**Twirlettes Succeed in winning 16th National team title**

The Saline Twirlettes National team program has a proven track record and the member’s commitment and dedication is proving to be a winning tradition. The program is building champions and this past national’s the team brought home their 16th national team title for their Pre-teen dance twirl called the MINION team, won 12 individual national titles and 78 top ten medals plus have three members make the top 20 in the Grand National Majorette contest and one top 6 finalist.

The team trains all year but intensity begins in the summer when other peers are sleeping in, hanging out with friends, and swimming every day, these members are in the gym at Washtenaw Christian Academy every day at 8:30 a.m. Monday-Friday. The team members train on an average 5-8 hours per day to prepare themselves for the National Baton Twirling Association’s national competition held at Notre Dame University each year.

This team is unique because the twirlers are ages 8-18 years of age and from the novice to elite advanced level. They don’t just come in for just a season or due to being a certain age. They all have the opportunity to join the team and have the unique experience of coming together as a team despite ages and abilities. Each twirler works on their individual skills on their level as well as being placed on a team that may best suit them. Graduating Team Member, Andrea Doa, states” I would not have traded this last summer for anything. I have learned more than tossing a baton over my head. I have learned skills from this team that will stay with me for a lifetime. It’s more than just a group of girls with a similar interest, it is a band of sisters with a deep passion to achieve greatness.”

Over the many hours together, they not only build their twirling skills, but also their friendships and bonds. There is no other opportunity on any other sports team where you may twirl alongside a national title holder, an 8-year-old, a HS senior, University of Michigan twirler or Miss Michigan, states Coach Usher. These girls have such an exceptional experience once they join. They buy into the program and the results come. I cannot give a full explanation, but something magical does happen in those hours in the gym through the pulled muscles, sweat, and bruises. “

This team included 23 members from 8 different communities. This team competed in 3 different team events and 15 different individual events the last week of July. Again, the work and commitment proved worthy. The “Minion” team won the Pre-teen dance twirl national championship out of 20 + teams from across the country. Members included: Haley Alvarez, Hanna Alvarez, Zoe Dotts-Brown, Kaitlyn Kornacki, Gabby Landini, Johanna Kegerreis, Avery St. Lawrence, Alexis Figueras, Elly LeCursi, and Aubrey Bukosky. For many of these team members it was their first taste of a national title. “It was a proud moment to win the 16th national team title in 2016”,stated Grass Lake 6th grader, Haley Alvarez.

The Junior team performed a nearly flawless routine, but fell a bit short in judging. The team won 2nd place in the Junior Large Dance Twirl division. Despite, the judge’s results, the team felt good about what they accomplished and that they left it all on the floor. Team is comprised of : Andrea Doa, Julie Palmer, Cori Walworth, Kelly Coghlan, Amanda Coy, Izzy Melvin, Alexa Bader, Sabrina Beiring and Lizzie Branch.

All 23 members came together to produce an artistic routine for the Junior Halftime show twirl division called “Sirens of the Sea”. It was a step artistically for the team and proved well as the team won 2nd place in a very competitive division.

The success continued in individual competition. Our 13 title holders included: Hanna Alvarez, GL 4th grader winning the Advanced 2 baton championship, Saline Junior Amanda Coy winning the Show Twirl championship and Grass Lake Junior Izzy Melvin winning the 3-baton national championship.

Sabrina Beiring and Andrea Doa won their respective ages in the Intermediate solo category. This was Andrea’s last solo ever so it was very exciting that she won a National title. Saline 7th grader, Avery St. Lawrence won the Show Twirl Championship, Alexis Figueras , Saline 6th grader, won her national title in Beginner strutting while Sabrina won the Beginner flag title and Kelly Coghlan, Saline Junior won the Beginner 2-baton title.

Even Novice students won title success Kaitlyn Kornacki, Milan 8th grader won her strut, flag and along with Duet partner Gabby Landini they won their duet. Kaitlyn won 3 individual titles this season. New to nationals was Jenna Huetteman and in her first nationals she won the novice strut title.

To have 13 Individual titles, is a testament to the girls hard work all season long to prepare them for the national stage.

Those 78 top ten medals, came from all 23 members of the team. Every member placed top ten in at least one event. This is pretty amazing since the groups are very competitive, especially when you’re in the advanced and have anywhere between 25-85 competitors’.

Amanda Coy, had her biggest accomplishment to date, by making the TOP 6 in the Junior Grand National Majorette contest. Amanda, Haley, and Hanna twirled off first in their respective divisions, made the top 20 and then Amanda went on to the top 6. Along with Amanda’s national show twirl title, she won a 2nd in modeling, flag, 3rd in strut and 6th in solo. Adding to her 3 baton title, Grass Lake Junior Izzy Melvin , won 3rd in show routine and flag, 13th in solo and freestyle. Hanna Alvarez won 7th overall in the Juvenile Miss Majorette of America title being the youngest in the division of 7-9 year olds. She also took 3rd in solo, and 2nd in strutting. She made the finals in all her events. Her sister Haley Alvarez was also the youngest in the pre-teen category and was awarded 10th in the Pre-teen Miss Majorette of America pageant. She also won 2nd in age 10 solo, 3rd in strut, 7th in 2-baton and made finals in solo, strut, and duet. The Alvarez sister duet won 3rd in advanced competition.

 Five girls represented in the Beginner and Intermediate National pageants competing in interview, modeling, strutting and solo. Alexa Bader won 4th overall in the Junior Intermediate division, Sabrina placed 11th as well in the same division, Cori Walworth, Chelsea Senior, won 7th overall placing 4th in solo, 5th in strut. In the Beginner Jr. Pageant Johanna Kegerreis placed 8th overall while Alexis Figueras won 9th in the Beginner Pre-teen pageant.

The intermediate twirlers did equally as well in open events. New Member, Alexa Bader of Sylvania, OH won 5th in open solo, 4th in strut and modeling, 8th in show routine, 10th in 2baton and 8th in 3-baton. She had a great first appearance with the team placing top ten in all events. Cori added a 5th in flag and 10th in 2baton while, Andrea Doa won 4th in flag and show twirling. Kelly Coghlan added 2 more top ten medals with a 6th in solo, and 3-baton. Saline Senior Julie Palmer received a 3rd in solo, 7th in strutting, 6th in 2-baton, and 9th in flag twirling. Grass Lake Freshman Zoe Dotts Brown won 2nd in her open solo and flag, 4th in 3-baton, 10th in duet with Kegerreis, 6th in 2-baton while her Duet partner Johanna Kegerreis, Jackson Christian Freshman added medals in solo placing 2nd, earning 7th in strutting, 6th in 2-baton, and 3rd in flag.

Sabrina Beiring continued a good week by winning 3rd in strut, 7th in show, and 15th in 2-baton and youngest Intermediate twirler Avery St. Lawrence won 9th in strutting and 2nd in Duet with partner Alexis Figueras.

Twirlette Beginner competitors held their own against the nation. Aubrey Bukosky, Milan 7th grader, placed 5th in solo and 4th in flag twirling. Gabby Landini placed 3rd in 2-baton and 11th in solo. Kaitlyn added to her 3 national titles with a 4th in solo, as well as Alexis Figueras who won 4th in open solo, 3rd in 2-baton and flag. Saline 6th grader Elly LeCursi won 8th in her strutting age group.

The Twirlettes had 4 new girls to the team this season and they brought home 11 top ten medals. Pioneer sophomore Ali Gucwa won a 4th in solo, 3rd in flag, 5th in strut, and 7th in 2-baton. St. Francis Cabrini freshman Addison Foy won a 4th in solo, 5th in strut, and 8th in flag while Saline 6th grader Jenna Huetteman won a 2nd in solo along with her first strut title. Lastly Saline 6th grader rounded out the medal count with a 2nd in solo, and 4th in flag twirling.

Four individuals were picked by Coach Usher to represent the team in the Team Princess or Team member of the year competition. Every Twirlette placed in the top ten; Hanna Alvarez won 3rd in the juvenile division while Avery St. Lawrence won 3rd in the Pre-teen division while Johanna Kegerreis brought home an 8th representing the team and Chelsea Senior Cori Walworth brought home another 3rd place. To have the Twirlettes represented and awarded in every division is a huge success. “It was an amazing week”, stated Coach Usher. “The girls brought home so many titles, top ten awards and another national title that in reaffirmed all the time in the gym this summer.”

The Twirlettes are gearing back up for the fall and a new term accepting new students. If you want to twirl in an established program with top quality instruction, then log onto: www. Salinetwirlettes.org