

“SYTYCD: The Next Generation” Season 13 Recap: The Eliminations Begin

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We knew it was coming.

We knew right from episode one when we started getting attached to these young dancers that soon we’d have to start saying goodbye to them one at a time. And now—after watching them all show their best moves for the first time on live television [last week](#)—that time has come.

But first, let’s talk about the good stuff, because there was loads of good stuff on last night’s episode.



Kida and Tate’s hip-hop routine. (BRB, running out to buy overalls, stat.) (Photo via FOX)

The dancers got out of their comfort zones this week by pairing up with their fellow contestants and dancing styles other than their own. Each dancer performed four routines. Again, *four* routines per contestants. Make sure you tell your non-dance friends watching that *that is a lot to learn in one week*. Each dancer performed two duets with a new partner (a fellow contestant, not an All-Star this time), one short routine with his or her All-Star partner, and an opening number. This is no joke, people. That’s a lot of choreography to master. And master it all, they did. Here are our favorite moments from last night’s show.



Emma and J.T. performing a Nappytabs hip-hop routine. And the award for Biggest Smiles goes to...
(Photo via FOX)

1. The opening Bollywood routine

In honor of busting out of the comfort zones, why not kick off the show by getting *everyone* out of their comfort zones? No dancer on the show right now—neither a contestant nor an All-Star—lists Bollywood as his or her speciality, so it was fun seeing all 20 dancers come together to perform this unique style. The routine was high-energy and tons of fun, and the only way we could tell the contestants from the All-Stars was because they wore different outfits. (That part when J.T. got to dance up front and shine in the spotlight for a second? He was *living* for that moment.) Nakul Dev Mahajan, you never disappoint. Way to kick off the show.



Bollywood mania! (Photo via FOX)

2. Having tWitch on the judging panel

While Jason Derulo was...somewhere...tWitch stepped in to fill his spot on the panel! His feedback was pretty tame, but he could've been silent up there and we would've been fine with it. (Though he did have a few gems, like telling Shaden, "You're cooler than a polar bear's toenails.") tWitch, your smile gives us life.

3. The contestants getting to dance with each other!

Sure, the contestant-and-All-Star duos last week were nice. But this week, with the contestants dancing with each other, we were reminded of the “So You Think You Can Dance” format we know and love. Each pair learned and performed two routines in two different styles. Tahani and Jake were so sweet together, Tate and Kida proved they’re forces to be reckoned with (donning overalls to boot), and J.T. and Emma were all smiles and totally adorable. All-Stars, we love you, but these are the pairings we love.

4. Jake and Tahani’s contemporary duet

As tWitch said, when these two were onstage performing this piece together, they were all, “I got you.” Their routine, choreographed by Bonnie Story, was about bullying, and it hit home for Jake, who shared that he has been bullied for being a dancer. It’s hard to learn this much choreography each week and maintain a strong performance quality, but Jake and Tahani nailed it this week. Not only did they dance full-out and beautifully, but they also connected with each other onstage and supported each other throughout the piece. Both dancers were crying by the end of the performance—and so were we. No surprise there.



ENCORE, PLZ. (Photo via FOX)

5. Maddie Ziegler coming into her own on the judging panel

Last week, Maddie’s feedback was mostly complimentary and she didn’t say a whole lot. This week, though, Maddie spoke up a lot more, and we loved it. We especially loved seeing her get on the dancers’ levels and relating to them. (Like when she told J.T. and Emma she got where they were coming from in their hip-hop piece because she isn’t a hip-hop dancer either, so she appreciated their efforts.) Having Maddie pop in during the rehearsals felt more cohesive this week, too. She’s able to see how hard the dancers work and what challenges they overcome, and it’s nice seeing her getting to know them and being invested in their performances. Keep it up, Maddie!

Speaking of Maddie, did anyone else expect her to bust out a cameo during the All-Star group routine? You simply can’t have a Sia song without a Maddie Z. appearance!



Ladies and gentlemen, your All-Stars! (Photo via FOX)

Other highlights from last night included Tate and Kida's John Deere-themed hip-hop routine ("You're two of the best dancers we've got on this show," Nigel told them afterward), J.T. and Emma's cute *West Side Story* Broadway routine, Jordan's smile, Tabitha and Napoleon D'umo sucking on lollipops in the audience (adopt us?), Sheaden's awesome stage presence and the All-Stars waiting in the wings with hugs for their dancers after each performance. (Of course this was totally staged, but it was still adorable and heart-warming and we wouldn't mind running offstage and directly into Robert's arms. Just saying.) What we could've done without? Those super awkward *Ice Age* promos and jokes, and the many even-more-awkward moments on the judging panel (like Nigel asking Paula if she was dating anyone and then telling her about a farmer's-only dating site...no). Ultimately—and tearfully—Daniela and Sheaden were the bottom two dancers, and the judges chose to keep Sheaden around. Daniela, we will miss you.



Bye, Daniela. Love you. (Photo via FOX)

Now we're off to sew our broken hearts back together, because this part of the show is the *worst*.