

Toronto Band Scores Surprise Win

DeLasalle of Toronto was named the top drum and bugle corps in the country at Lansdowne Park Saturday, and ended the 11-year reign of the perennial champs, the Toronto Optimists.

To most of the enthusiastic crowd the DeLasalle group were dark horses who snuck home with top honors.

Until final tabulations ended some 16 hours of marching, bugling, trumpeting and occasional fainting, the 10,000 persons at Lansdowne Park viewed the struggle as a contest between the mighty Optimist Corps and the hometown Lasalle Cadets.

Lasalle, DeLasalle and the Optimists, along with a mixed group from Montreal called the Vicomtes, were competing in the Junior "A" finals. And, traditionally, the corps which wins that class, takes all the marbles.

The orange-capped Lasalle

cadets, hosts for the meet, were given a thunderous ovation as they took the field. They put on an exciting performance ending with a soaring flourish of bugles, cymbals and standards.

Their exuberant finale revealed the source of the cadets' reputation as a corps that is not afraid to be innovative.

The natty, white-plumed Optimists, showing the poise of champions, followed with a performance that turned the jeers of the partisan spectators into cheers. Where the cadets were flashy, the Optimists showed technical excellence.

"Love-in" tunes, like "The

Age of Aquarius" and "San Francisco" hardly seemed suited for performance by the military crash and roll of a drum and bugle corps. Despite that, the Optimists made it sound good to any ears.

After the excitement caused by back-to-back appearances by the Cadets and the Optimists, the DeLasalle appearance came as somewhat of an anti-climax to the crowd. The DeLasalle group were the last of 13 groups to appear.

The audience, after about 150 solid minutes of action from preceding groups, gave them relatively subdued response.

But when it was all over, and

13 judges had tabulated scores, DeLasalle had a score of 80.55 per cent, one-half of a percentage point higher than the Optimists.

Lasalle Cadets were third with a mark of 78.45.

The Guelph Royales were on tops in the Senior "A" classification with a mark of 67.80. The Chatelaines, from Laval, Que., were the best all-girl group with a score of 69.63.

Tops in the Junior "B" section with a mark of 71.68 were the Midlanders from London.

While Lasalle missed the top rung by a whisker, judges decided it was not the fault of the corps' nimble drum-

mers, as the cadets took Canadian Drum Corps Association trophies for the best drum major, and the best drum line in the Junior "A" class.

The finals came after a full day of preliminaries and minor competitions held in R. D. Campbell Stadium at Laurentian High School.

Fourteen groups took part in the preliminaries for the girls' class "A" finals and the boys Junior "B" finals, and another nine groups competed for honors in four minor classes.

The Centennials, from Kingston, topped the junior novice class with a mark of 57.5. The Reveillers, from Carleton Place, were tops in the junior standstill with a mark of 68.3. The Majorettes Optimistes of Cowanville, Que., took the trumpet prize.

And a group from the Royal Hamilton Light Infantry captured the Senior "B" trophy.

The heat, humidity and the exertion of drumming, bugling, marching and flagbearing took its toll of many of the estimated 2,000 competitors.

As each team left the field after its 13 minute performance it was not unusual to see several topple over on the end zone grass.

Optimists take title in bugle corps 'squeaker'

By Bill Fox
Citizen staff writer

The Toronto Optimists have been dethroned as Canadian Junior A Drum and Bugle Corps champions for the first-time in 12 years — by a half-step.

The Optimists put on the dazzling display before more than 13,000 marching band enthusiasts at Lansdowne Park Saturday befitting defending champions of 11 years.

Judges awarded them an excellent 80.80 score.

But it wasn't enough. Another Toronto corps, De La Salle Oaklands, were the last to march onto the Lansdowne turf in a bid for the Junior A title.

When they paraded from the Bank Street end-zone it was obvious the judging between the corps would be close, but it is doubtful anyone in the grandstand realized just how close it would be.

As the results were read, in reverse order of finish, the Optimists were placed second with 80.80. De La Salle's score was 80.85, only 1-20th of a point better.

Errors of a marching band routine — such as a drum hit at the wrong time or a formation that isn't straight or a missed step — usually cost a corps 1-10th of a point.

De La Salle Oaklands were a "half-step" better Saturday night.

Ottawa's LaSalle Cadets, co-hosts with radio station CJRC for the 1969 championships, finished third with 78.45 points.

But the Ottawa side was not shut out completely.

To the delight of hometown fans, drum majors Gilles Longtin and Bob Nault were awarded the trophy as best drum majors in the classification.

The Sussex Drive school's drum line was also honored as the best in the Junior A division.

For Toronto Optimist fans, who with their banners, signs, and green paper flowers were almost as colorful as the corps, the trip to Ottawa wasn't a total loss.

The Optimist Corps was awarded the "M and M" Trophy.

De La Salle Oaklands won the trophy for best horn line and the Canadian Drum and Bugle Corps Association Trophy for receiving the highest score of the competitions in addition to the Junior A championship.

In the Senior A division, Guelph Royales swept the field.

Not only did they win their division by 20 points, the Royales copped all individual prizes as well, for a clean sweep.

The Laval Chatelaines came close to duplicating the feat in the Girls A finals.

Winners over the St. Therese Marquises for the division championship by two points, the Chatelaines

also won individual awards for best drum line, best horn line, and best M and M.

The Marquises won the trophy for best drum majors.

A 71.67 score brought the Junior B class trophy to the London Midlanders, who also were awarded three of four individual honors.

The only award to elude their grasp was the best drum major trophy which went to second-place Scarborough Firefighters.

Saturday afternoon competitions at R. D. Campbell Stadium were highlighted by championship performances in the Junior Novice Class by the Kingston Centennials and in the Junior Standstill class by the Carleton Place Revellers.

The Fantaisistes Laurentian of St. Jerome, Que. won the Trumpet final and Hamilton R.H.L.I. were tops in

the Senior B class.

Hamilton's Kinsmen Girls won the Girls B championship.

A total of 33 marching bands — 2,000 young musicians — from Ontario and Quebec vied for top honors in nine classifications.

Preparation for the September "Nationals" usually

begins in October of the previous year when a corps begins to learn its new music.

Repertoires are in good shape by Christmas and as soon as the snow leaves the ground the field show is prepared and the marching bands spend the next few months perfecting the rou-

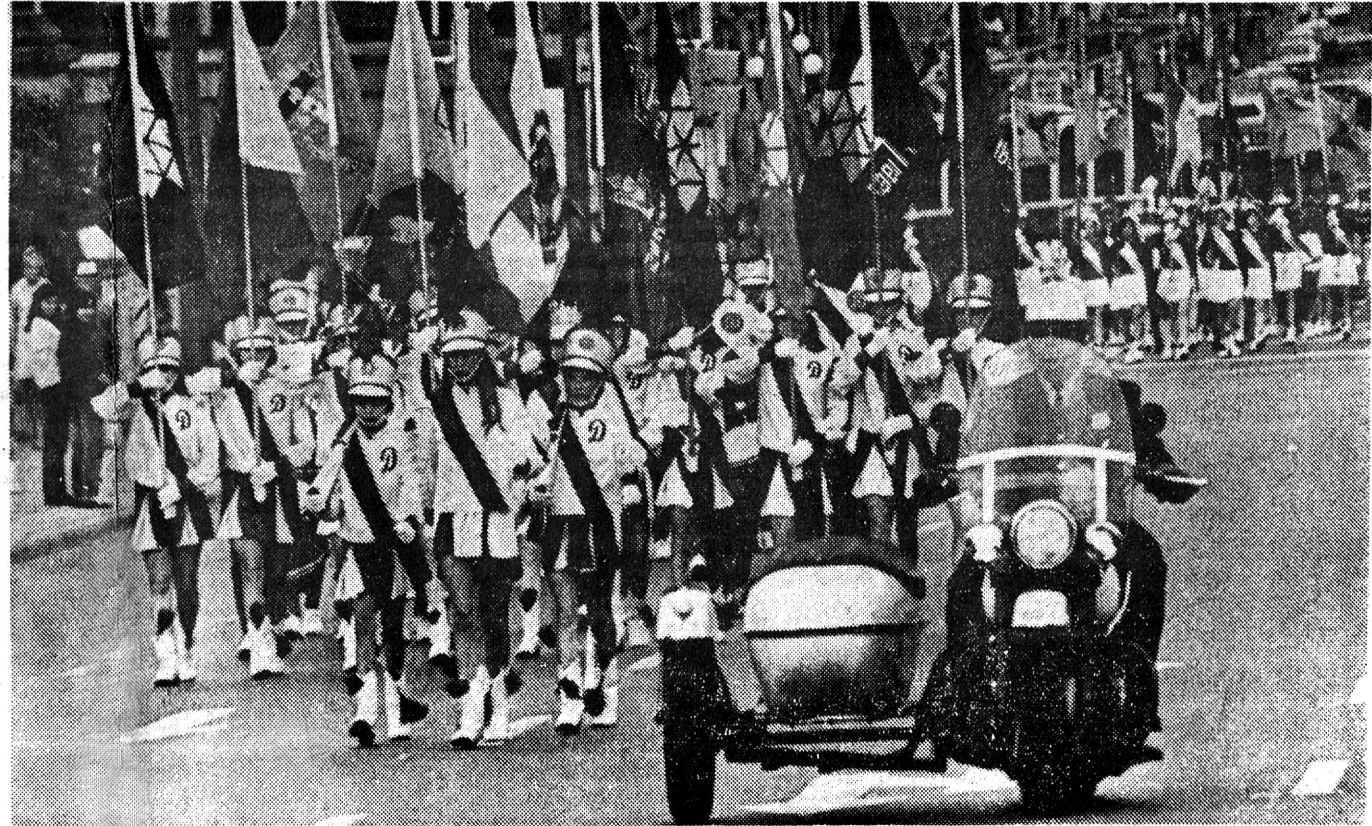
tine.

Between Saturday afternoon's eliminations and the evening finals, 20 participating corps marched to Parliament Hill and passed in review.

Shortly after midnight, the winners having been declared, the finalists tramped off the Lansdowne turf,

some exhilarated, some disappointed.

All participants are in a for a month of rest, then 11 months of preparation for next year's competition.



Parading up Rideau Street to Parliament Hill