

FRIDAY, MARCH 5, 2021

Dance & Professional Sports Dance Teams

Andrew Vaca, California State University, Long Beach with additional presenters (see bios)

Registration Cap: 280

Workshop Overview:

Sports entertainment teams employ thousands of dancer/performers across the U.S. each year for sports including basketball, football, soccer, lacrosse, baseball, and even ice hockey. Dance And Professional Sports Dance Teams will bring together dancers from across the nation (and world, perhaps) to explore and build skills necessary for employment on professional sports dance teams (largely know as “Pro Dance Teams”), and to understand the purposes, goals, realities, and history of this subset of the dance field. Participants in this workshop can expect to explore personal strategies for preparing for and succeeding at Pro Dance Team auditions, engage in discussions with current directors and choreographers from across the US about policies and philosophies that bind sports entertainment teams to their larger organizations, engage in discussions with current and former Pro Dance Team employees, and learn dance routines representative of both field and court dance teams.

Workshop Content:

Employment on Pro Dance Teams requires skills that go far beyond being a technical and engaging dancer. **Session 1** will help dancers better understand the history, purposes, realities, and goals of Pro Dance Teams.

Movement sessions, **Sessions 2, 3, 5** and the **Optional add-on** will concentrate on dance and auditioning skills specifically intended to aid dancers during Pro Dance Team auditions and material choreographed specifically for both court and field sports entertainment. Several different routine options will be offered during Session 3 and the *Optional add-on* (number offered will depend upon number of dancers registered). During Session 5, dancers will be split up into multiple Audition Workshops, each with an instructor, a demonstrator who is a current NBA or NFL dance team member, and other current or former Pro Dance Team members who will be present to assist in giving dancers individual feedback.

Session 4, the Roundtable Discussion, will involve current and/or former dance team Directors, who represent both NFL and NBA franchises, helping dancers better understand the individuality of each team/organization and the realities of employment on a Pro Dance Team. Additionally, information will be shared regarding long and short-term preparation for Pro Dance Team auditions.

Schedule:

TIME—all times are in Eastern Time	SESSION
12:00 pm –12:30 pm	Session 1 Welcome, overview of Pro Sports Dance Team industry & history
12:30 pm –12:45 pm	Break
12:45 pm –1:15 pm	Session 2 Warm-up for movement classes
1:15 pm – 1:30 pm	Break
1:30 pm –2:45 pm	Session 3 Pro Dance Team Routine
2:45 pm – 3:00 pm	Break (Grab some food!)
3:00 pm –4:30 pm	Session 4 Roundtable Discussion with Dance Team Directors
4:30 pm – 4:45 pm	Break
4:45 pm-6:00 pm	Session 5 Audition Workshops (multiple classes)
6:30 pm-8:00 pm	Optional Pro Dance Team Routine #2* with Andy Vaca

***Optional Pro Dance Team Routine #2 requires a separate registration and additional \$5.00 fee. Although *Dance & Professional Sports Dance Teams* is a complete six-hour, five-session event, it also has an Optional Pro Dance Team Routine class that follows the workshop. This gives dancers the opportunity to engage in one additional routine in a different movement style since all Pro Dance Teams dance a wide variety of material. This also allows individuals who could not commit to the six-hour Workshop the opportunity to have a mini-experience in Pro Dance Team movement material.**

Space/ equipment requirements for participants:

Participants will need to have an active Zoom account and space necessary for dance combination movement. As these sessions will not be recorded, dancers should have a note-taking method at the ready throughout the workshop to capture thoughts, ideas, and suggestions.

Presenter Bios:

Andrew (Andy) Vaca is a Professor at California State University, Long Beach (known to sports fans as Long Beach State) where he has taught dance for 22 years. His work with pro dance teams spans 35 years and includes work for both NBA and NFL dance teams including the Boston Celtics Dancers, the Portland BlazerDancers, the Pro Bowl Cheerleaders, the Sacramento Kings Dancers, the San Diego Charger Girls, the San Francisco 49ers Gold Rush, the Los Angeles Laker Girls, and the L.A. Clippers Spirit. He is currently on faculty with Pro Action Dance, the nation's top source for professional sports dance team choreography and collegiate dance team entertainment. Andy is also proud to be the President of the American College Dance Association.

Diane Bonds was a member of the world-famous Los Angeles Laker Girls during the championship eras of Kareem Abdul-Jabbar and Magic Johnson. She went on to be the choreographer of the team while teaching at the Orange County High School of the Arts and serving as the Songleading Program Director for USA Camps. Diane is currently a choreographer and co-director of the Pro Bowl Cheerleaders, directs the dance program at Arroyo Valley High School, and is on the dance faculty at Chaffey College. Diane holds BA and MA degrees in Dance from CSU Long Beach.

Michelle Burch is in her 14th season as the Performance Teams Manager for the Portland Trail Blazers after Coaching the Blazers Jam Squad for two seasons and performing as a BlazerDancer for six. She has taken performance groups to perform all over China, Korea, Taiwan, Manilla, and Estonia as part of the NBA's Grassroots travel program in addition to working production for the 2018 NBA All-Star Game. Michelle has performed as part of the Southern University "Dancing Dolls" and SU's world renowned Human Jukebox Marching Band, and was the Assistant Director and Principal Dancer with the NW Afrikan American Ballet, a company she performed with in Johannesburg, South Africa and Edinburgh, Scotland for The Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Alicia Burghardt graduated from Dean College with a Bachelor of Arts in Dance with a concentration in performance and choreography. Alicia completed two seasons as a Boston Celtics Dancer, performing at TD Garden and choreographing for playoffs. She is a choreographer for Pro Action Dance and had the privilege to represent the Celtics at the Pro Action Dance intensive in Las Vegas. She is currently based out of Los Angeles where she is teaching and performing.

Jessie Christensen directed the NBA's Los Angeles Clippers Spirit Dance Team for 10 years. Simultaneously, she was the Associate Director of the San Diego Charger Girls and a five-year director of the NFL Pro Bowl Cheerleaders. Jessie had the pleasure of working for e2k Events and Entertainment and the NFL league office, producing game entertainment for national and international games, working with such musical artists as Mariah Carey, Mary J. Blige and the Backstreet Boys, to name a few. Jessie is a graduate of UCLA, where she was a member of their nationally ranked dance team.

Keeley Fimbres is a seasoned director of sports entertainment and the Director of the Los Angeles/St Louis/Los Angeles Rams Cheerleaders for the past 30 years, Keely was the first NFL director to include

men on a dance team, and the first to ever perform at the Super Bowl. Keely is also a three-time national championship dancer, including two championships with her alma mater, CSU Long Beach.

Jessica Fought is a former Co-Captain of the Boston Celtics Dancers. Jessica specializes in the dance styles of hip-hop, jazz, and pom. She has been training since the age of three, and has 8 years of experience dancing professionally in the NBA. Currently, she is a dance instructor and choreographer for all-star dancers ages 8-18.

Kiki Galpin is a Southern California native and has been dancing since the age of 3. Along with training at some of the most prestigious studios in California, she spent 3 years on the Long Beach State dance team. Most recently, Kiki has been dancing professionally on the renowned Boston Celtics Dancers for the last 3 seasons.

Amanda Herman is a Los Angeles native who attended USC and performed with the USC Trojan Dance Force. After college she moved to Boston, where she was a 4-year member and 2-year co-captain of the Boston Celtics Dancers. She now teaches yoga and fitness classes around LA and works as a video editor for NFL Media.

Kristin (Egusa) Hollowaty is the former director of the Tokyo Girls and San Diego Charger Girls, a producer for the NFL Pro Bowl Cheerleaders, and has choreographed and produced pregame and halftime performances for the NBA, NFL, and PAC-12. Kristin has choreographed for multiple NBA and NFL dance teams. Kristin is also the former captain of the Los Angeles Clippers Spirit dance team and a proud alum of CSU Long Beach.

Stephanie Judah is currently the Director of the Kansas City Chiefs Cheerleaders, Mascot, & Drumline and has been for the past 12 seasons. She was a Chiefs Cheerleader for 7 seasons and represented the Chiefs as a Pro Bowl Cheerleader. Stephanie grew up in the competitive dance studio world where she trained in all forms of dance. That led her to Chicago where she became an apprentice and ultimately a member of Gus Giordano Jazz Dance Chicago under Gus Giordano. Stephanie later joined the West Coast Tour of *West Side Story*. Stephanie eventually moved back to Kansas City to obtain her BA in Business from the University of Missouri – Kansas City. Stephanie has a strong passion for dance and people and her current job is the perfect blend of both. Stephanie is also a proud wife, and mom of the best 11 year-old son.

Marina Ortega is the co-founder of Pro Action Dance and the Director of the Boston Celtics Dancers, known as one of the NBA's top dance teams. Prior to joining the Celtics entertainment team in 2007, Marina was the Dance Team Director for the Frankfurt Galaxy (NFL Europe). As part of Pro Action Dance, her choreography is loved by college and professional dance teams around the country and world. Marina coached the dance team at Northern Arizona University and is a former dance instructor with USA Camps.

Mina Ortega is the co-founder and Artistic Director of Pro Action Dance along with her sister Marina. Mina has been the Director of the USC Trojan Dance Force for over 20 years where her innovative choreography entertains PAC-12 crowds throughout basketball season. In addition to working with the world-famous Los Angeles Laker Girls and the NFL Pro Bowl Cheerleaders, Mina's choreography is a favorite amongst professional and college dance teams across America. Mina is the former Dance Program Coordinator for US Spiritleaders, taught dance camps for 15 years for USA Camps, and has taught jazz and hip hop courses at CSU Long Beach.

John Peters is easily recognized as one of the nation's most innovative and award-winning dance team choreographers. John is the choreographer for the Los Angeles Rams Cheerleaders and has choreographed for practically every Pro Dance Team in America, including being the official dance team choreographer for the XFL 2001 and the Pro Bowl Cheerleaders from 1993-2000. John has choreographed pre-game and halftime shows around the nation and world including NFL America Bowls in London, Tokyo, and Barcelona, halftime features for the NFL Pro Bowl, and the 2017 Hong Kong Chinese New Year Parade celebration.
