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March 2002



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FAP



Rat Pack City Revue

Lou let the dogs out

LAS VEGAS—On the weekend of November 30–December 1, the weekend before the remade Rat Pack flick "Ocean's 11" blew open the vaults at the intersection of Las Vegas Boulevard and Flamingo Road, producer **Lou Zwick** pulled off a different kind of caper at that very locale: He moved his Fitness America National Championship from South-



Top of the pageant beanpole (from left): Kan-Ardon, Kouril, Hunt, Ethier and Cravens.

1) **Stacey Cravens**. Many FAP followers caught Cravens' Dalmatian dance last June at the Fitness Universe, where she finished 13th, obviously with a speeding bullet. It all just came together for Stacey, according to observers. Her physique was ready as it hadn't been at the earlier show—and she glowed with that extra ounce of radiance that had the judges craven all their love for the 5'5" cheerleading and gymnastics instructor. At the University of Tennessee she was a collegiate All-American cheerleader, but in Vegas, it was husband Chris Cravens and Stacey's longtime gymnastics coach Jeff Hale who were leading the cheers.

ern California to Vegas, with a stay at the Flamingo, one of the places the original Ocean's 11 knocked off. The biggest heist of the pageant, however, was pulled off by Tennessee's **Stacey Cravens**, who howled like a dog till they gave her the title. Two full points separated Stacey from former FAP winner **Ruscha Kouril**, with Canada's **Allison Ethier** moving from top 10 in 2000 to top three, **Natalee Kan-Ardon** 4/10 of a point behind her in fourth and newcomer **Natalie Hunt** in fifth.

The lithesome lineup of 96 starry-eyed lookers and leapers in super-high heels who stepped onstage at the Cashman Center Theater was short on familiar faces. Instead, the chorus included a lot of promising newbies, athletes who will be the core of talent coming up the pageant beanpole in the next couple of years.

This contest includes an interview round, worth 20 percent of the total score. Since the breakdowns for the final scores at the FAP were unavailable this year, one can only speculate as to why the panel judged the way it did.

MORE FAP

2) **Ruscha Kouril**. Bio data on Kouril says, "She loves performing onstage and strives for perfection." This photo says it even better. The one-time German national gymnastics champion was as limber as ever, tumbling elegantly and balancing on her hands with her legs V-ed in the air, opening and closing to the strum of a Spanish guitar. It was the 5'3" fitness and aerobics instructor from Boston and Germany's best routine ever—and her best finish since winning this contest in '99. Interesting note: With the exception of Kouril, most of the 20 routines that made it to the finals were dance-oriented.



FLAP

3) **Allison Ethier**. The 5'4", 115-pound high school math teacher looked fabulous, bouncing around the stage in a Nicole-Kidman-in-"Moulin-Rouge" bustier. Her star turn included twirling on her hands (pun intended) and some hard work paying off in her strength moves. Plus, Allison gets extra points for making her own costumes.



'01 Fitness America National Championship

Las Vegas, December 1

- 1) Stacey Cravenis
- 2) Ruscha Kouril
- 3) Allison Ethier
- 4) Natalee Kan-Ardon
- 5) Natalie Hunt
- 6) Tiffany Ripple
- 7) Linda Okwor
- 8) Kim Dolan
- 8) Valerie Brown Stephens (tie)
- 10) Madison Chase
- 11) Dawn Butterfield
- 11) Tina Rigdon (tie)
- 13) Sylvia Tremblay
- 14) Michelle Freeman
- 14) Cara Koknes
- 16) Andi Martin
- 17) Lorri Insiengmay
- 18) Jennifer Searles
- 19) Danielle Bird
- 20) Emily Nevin

NATIONALS NOTE

Siblings' Rivalry

Wasn't anyone seeing double?

Folks have been so busy talking about the swell stylings of Las Vegas siblings **Lea** and **Sara Waide** in the fitness routines during the 2001 NPC season that they failed to notice another sensational sister act tiptoeing onstage at the Nationals. Not that Alabama's **Natalie Montgomery-Carroll**



and **Adria Montgomery-Klein** are the quiet types. The Fitness Twins, as they bill themselves, have made quite a bit of noise on the Ms. Fitness circuit, where they had a lock on the USA and World titles for the past two years. Natalie was the '01 M.F. USA, Adria was the M.F. World in '01 and '02 as well as the '02 USA winner. After cleaning up for the second time at the IFSB's annual wild weekend in Vegas last September, they made a quick stop in Denver in November, at the NPC **Carol Semple** Fitness Classic, where they lassoed the top two spots. A week or so later they turned up at the Nationals—sans hyphens—in time for Natalie to pick up a pro card as the Tall class runner-up.

Will the Belles of Birmingham achieve total pro-dom before the Waides? Anyone placing bets should know that Carroll and Klein shot it out earlier in the year with another sister act, **Kirsten Elliott-Warner** and **Karen Elliott**, and were left standing at the end of the weekend. Who'll be left in the amateurs after the 2002 season? It's something to keep an eye on.

Rounding Out the Top Five



4) **Natalee Kan-Ardon**. The shoulda-finished-higher candidate of the bunch, Natalee has been paying dues—and getting better and better—for several years. Physiquewise, the 5'3" babe from Brooklyn had the best, most complete package in the winner's circle. Routinewise, her khaki-clad hero had a nice balance of dance, strength, tumbling skills and flexibility. Anyone watching Natalee's mean martial-arts moves—or those flips from an all-fours position on the floor—knows this survivor will indeed be back.

5) **Natalie Hunt**. The 5'5", 114-pound student and personal trainer from Houston has potential with a capital P: She was an elite gymnast, she's very pretty, and she has the makings of a killer physique. Her beautifully performed routine was unusual: She started on a box, posed like a Chinese statue, before moving into some impressive strength feats and tumbling turns.

