



Current events In Italy

Same-sex couple reach Dancing with the Stars grand final

It's the first version of the show to feature a same-sex pair as contestants. Dance fans may still be dreaming of the day when a same-sex couple competes on the UK's Strictly Come Dancing or its US counterpart, Dancing with the Stars. However, the show's Italian equivalent, Ballando con le Stelle, has quietly been making history. The current season of the show has featured a same-sex couple. Despite facing some early criticism from the judges, the pair have won over TV audiences and have made it through to the show's grand final.

Giovanni Ciacci is a well-known fashion designer and stylist in the country. He is openly gay. He was paired by the show's producers with professional dancer Raimondo Todaro. The coupling was always going to provoke reaction in the traditional Catholic country. One of the show's judges, after the pair's first dance, controversially gave them zero points.

However, he said it wasn't because of any homophobia on his behalf - he just didn't think the two men displayed any chemistry whilst dancing together.

Coming out fighting

In answer to this, the two men pushed boundaries the following week with an Argentine tango. It's famed for being one of the world's most intimate and sensual dances. The routine received applause from both judges and the public - although it almost pushed Ciacci to breaking point.

He posted a message to his

Instagram on the day of the dance saying he was contemplating pulling out of the competition as he was finding it difficult to handle the pressure. Fortunately, due to public support, he decided not to drop out.

Next weekend, the two men will compete in the final. They will be up against two opposite-sex couples: Francisco Porcella and Anastasia Kuzmina, and Gessica Notaro and Stefano Oradei. GSN has contacted Giovanni Ciacci for comment.

Same-sex couples on Strictly and Dancing with the Stars

Last year, a well-known lesbian contestant, Susan Calman, on the BBC1's Strictly Come Dancing faced criticism for dancing with a male partner.

A BBC spokesperson said at the time: 'Strictly has chosen the traditional format of mixed-sex couples and at the moment we have no plans to introduce same-sex couples in the competition.'

Same-sex couples have also not yet competed on the US version of Dancing with the Stars. However, 'sexually fluid' model Nyle DiMarco did participate in a brief, same-sex routine in a January 2016 episode of the show. He went on to win the series with dance partner, Peta Murgatroyd.



Giovanni Ciacci and dance partner Raimondo Todaro (Photo: @giovanniciacci | Instagram)

'A great development in dancing'

Bradley Stauffer-Kruse, along with his partner, Soren, are same-sex dance couple the Sugar Dandies. They have featured on Britain's Got Talent and are current European same-sex Show Dance Champions.

'This is great development in dancing and we wish them both well in the final,' he told GSN. 'I think it adds a lot to the show. Broadcasters should be showing more diversity and it would be good to see other networks take note and include same-sex couples in their programmes. If it can happen in Italy, it can happen anywhere!'

The grand final of Ballando con le Stelle will air at 8.30pm on Saturday 19 May on Rai 1.

*Article by [GAYStarNews](#) with video and pictures

Community

We have created a [Facebook](#) group for North American dancers planning on attending and/or competing at the Gay Games 10 in Paris this summer.

Share your questions, ideas, preparation of routines and find any of your friends who is traveling to Paris.

Promotion of T-shirts for the group is the next project we are working on.

Please, join the group for latest info.

Announcement

North American Scholarships available now

The Board of Directors has approved a proposal by the Scholarship Committee to expand NASSPDA's scholarship program to include all its sanctioned competitions. Therefore, anyone planning to compete at a NASSPDA sanctioned event may now apply for financial aid as long as the allotted number of scholarships for that year hasn't already been awarded.

Currently, 4 scholarships are still available to be awarded this year, and the next eligible event is the New England Championships held in Providence, RI on September 28th & 29th, 2018.

The deadline to apply is June 30th, 2018. Application and guidelines can be found here: [2018 North American Scholarship Application Form](#)

Board of Directors Election

Election Committee

The election is closed as of Sunday, May 20, 2018. Out of the seven candidates, 6 received over 50% of all those ballots returned, which brings NASSPDA's Board of Directors again up to nine members, who are as follows:
 Eddie Alba, Simone Assboeck, Debbie Esparza, Lee Fox, Erik Jaeger, Horace Luong, Kalin Mitov, Benjamin Soencksen & Barbara Zoloth.
 Officers and Committee Chairs will be elected and/or confirmed during the Board's next meeting, in accordance to NASSPDA's By-Laws.
 Please check NASSPDA's website or next upcoming eNewsletter for those results.

Competition Calendar

Competition Committee

Competition Recap of April Follies held on April 28, 2018, in Oakland, CA:

For the 16th year in a row, the organizing committee of April Follies put on an exciting day of competitions, including some audience participation. The Follies culminated in the evening with North American and California States Championships A-level finals and a wonderful show that took us to the world of the circus. A packed house cheered on the competitors and performers, filling the room with positive energy. All tolled, the day saw over 100 heats in International and American styles of ballroom and latin dancing, Swing, Country/Western, Argentine Tango, Salsa, and Bachata. Additionally, five teams signed up compete in formation team dance. From beginners to Pro-Am to top level amateurs, all levels of dancers from around the continent had the opportunity to show their skills to the judges and audience. Once again, it was a fantastic, welcoming and inspiring day for same-sex Dancesport!

2018 Bronze, Silver & Gold Medal and Title Winners North American (A-, B- & C-level) & California State Champions (A-Level only):

Women's American Rhythm

C-Level

2. Renee De Palma & Wendy Thermos, California, USA

C-Level Student/Teacher

1. Linda Strine & Tina Mayer, California, USA

Women's American Smooth

C-Level

2. Renee De Palma & Wendy Thermos,
 California, USA

3. Janell Darroch & Kate Hurley, California, USA
 C-Level Student/Teacher

1. Linda Strine & Tina Mayer, California, USA

2. Debra Esparza & Julianne DiBacco Daniels,
 Arizona, USA

B-Level Student/Teacher

2. Kathy Brophy & Michelle Fox, California, USA



Women's International Latin

C-Level Student/Teacher

1. Linda Strine & Tina Mayer, California, USA

B-Level

1. Caryl Anne Hathaway & Evelyn Velez, California, USA

Women's International Standard

A-Level

2. Sunny Brockett-Williams & Melissa Saphir, California, USA
3. Caryl Anne Hathaway & Evelyn Velez, California, USA

C-Level

2. Renee De Palma & Wendy Thermos, California, USA

C-Level Student/Teacher

1. Linda Strine & Tina Mayer, California, USA
2. Debra Esparza & Julianne DiBacco Daniels, Arizona, USA

Women's Argentine Tango

A Level

1. Michelle Richards and Pamela Sreeve, California, USA
3. Ivetta Rivera & Julie Lui, California, USA

B-Level

1. Barbara Zoloth and Kim Wallace, California, USA

B-Level Student/Teacher

1. Linda Strine and Tina Mayer, California, USA
2. Tracy Payne and Alexis Massey, California, USA

Men's International Latin

A-Level

1. Truong Le & Jose Comoda, California, USA
2. Duke Khuu & Chris Phan, California, USA

Men's International Standard

A-Level

1. Vitali Tozik & Sergh Aliev, Florida, USA
2. Garret Gerritsen & Rafael Dominguez, California, USA
3. Andreas Woytowitz & Erik Jaeger, Illinois, USA



Open American Rhythm

C-Level

1. Renee De Palma & Wendy Thermos, California, USA

Open American Smooth

C-Level

1. Renee De Palma & Wendy Thermos, California, USA
- C-Level Student/Teacher
1. Debra Esparza & Julianne DiBacco Daniels, Arizona, USA



Open International Latin

C-Level

1. Ardel Thomas & Lisa Haefele, California, USA

Open International Standard

A-Level

1. Sunny Brockett-Williams & Melissa Saphir, California, USA
2. Andreas Woytowitz & Erik Jaeger, Illinois, USA

C-Level

1. Renee De Palma & Wendy Thermos, California, USA
- C-Level Student/Teacher

1. Debra Esparza & Julianne DiBacco Daniels, Arizona, USA

Open Argentine Tango

A Level

1. Michelle Richards & Pamela Sreeve, California, USA
2. Christy Cloud & Niria Arellano, California, USA

Showdance

2. Jamie Cooper and Annette Wegesand, California, USA

Student/Teacher

1. Kathy Brophy & Michelle Fox, California, USA

Formation Team (Couple Routine)

1. Vima Vice Squad, California, USA
2. Trip The Light Fantastic, California, USA
3. Q It Up, California, USA

California State Champions

(only):

Women's
International
Standard
A-Level

1. Brittany Whitehill & Ming Cheng, California, USA



Women's Argentine Tango

A-Level

2. Nervanna Vargas & Laura Amaral, California, USA

Showdance

1. Erik Green & Ronald Frost, California, USA

Pictures from April Follies are gratefully donated by the Photographer Shell Jiang

New England Open

Hosting NASSPDA's 2018 New England Championships

Organized by Boston Open Dancesport

September 28 & 29th, 2018

Rhode Island Convention Center

Providence, RI

<http://www.bostonopendancesport.com/events.html>

Friday 09/28:
American Smooth Single dances
International Ballroom Single dances

Smooth and Ballroom Scholarships
Smooth and Ballroom Championships
NASSPDA Same-Sex Championship
Show Dances
Formation Teams



Saturday 09/29:
Kids, Youth and Under 21 - Single Dances (all Styles)
American Rhythm single dances
International Latin Single dances

Rhythm and Latin Scholarships
Rhythm and Latin Championships
NASSPDA Same-Sex Championship

Gala Dinner, Show and Social Dancing

*Workshops throughout the weekend
*NASSPDA scholarship for same-sex couples



Upcoming World competition:



Dancesport

Gay Games X

Hosting the World Same-Sex Championships
DanceSport events August 6-10th, Paris
<https://www.paris2018.com/sports/dancesport/>

Did you know that there are already more than 200 participants registered for the DanceSport competition at the Gay Games 10 in Paris? Have you signed up and made your travel plans?

We are looking forward having you represent North America in France this summer, so please sign up and participate and we'll cheer you on!

The competition will take place August 6-10. A gala will be held on August 10, and a Competitive Edge workshop for Latin and Standard dances on the morning of August 11- both are included in your registration fee. There will be dancing at all levels and different age groups for International Standard, Latin, Argentine Tango, and Showdance. Also, there will be same-sex, mixed couple, handidance and team dancing, something for everyone. Connect with other interested participants from North America by joining our Facebook group...

Schedule:

Monday, August 6th 2018 will be dedicated to training and rehearsal.
Competition will be run from Tuesday the 7th till Friday the 10th of August 2018.
For each day of competition, there will be two sessions:

Morning (9 am - 2 pm)

Senior Men, Women and Mixed couples Latin and Standard dance competition
(general look, quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals D, C, B and A)
Handi dance; Formation Team; Showdance (on Friday)

Break (2 pm - 3 pm)

Afternoon (3 pm - 8 pm)

Open Men, Women and Mixed couples Latin and Standard dance competitions
(general look, quarter-finals, semi-finals and finals D, C, B and A)
Argentine Tango (on Wednesday)

On Wednesday, August 8th, 2018 the Argentine tango competition will be immediately followed by a Milonga, open to both competitors and spectators.

Friday, August 10th, 2018 is reserved for the Gala Ball (at 7 pm), during which the winners of the category "Top level" (A) of the Standard Dance, Latin Dance and 10 Dance Showdance, and Argentine tango will present their most beautiful performances.

Membership Information

Membership Committee

Join NASSPDA TODAY! Payments will now be taken by credit card instead of through PayPal. The new system has special encryption to keep your data safer than before. The new site URL is the same as before: nasspda.org.



If you have problems, or want to help us improve the website-parts are still under construction-please write to Kathy Wildman, our website administrator, at wildmankathy@gmail.com or to info@nasspda.org

Outreach and Media

Promotions Committee

ACTIVITY GRANT FUNDING PROGRAM

NASSPDA would like to encourage its members and our community at large to engage in various fun activities that promote same-sex dancing. We recognize that many of our members may have a creative idea and NASSPDA would like to contribute in a small financial way.

Up to 4 grants of \$250 each will be awarded per calendar year on a first-come first-served basis to applicants who can demonstrate that the proposed activity will advance NASSPDA's mission of promoting and expanding social and competitive same-sex partner dancing.

The proposed event should also be in alignment with NASSPDA's following goals:

- * Support functions and venues for social same-sex partner dancing.
- * Provide a resource for same-sex partner dancers.
- * Aim to raise the level of same-sex partner dancing
- * Encourage the inclusion of dancers from diverse backgrounds with regard to race, ethnicity, gender, age, [dis]ability, gender identity and/or expression.

Some ideas for events and organizers to receive grant support:

- Same-sex dance classes
- A social dance mixer with actively inviting and encouraging same-sex dancing or "alternative lead and follow"
- An excursion to a local competition, introducing dancers to the concept
- A welcome party before one of NASSPDA's sanctioned competition
- Setting up a booth at a local street fair promoting same-sex dancing
- A neighborhood or community event promoting partner dancing and the inclusion of same-sex dancing
- Involving studios to promote same-sex dancing
- An event in conjunction with a city's Pride activities



These are just a few suggestions. To apply for financial support from NASSPDA's \$250 Grant Program, please visit our website at NASSPDA.org, click on the 'Scholarships and Grants' bar and then 'Grants' to read more for more information. You can also email us at promotions@nasspda.org with any questions.



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