jada A. Danner, 16

Upper Marlboro, Maryland

Fourth year in PreTrials

Coach: Glenn Bittenbender

"I participate in PreTrials because I love to baton twirl. I lost my coach Janet Weaver a couple years ago. It was one of the hardest deaths I had to deal with. Even though it was hard she still made me strong, because I know she is watching over me. I love that I am able to pick my own music, learn different skill sets, and challenge myself with everything that PreTrials has to offer."



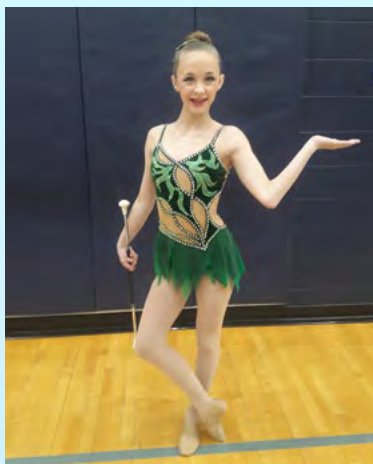
Charlize Dixon, 13

Olympia, Washington

Third year in PreTrials

Coach: Judy Welsheimer

"I participate in PreTrials because it helps me focus on skills that will help me to achieve my goals."



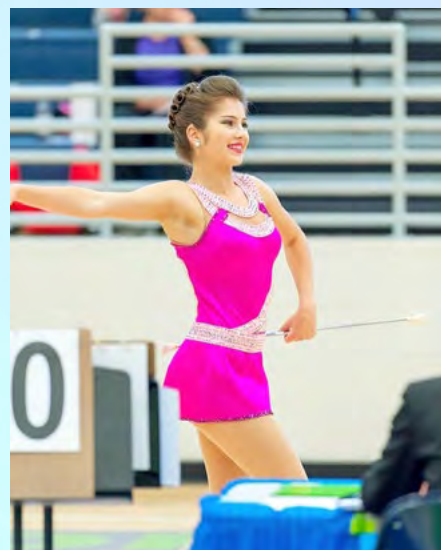
Holly Forbes, 14

Cincinnati, Ohio

Third year in PreTrials

Coach: Machel Stiehl

"I participate in PreTrials because I love to be able to perform my freestyle. My coach and I are able to pick music that fits my personality. Through her choreography I'm able to become the character and express my love for twirling. Learning compulsories and movement technique improves my twirling in all my competitive events."



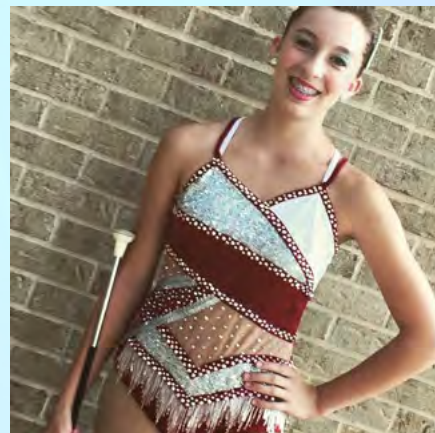
Paige Glass, 18

Gonzales, Texas

First year in PreTrials

Coach: Janice Glass and Sheri Carter

"I participate in PreTrials because it gives me more opportunities to compete."



McKenzie Gomez, 16

Round Rock, Texas

First year in PreTrials

Coach: Lynn Dell Harrell

"I participate in PreTrials because I want to challenge myself to be the best I can be and I look forward to completing with the best athletes in the sport."

USTA'S PRETRIALS PROGRAM



Destiny LeBrun, 15 (at left, above)
Panola, Texas

Third year in PreTrials
Coach: Lori Perkins

"I participate in PreTrials because it betters me as a person. Freestyle is my favorite event in twirling and I love pushing myself to get a better score."

Keriann Hollis, 15 (at right, above)
Shreveport, Louisiana
Third year in PreTrials
Coach: Lori Perkins

"I participate in PreTrials because compul-sories are one of my favorite events helping with speed, control and technique."



Jocelyn Holtsberry, 15
Urbana, Ohio

Second year in PreTrials
Coach: Holli Brown

"I participate in PreTrials because it's a chance for me to perfect my technique and express myself through my routine."



Julianna Nash, 9
Lincoln, California

First year in PreTrials
Coaches: Mark and Ella Nash

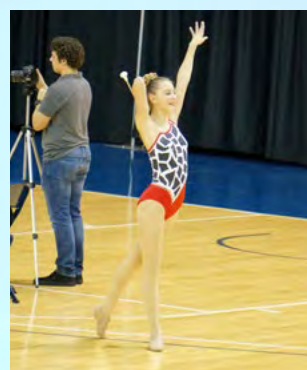
"I participate in PreTrials because I love that I am on the floor all by myself, to perform to my own music, and I know this is the first step to reach my ultimate dream: to become a world champion, just like papa!"



Olivia Nash, 10
Lincoln, California

Second year in PreTrials
Coaches: Mark and Ella Nash

"I participate in PreTrials because It helps me grow as an athlete and I love to choose my own music and theme!"



Mackenzie Rayburn, 14
Fresno, California

Two years in PreTrials
Coach: Yolanda Stone

"I participate in PreTrials because I love the rush of adrenaline I get while performing. I have been working very hard to develop my skills to compete in freestyle at Nationals. I'm excited to perform in front of the judges!"



Ashley Vader, 19
Vicksburg, Michigan

Two years in PreTrials
Coach: Kyle Keiser

"I participate in PreTrials to have the opportunity to increase both my technical skill as well as my expression in routines. I love participating in PreTrials because I enjoy watching others perform to different types of music as well as seeing various levels of skill. Being a newer twirler with about three years of experience, I learn a lot from participating in PreTrials. I can see the technical skills as well as expressive skills that I am excelling in or need extra work on. I have met several twirlers and coaches through PreTrials and have learned and grown more in love with the sport."

USTA'S PRETRIALS PROGRAM

AAA LEVEL



Emma Wright, 14

Otisville, Michigan

First year in PreTrials

Coach: Kyle Keiser

"I participate in PreTrials because I love how it has helped me to set goals and work toward them!"



Tara Zielinski, 10

Mattawan, Michigan

First year in PreTrials

Coach: Kyle Keiser

"I participate in PreTrials because I hope to get a qualifying score where I can perform my freestyle at Nationals. Also, I'd eventually like to participate in US Trials and I know the PreTrials program will help me prepare to be able to reach that goal."



Josie D'Acquisto, 14

Redding, California

Second year in PreTrials

Coach: Kellie Donovan-Perelman

"I like participating in PreTrials because I get to experience a different type of competition."



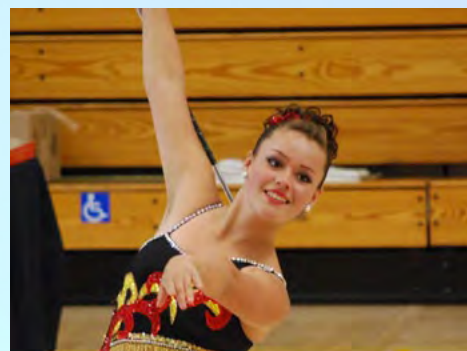
Kaylynn Davis, 13

Cincinnati, Ohio

Third year in PreTrials

Coach: Cindy Harmon

"I participate in PreTrials because I enjoy competing and doing freestyle. I love to watch my friends and the other athletes excel and grow over the year."



Cadence Doods, 13

Visalia, California

Second year in PreTrials

Coaches: Kellie Donovan-Perelman and

Yvette Doods

"I participate in PreTrials because I use it as an outlet, a way to express myself. Baton twirling is a sport I've had the pleasure of competing in for most of my life."



Jaida Jobe, 11

Cottonwood, California

Second year in PreTrials

Coaches: Irene Mazzini and Kellie

Donovan-Perelman

"I compete in PreTrials because I love the friendships that I make and I LOVE to perform and express myself through twirling and dance."

USTA'S PRETRIALS PROGRAM



Selah Johnson, 16
Port Angeles, Washington
Third year in PreTrials
Coaches: Kathy Forsythe, Kellie Donovan-Perelman

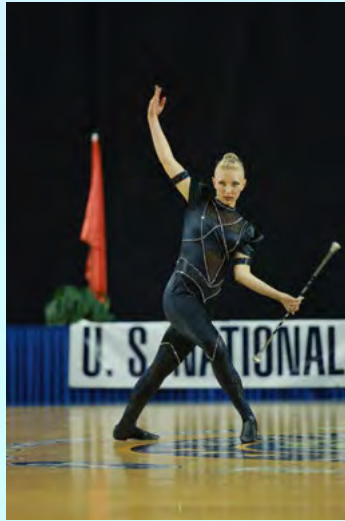
"I do PreTrials because you get to express yourself the most while doing freestyle. It is unique to fit you."



Madelaine Schmidt, 18
Westminster, Colorado
Fifth year in PreTrials
Coach: Ashley Dolan, Anna Dolan, Michelle Dawson

"I participate in PreTrials because I enjoy getting to pick and perform to a song of my choice that's a little more competitive than a show twirl!"

ELITE LEVEL



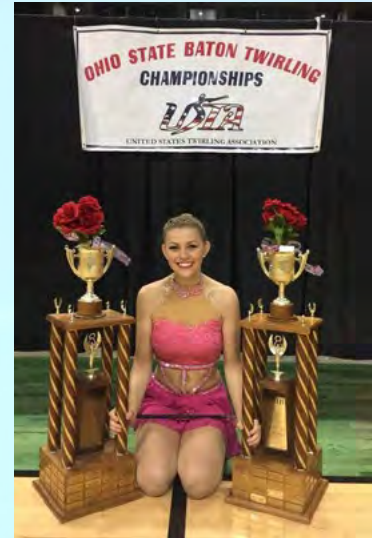
Charlie Andersen, 19
Colorado Springs, Colorado
Sixth year in PreTrials
Coaches: Machele Stiehl and Michelle Dawson

"I enjoy participating in PreTrials and get the chance to perform to a variety of styles and music."



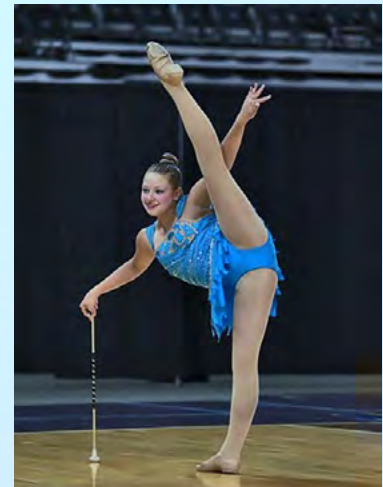
Alicia Dennie, 18
Culver, Indiana
Sixth year in PreTrials
Coach: Kyle Keiser

"I participate in PreTrials because I enjoy twirling to different music and performing on the floor and letting my personality show through. I love the performance part of PreTrials and I love how excited the crowd gets during freestyles!"



Emily Harmon, 17
Liberty Township, Ohio
Sixth year in PreTrials.
Coach: Machele Stiehl

"I participate in PreTrials because I like being able to express my personality through my freestyle and I like the challenge."



Sarah Lewis, 13
Avon, Ohio
Fifth year in PreTrials
Coaches: Cheryl Wimberley and Michael Harris

"I participate in PreTrials because compulsories help me with my technique and basics of baton twirling. Freestyle is one of my favorite events because I love being able to do a new routine every year to music I love."

USTA'S PRETRIALS PROGRAM



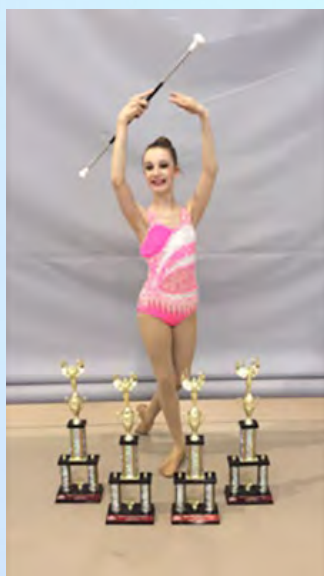
Savannah Miller, 20

Kansas City, Missouri

Sixth year in PreTrials

Coaches: Kathy Harris, Dale White, Mark Nash and Koralea Slagle

"I participate in PreTrials because I want to continue to grow as an athlete and push myself in new, innovative ways."



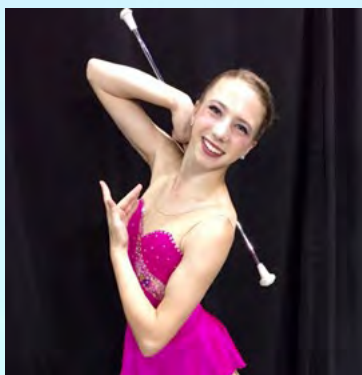
Madeline Stiehl, 14

Trenton, Ohio

Fifth year in PreTrials

Coach: Machel Stiehl

"I like to enter PreTrials because I love to choose my own music and theme."



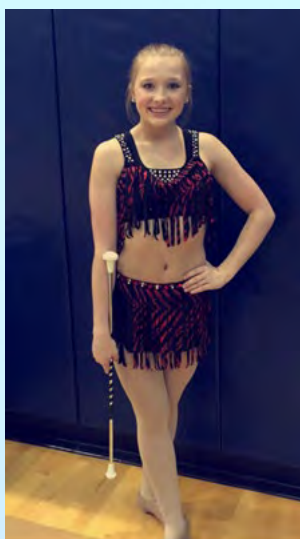
Grace Wennerberg, 15

From Avon Lake, Ohio

Four years in PreTrials

Coach: Stephanie Baddour Malkin

"I participate in PreTrials because it gives me an opportunity to work on my performance skills and push me out of my comfort zone. I am also challenged to work on my technique with the compulsory component that is a part of PreTrials."



Konlie Westerfield, 16

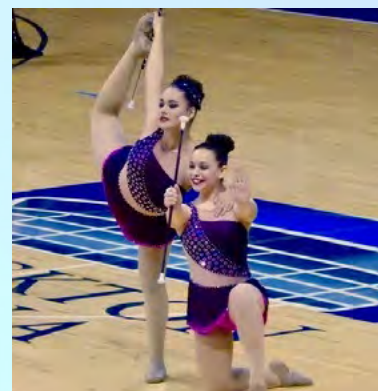
Lebanon, Indiana

Five years in PreTrials

Coach: Kyle Keiser

"I participate in PreTrials because I enjoy twirling to a piece of music picked out just for me. It is a challenge to portray the routine just as Coach Kyle intends. This year's piece is full of grace and elegance."

AAA PAIRS



Josie D'Acquisto, 14, and

Cadence Doods, 13

Redding, CA and Visalia, CA

First year in PreTrial Pairs

Coach: Kellie Donovan-Perelman

"We enjoy competing in PreTrials because it provides us with an outlet to communicate in a competitive environment."

COACHES



Cindy Harmon

Liberty Township, Ohio

I have been coaching PreTrials athletes for eight years.

"I have noticed such growth and development since my students have been involved in PreTrials. Working toward the goal of qualifying for National PreTrials has been such a great motivator! They have become more balanced, and more technically strong as a result of their participation in this event."

USTA'S PRETRIALS PROGRAM



Kyle Keiser

Kalamazoo, Michigan

I have coached PreTrials athletes since inception of the program!

"I have my students enter PreTrials as part of a long-term developmental plan. After establishing them in competitive events and building a strong foundation, along with their Compulsories and Movement Technique, PreTrials participation is the logical progression to the long term goal of competing in the US Trials as a potential member of the US Team for the World Championships. PreTrials for my program is not an end goal—it is a step along a dedicated process to developing the whole athlete. Each level prepares them for the next and sets goals for the coming seasons."



Christy Malone

Madison, Tennessee

I have been coaching PreTrials for about four years now.

"I encourage my athletes to participate in PreTrials because Compulsories and Movement Technique enhance their technique. It also provides them with the opportunity to perform a routine where they can be a little more artistic and expressive."



Machele Stiehl

Trenton, Ohio

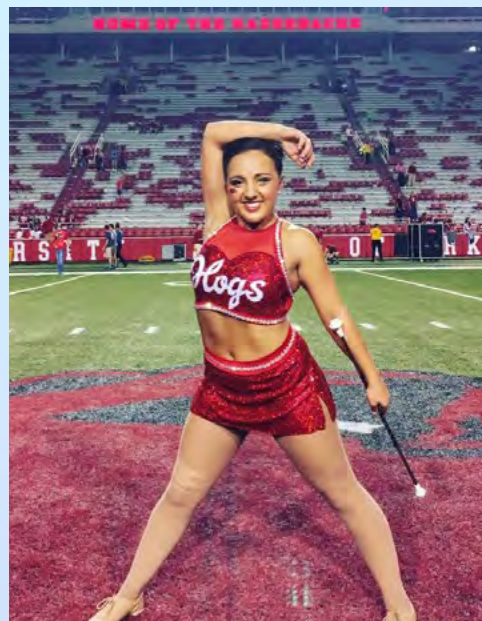
I have been coaching PreTrials athletes for 24 years.

"I have my students participate in PreTrials because participation is both challenging and fun."

MILLER AND FAMILY DONATE COLLEGIATE CHAMPIONSHIP TRAVELING TROPHY

Grand National Champion and University of Arkansas Feature Twirler Savannah Miller, who won the first-ever USTA Collegiate Championship in 2016, along with her family, have donated a traveling trophy that future winners of the National Collegiate Event will be able to display at their schools during their year as Collegiate Champion.

"USTA is grateful to Savannah for setting such a wonderful example as our first-ever Collegiate Champion and for her generosity in donating this traveling trophy, which will be known as the 'Miller Cup,'" said USTA Executive Director of Sport Mark Nash.



MEET USTA'S COUNCIL PRESIDENTS, PART 3:

**Elaine Jones,
Illinois Baton Council**



Enjoy this Q&A with Elaine Jones, president of the Illinois Baton Council, which is supporting USTA and the sport of baton twirling in America's heartland.

How did you initially get involved in baton twirling?

I got involved in twirling because my mother signed me up at our park district.

How have you been involved in twirling over the years....as an athlete, coach, judge, contest director, council member, USTA roles, etc.?

I have been an athlete, coach, judge, parent of a twirler and council member.

When did you become your council president? Why were you willing to take on the presidency?

I took on the task of running our state contest beginning in 1999. I was willing to become president to promote twirling and related activities in our area.

Tell me about your council – how many members, what types of events or activities it sponsors, special things it does, etc.

Right now our council runs one contest per year – the Illinois State Championships. We have also partnered with other organizations to expand our reach and grow twirling in Illinois.

What is the biggest challenge and the biggest reward of being your

council president?

The biggest challenge is always to find twirlers, especially to find those willing to stick with it from year to year. My biggest reward is growing the state contest each year.

What are the qualities of a successful council president?

The qualities of a successful council president, in my opinion, are a willingness to try new things, to think outside the box and to involve other people and related activities.

Are there folks you would like to thank?

I would like to thank current and past board members and officers who have helped run the state contest and other events. That includes Carol Lites, Lisa Shaw, Carmen Young, Susan Altman, Kanisha Ku and Kathy Smith. I would also like to thank the parents of the groups that have helped with the contests.

MEET USTA'S COUNCIL PRESIDENTS, PART 4:

**Erin Link,
Arizona Baton Council**



Enjoy this Q&A with Erin Link, who is following in her mother's footsteps as president of the Arizona Baton Council, which is keeping twirling alive and well in the southwest.

How did you initially get involved in baton twirling?

When I was in kindergarten I came home with a flyer about baton twirling lessons. My mom, Susan Link, had actually twirled for a few years in California. So, seeing the flyer, she asked me if I wanted to twirl. I was only 5 years old, mind you, and had no idea what a baton was. So I asked her "What is that?" She got out an old baton she had tucked away in her closet and started showing me all the different things you could do. It started out small from hand rolls to flourishes and then the most important trick in twirling, a thumb toss. After seeing her magnificent display I was in awe and said "Mommy I want to do that!" I've been involved in twirling ever since.



How have you been involved in twirling over the years....as an athlete, coach, judge, contest director, council member, USTA roles, etc.

I started out in the rec programs at age five, then started competing in 1996. Oakland was my very first Nationals. My competitive career as

an athlete spanned from 1996 to 2009. During this period I helped my mom and others with small duties regarding the local contests we would hold. In 2010 I joined our council as an official member. At this point I was just getting into judging and now I am a Level II Certified Judge.



When did you become your council president?

I became council president in 2012.

Why were you willing to take on the presidency?

I was willing because I wanted to be more involved in my council and in USTA. Twirling has always been a part of my life and I wanted to keep it that way. I had a student who ended up not continuing with USTA and I had an overwhelming feeling that this is what I wanted to do to stay connected to twirling in Arizona.

Tell me about your council – how many members, what types of events or activities it sponsors, special things it does, etc.

We are definitely a small, tight-knit group in Arizona. Currently we have seven council members. We try to hold a contest every month starting in February and ending in May. We also try to get everyone together after football season and hold clinics and studio contests. The one thing I enjoy that we do in Arizona is every contest has a themed pageant. Example: February-Miss Sweetheart; April-Princess in the Pines. (This one is always held in Flagstaff.) It's a fun way to get the little ones involved. We will be implementing a new aspect to our contests next year by having an athlete that others com-



Arizona Baton Council, L to R: Tamara Abeyta, Michelle Ekstrom, Julie Fix, Megan Ekstrom, Susan Link, Erin Link, Sherry Kortan and Jason Thomson.

petitors nominate for a sportsmanship award. It's a great way to show our athletes that it's not always about winning; it's about the relationships and friendships you make twirling.



What is the biggest challenge and the biggest reward of being your council president?

I think the biggest challenge is having everyone in our state come together as a whole. Arizona is fairly large geographically so it is hard sometimes to coordinate. My council does a fabulous job of always putting their athletes and parents first. The biggest reward for me is being close to the coaches here and having them value my opinion as a judge and president. I love seeing that our sport is finally growing and how many talented twirlers we have now in

Arizona. That is something I'm definitely proud of.

What are the qualities of a successful council president?

Successful qualities to me are someone who isn't biased, is a good listener and is in it not for the title but for the reward. I take everything that my council says to heart and I truly believe if you don't love what you do, you shouldn't do it.

Are there folks you would like to thank?

I'd like to thank the entire Arizona Baton Council for giving me the honor of representing them and trusting me with this position. I also want to thank my mom for bringing twirling into my life. Without her I wouldn't be here today. Lastly, I would like to thank my boyfriend, Drew, and our friends for always being so supportive of twirling. I have many great memories of them having me twirl at BBQs, holiday celebrations and weddings, ha-ha!

What else would you like to add?

Thank you to USTA for expanding twirling the way it has. It is wonderful to have so many ways to get connected to twirling. I feel social media has definitely changed the view on baton twirling.

JUMP AHEAD TO JACKSONVILLE

**Site of the 60th Anniversary U.S. National Baton Twirling Championships
July 8-14, 2018**

2018 is an International Cup Qualifier year, so this competition will be big!

Hotel information will be posted late summer on the USTA website. Start planning now to join us in Jacksonville!!

Jacksonville boasts **1,100 miles of shoreline**, **80,000 acres of parks and trails**, world-class **art and museums** and numerous **sporting events**. It's the perfect place to experience a new side of Florida. The abundant waterways, parks and ecological preserves in Jacksonville provide an unforgettable opportunity to escape the ordinary and relax in nature's playground. All the natural beauty is surrounded by a modern and vibrant city filled with authentic dining options, thrilling attractions, world-class museums, beautiful hotels, exciting events, cool nightlife, a hip Downtown and unique historic districts with entertaining options for visitors of all ages.





THE CHAMPIONS ARE COMING...

ARE YOU ?

**August 2-5, 2018
Kissimmee, FL, USA**

Hosted by:



CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS AND BENEFACTORS!

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

USTA will be hosting the 35th World Baton Twirling Championships in Kissimmee, Florida, August 2nd-5th, 2018. This is the most prestigious event for our sport, and is a very large financial undertaking.

Because this event does not generate revenue for the USTA, we are asking all State/Region Councils, Professional Members, interested individuals and teams/groups for volunteers and financial assistance to help run the competition and cover the costs of these championships.

The success of this endeavor is of great importance to the sport of baton twirling in this country as well as throughout the world. On behalf of the USTA Executive Board, Technical Advisory Group, and the 2018 World Championships Staff, thank you in advance for your generosity and support!

Please email any and all questions to Karen Cammer at president@ustwirling.com.

VOLUNTEER!

Volunteer to help as practice gym coordinators, competition and practice monitors, food, refreshment and hospitality, administration, digital/social media, ceremonies, celebrations, tabulation, country host, registration, print work.....and the list goes on!

DONATE!

Your generous donations will go towards the Welcome Party for the Athletes, the Reception for the World Delegates, Ceremonies, the Live Stream, and more!

Benefactor form:

<http://www.ustwirling.com/content/getattachment/Benefactor-Foundation/2017-Benefactors-Form-updated-042017.pdf.aspx>

Be sure to select "2018 World Championships, Kissimmee, FL" as the designation for your donation.