

Salem, Ore., Mon., Aug. 30, 1976, 7A ★

# Argonauts tour just moral victory

By STEVE BAGWELL

Staff Writer, The Statesman

OREGON CITY — The 99-member, Salem-based Argonauts Drum and Bugle Corps had to settle for a moral victory in the 1976 Northwest Drum Corps Championship on Sunday in Oregon City.

The corps could have won — it bested the field by 10 points on the judges' scorecards — but it gave up the chance by using three ineligible performers who'd been with it all season.

The members' decision reflected their new-found pride in their outfit.

UP UNTIL LAST year, when the corps changed its name from the Flamingos to the Argonauts, it never had won a major drum and bugle corps championship. Its only claim to fame was its first place in the 1974 Lions Club International parade in San Francisco.

But last year the corps found itself, winning the Northwest Drum Corps and Drum Corps West championships as well as the prestigious national drum and bugle corps championship in Los Angeles.

This year the corps didn't do as well. Slipping to 10th in the nationals in New York City and winding up 23rd in the internationals in Philadelphia.

HOWEVER, IT WON several contests in the Midwest and East while on tour and repeated as Drum Corps West champ Saturday in Seattle.

With that kind of success under their belts, members felt their cohesiveness as a group before anything else, including a championship they had won the year before.

They knew they were the best Sunday and, after their performance, everyone in the stands knew it too — even if they didn't leave with a piece of paper saying so.

Of course, success was a long time coming. The corps has been in existence since 1962 when it grew out of the 26-member, all-male Sons of the American Legion.

But according to its boosters, the Argonauts' success wasn't undeserved. They said its boy and girl members, whether bearers of flags, rifles, drums or bugles, have been practicing four hours each weekday and up to 12 hours each weekend day the last two seasons.

JOYCE MATTHYS, a booster by

virtue of having four children in the corps, admitted it's been a struggle both for youthful corps members and their parents and instructors.

She said the tour that ended Sunday, the first that had taken the Argonauts away from the West Coast, was especially tough.

She said it was tough on the kids, who range in age from 12 to 20, because they had to compete before large crowds in faraway places like New York City after having spent days riding across the country on hot, crowded buses.

It was hard on the adults because they had to raise the necessary money beforehand — it took \$80,000 to support the Argonauts this season — and because they had to cook meals, chaperone their charges and prepare for contests while riding the same buses, she said.

HOWEVER, MRS. MATTHYS said the tour drew everyone closer together. And she said that because precision marching and playing requires such close coordination, it helped the Argonauts polish their routine.

As evidence, she cited the corps' scores. She said it was scoring in the 50's and 60's shortly after it set out, but scored 74 in Philadelphia, 77 in Seattle and 78 in Oregon City.

A score of 100 is theoretically possible.



Statesman photo by Ron Cooper

**Water break** (OREGON CITY) Cheryl Windsor, assistant drum instructor for the Salem-based Argonauts Drum and Bugle Corps, sprayed water into the mouth of corps members before they took the

field at the Northwest Drum Corps Championship on Sunday in Oregon City. Near 90-degree temperature caused a number of performers to faint, but all of the Argonauts came through fine.

1976 NWDCA Championships