



The “Dancing With The Stars” finalists, including retired sgt. Noah Galloway and his partner, Sharna Burgess, at left, await the first results of the finale. Galloway and Burgess placed third. (Photo courtesy of ABC’s “Dancing With The Stars.”)

Injured vet places 3rd in ‘Dancing’; expect to see Galloway soon

By Clifford Kyle Jones — NCO Journal

Medically retired Army Sgt. Noah Galloway made an incredible run on ABC’s “Dancing With The Stars,” but he didn’t carry away the show’s signature mirrorball trophy. The double amputee and fitness guru placed third in Tuesday’s final show of the program’s 10th anniversary season.

Galloway said in a taped message aired Monday night that he only expected to make it until about Week 3. But here on Week 10, many were calling the show too close to call.

“I made it to third place!” Galloway said. “And I’m so happy about that, and it’s because of all the love and support from everyone here.”

Galloway often struggled with the “Dancing With The Stars” judges, but fans, particularly Soldiers and veterans groups, helped propel him on his impressive run.

“Congratulations & thank you, @Noah_Galloway! You inspired us all, proving injuries & illnesses don’t define #veterans,” the 1.2 million strong Disabled American Veterans charitable nonprofit organization tweeted after the announcement that Galloway had placed third.

Another injured veteran and “Dancing With The Stars” alum, J.R. Martinez, tweeted to Galloway, “You

ARE a champion! You don’t need a mirror ball trophy! You’ve forced me and so many others to stop making excuses! Thank you!”

The finale is broken into four parts, two judged dances Monday, one judged dance Tuesday and fan votes between Monday’s and Tuesday’s show.

After the judges scored the final dances, Galloway and his partner, Sharna Burgess, trailed their “Star” rivals, Riker Lynch and Rumer Willis, who eventually won the competition.

Although the judges didn’t score Galloway as highly as his competitors, they called him an “inspiration” and “the heart of the program” after his last dance.

“Every time you’ve come into the ballroom, you’ve done more than dance, you’ve changed people’s lives,” judge Carrie Ann Inaba said after Galloway and Burgess’ final dance.

During their first dance Monday night — a repeat performance from earlier in the season of the duo’s Week 3 Argentine tango — Galloway stumbled a bit in the latter portions of the dance. They were given 32 out of 40 possible points from the judges. Their competitors each received perfect scores.

Galloway, however, staged a comeback in the penultimate dance Monday, the freestyle. Burgess choreographed a sequence inspired by the veteran's injuries and Galloway's long recovery. They danced to a mashup of David Guetta and Sia's "Titanium" and Coldplay's "Fix You" and received a perfect 40 for their performance.

"Your journey has been the hardest and the longest, and as we nearly reach the journey's end, I have to say, that was amazing," judge Len Goodman said.

Inaba said, "It's beyond words what you did."

Of course, Galloway's journey is far from over. He walks away from "Dancing With The Stars" with new levels of fame, a new fiancée, a new motorcycle. And, as he told the NCO Journal in a telephone interview just before the finals, big plans.

"Well, you know, I've got a wedding I've got to plan," he said and laughed. He proposed to his girlfriend, Army Reserve Spc. Jamie Boyd, during last week's semifinals.

But after that, he said, another television project looms in his future.

"I want to have a show of me going and doing these extreme things all over the world," he said. Kayaking. Mountain climbing. Riding a bull. Running with the bulls. Skydiving.

"There's all these different challenges to do all over the world, it would be cool to do that," he said. "To go and show different parts of the world and these extreme things and be doing it missing an arm and a leg and showing what's possible."

With his performances at "Dancing With The Stars," Galloway has certainly done that. ■



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