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PHOTOS COURTESY OF TIM FENNER

Lake Park High School's varsity Lancettes won the state title with this performance in the AAA Open Dance category at the Team Dance Illinois State Championship competition in Peoria.

Victory dance

Lake Park Lancettes take title for open dance

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This time, the spotlight is all theirs.

After tying with St. Charles North for the title in 2007, this month the Lake Park High School Varsity Lancettes Dance Team alone captured the AAA Open Dance crown at the Team Dance Illinois State Championship in Peoria.

The Roselle dancers beat 12 teams from throughout Illinois in AAA Open Dance, including squads from Neuqua Valley High School in Naperville, which took fourth, and Downers Grove South High School, which placed sixth. The category allows for a broad interpretation of contemporary dance, including jazz and modern choreography.

Led by captains Jordan Fenner, Kori Kelly and Amy Knorowski, the Lancettes won with a routine that fused sharp and fluid movements performed to a percussion-heavy song. Coach Stephanie Hageman, a Lancettes alumna and first-year varsity coach, choreographed the winning moves that helped the Lancettes go undefeated in six regional competitions since November. Hageman said the state victory was a culmination



This year is the second time the Lake Park High School Varsity Lancettes won the AAA Open Dance Category at the Team Dance Illinois State Championships. In 2007, they tied for the title with St. Charles North.

of a 10-month journey that started with tryouts in May and included summer camp, performances at all Lake Park basketball and football games, and several competitions. "The work is never done and that's the beauty of it; it's work the girls find very rewarding," Hageman said. "It's about the journey to the state contest and the journey of the year. It's a constant progression and growing process for the dancers individually, as well as the routines."

The varsity team also finished fourth in the AAA Lyrical category, which challenges dancers to interpret and convey the

lyrics of a song. Hageman said lyrical dances are typically slower and often based in ballet. The Lancettes chose a song titled "How You Live" by Point of Grace. The team also qualified to compete in AAA Hip-Hop, but chose to perform its strongest routines, since each team can compete in only two categories, Hageman said.

"They're such well-rounded dancers to be able to compete in three categories of different styles of dance," she said. "It's remarkable."

The varsity Lancettes include an almost equal mix of lower- and upperclassmen. Hageman said their

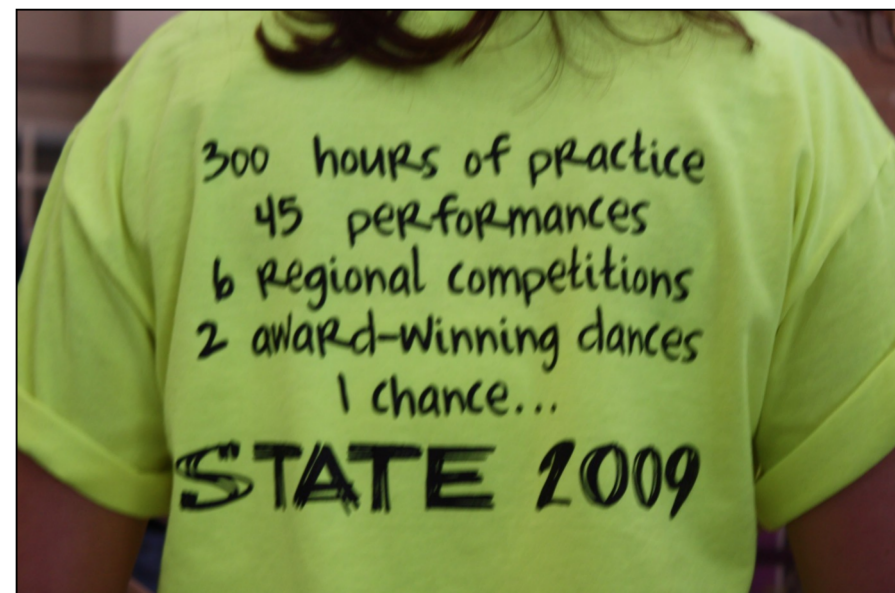


Lake Park High School's varsity Lancettes perform in the AAA Lyrical category at the Team Dance Illinois State Championship in Peoria. The team placed fourth with this routine.

ability to gel despite their age differences is key to their success.

"One of the things that the girls talked about a lot, even before the win, was just how connected the team is," she said. "The girls felt they had such a connection that transcended their (age) boundaries."

The varsity Lancettes are: T'Lyn Candella, junior, Roselle; Lauren Caputo, freshman, Bloomingdale; Lauren Dahly, sophomore, Bloomingdale; Nina Delgado, sophomore, Roselle; Ashly Dillon, junior, Hanover Park; Jordan Fenner, senior, Bloomingdale; Bianca Gerardi, senior, Bloomingdale; Maria-Cristina Gianni, sophomore, Roselle; Kori Kelly, senior, Bloomingdale; Amy Knorowski, senior, Bloomingdale; Lucia Leone, junior,



With a practice and performance season that is 10 months long, Lake Park High School's Varsity Lancettes sported T-shirts that were testament to the hard work that won them a state title.

Bloomingdale; Jamie Martin, freshman, Medinah; Annie Mauro, freshman, Bloomingdale; Alyssa Milani, senior, Bloomingdale; Gabby Palanti, junior, Roselle; Nell Wickstrom,

senior, Bloomingdale; Kaylee Willis, junior, Roselle.

For details on the team, visit lancettes.com. For details on the competition, visit teamdanceillinois.org.