YOUTH AMERICA GRAND PRIX BRINGS HIGH STAKES, HIGH PRESSURE BALLET TO SAN MATEO

By Wayne Freedman

SAN MATEO, Calif. (KGO) --
Young ballerinas came together under one roof Thursday for what's being called the Olympics of ballet. For 12-year-old dancer, Solana Delizo, her 10-year dream is on the line. (Wayne Freedman)

Their dancing dreams are on the line.

Things have become very serious in San Mateo--life or death serious for someone who aspires to dance professionally.

When asked if she was nervous, Delizo said, "Sort of, yeah."
Her mother says she started working on her routine in September.

For dancers, the Youth America Grand Prix is the equivalent of an NFL draft, but more graceful.
The best ballet students in this region get two minutes on stage to prove they belong in New York City competing against others from around the world. Charles Darwin eat your heart out.

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This? A modern Degas as kids warm up before performing. @yagp
#abc7now
More like graceful chaos?
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"It's the creme de la creme de la creme," said judge Karine Plantadit.

These kids have come from all of California, Nevada and even Utah. There's a lot at stake.

Larissa Saveliev, formerly of the Bolshoi Ballet, founded this competition which awards scholarships from 30 ballet companies which train and turn out to be the stars of our future.

Around 7 p.m. Delizo took the stage for her contemporary number with her 10-year dream on the line. She looked good to us, but the judges won't announce who moves on until Sunday.
When asked if she'd get homesick going to school away from home Delizo replied, "Yeah, but it's a big opportunity so I would definitely do it."

Wayne Freedman last Thursday
If you have a child who knows the difference between fifth position and a pas de de deux, you may have already been to the San Metao Performing Arts Center, tonight. If not, maybe Friday, Saturday or Sunday.
They call the Youth America Grand Prix 'The Olympics' for aspiring dancers. The competition takes place in nine countries and twenty-nine cities. After years, even decades of training, each dancer gets two minutes on stage to show that he or she has enough talent to com... See More