

# Team Dallas

## JCC Maccabi Games 2018

*Taking their talents to the west coast*



# Team Dallas shows UP - in a BIG way!

By Scott Braswell (Assistant Executive Director)

One of the things that I love about my role as Assistant Executive Director is traveling to the JCC Maccabi Games and Artsfest each year to support our delegation heads and coaches and to interact with our parents and families who travel to see their teens. This year, Team Dallas represented in a big way with over 160 supporters who traveled to see our teams compete and our artists perform. On Monday, August 6 we invited our Team Dallas supporters to a happy hour, co-sponsored by BBYO, to help connect our supporters to each other. It was a great turn out of about 50 people and made clear that Dallas supports JCC Maccabi and that getting the supporters together is a great way to connect the families of athletes and artists.

I was asked by many people both in Orange County and back in Dallas how the games went since a well-run games makes a huge difference on how the teens perceive their experience. In my opinion, there are few places in the country that could handle over 3,000 athletes and coaches the way that the Orange County community did. There will always be challenges that a host community goes through but with such a large event, I believe the host did an amazing job.

My favorite part of being a supporter of Team Dallas is seeing our coaches interact with our teens. We are incredibly lucky in Dallas to have coaches who have been part of our delegation for many years. The way in which they approach the competition portion of the week as well as the Jewish experiences they help facilitate make them truly invaluable. It is rare for such a large delegation to have so many quality coaches and I am grateful to our delegation heads Abbi, Josh, Laurel and Daniel who instill in our coaches the understanding that they are there for much more than a sporting competition.





## On a Medal Mission

Our athletes danced, pitched, ran and kicked their way to the podium racking up an astounding number of Medals!

### Gold (8)

Dance  
Swim

### Silver (8)

14U Soccer  
14U Basketball  
Dance  
Flag Football  
Swim

### Bronze (9)

14U Soccer  
14U Baseball  
Dance  
Softball  
Swim

# A Note from Josh and Abbii

Even in the overwhelming mass of 3,000 athletes, artists, coaches and delegation heads, the 144 members of the Dallas Delegation of the JCC Maccabi Games stood out. The white windbreakers with Carolina Blue writing made the largest out of state delegation shimmer and shine as they walked into opening ceremonies to kick off an amazing week for this group of Dallas teens.

Once again we showed the rest of the J world why Dallas is a JCC Maccabi leader. We represented the Dallas Jewish Community and displayed the highest levels of class and ruach throughout the week. We were model athletes competing hard, and showing sportsmanship. We gave back to the community during the JCC Cares projects. We made lifelong friendships with new friends from Dallas as well as new friends from all over the United States, Israel, Canada, Mexico, Great Britain and Panama during the social events. In short, the JCC Maccabi experience in 2018 will have an everlasting impact on Team Dallas.

This was also the first year team Dallas brought an ArtsFest Contingent to the JCC Maccabi experience. The ArtsFest Contingent spent all week preparing for a Thursday final showcase. The Visual and Culinary artists from Dallas prepared an exhibit and hors d'oeuvres for pre-show while the Rock Band and Vocal Music Artists performed during the showcase. Meanwhile the Social Media Squad covered all aspects of JCC Maccabi and Artsfest throughout the week.

Team Dallas won 25 medals in Baseball, Basketball, Dance, Flag Football, Soccer and Swimming. In addition, four members of team Dallas were awarded Midot Medals for exhibiting the highest values a JCC Maccabi participant can exhibit. We would like to send a special thank you to all of the families who supported the program, the fans who traveled to cheer on the teams and the coaches who volunteered countless hours. We will continue to relive the incredible memories from the week over the next year while we prepare for next year's JCC Maccabi Games. We hope you will join us again for this great program where Sports and Arts are the vehicle and Jewish is the journey.

Thank you,  
Abbii and Josh





**A great  
first year at  
ArtsFest!**

# #wearemaccabi2018



#jccdallas



#teamdallas

# A Maccabi for the Memory books

By Zachary Pollack (Coach)

2018 was quite the Maccabi experience and will go down in history as a very unique set of games. Everything was magnified, multiplied, and just on a different level in Orange County. Just observing the trading of pins from members of countless delegations and being able to network with peers, athletes, and even visiting families was something I was so privileged to be a part of.

14U basketball in Dallas has become a program in itself that is so special to myself, the Jewish community as a whole, and the many families that follow our progress years after leaving the Maccabi system. This year's team continued the tradition of setting a great example for any team, delegation, or walk of life by 'Having Fun While Excelling In Their Craft'.

The basketball facility, Momentous Sports Center, was sensational with over 20 courts that provided wall to wall action. Best of all, we got so much love and support from our own delegation, visitors, and friends that we made throughout the week all thanks to the amazing access of such a conveniently designed basketball venue. On the court, we played a mix of competition that included being humbled by a strong Los Angeles group, a victory over in-state rival Houston to secure the Maccabi Silver Boot and a pair of heart-stopping thrillers in which we won one and lost one. All that gave us the tremendous opportunity to fight our way into the Blue Bracket Gold medal game. Nary a member of the Dallas community will forget the electrifying first half show this team put on playing mighty Atlanta to a 25-25 tie at halftime. While this group ran out of gas and settled for the Silver, no medal can measure the heart, determination, and absolute



joy this team brought to a city that was desperately craving a team to distract them from a long, hot summer.

The Maccabi program in Dallas is healthier than its ever been. Interest is off the charts and next year in Detroit and/or Atlanta figures to be another epic showing for Team Dallas. We cannot wait to do it all again in 2019 and make our community proud.





# An Athlete's Experience

By Gabby Ohayon

Hi! I'm Gabby Ohayon and I've been competing in the Maccabi Games as a dancer for the past four years. Every year is different but this year in Orange County was my favorite by far. Usually each summer there are at least two different Maccabi Games in different places but this year, every athlete from around the world was sent to the same Maccabi. At first this sounded a little intimidating, but to my surprise it actually made the experience ten times better.

I was meeting new people from around the world every day and getting to see what it's like to live with a family in Orange County. The host family I got this summer was incredibly nice and welcomed us wholeheartedly into their house. Me and my two best friends were so excited because they were so fun to be around and offered to take us anywhere we needed/wanted. Living with your friends is not an opportunity you get a lot, so every summer we try and make the best of the time we have. Waking up early in the morning to compete and going all day until the night activity, which then ends around nine can be exhausting, but that's what completes the experience. Night activities are my favorite part of the week, because everyone is in the same spot so you get to see your friends and make new ones all while doing whatever is planned for the night. At the end of a long day, walking around and just having fun with your friends is such a treat. There's music, and food, and different activities depending on the location. Dance is a little different than most other sports, we have the opportunity to win a medal for each dance we compete and let's just say, Dallas dance did not come home empty handed. My team had the opportunity to choreograph our own dances which also means we had another chance to win a medal for self-choreography. Once the summer starts, that means we're in the studio everyday for about an hour and a half choreographing and learning. Fortunately, my cousin Jordan LeBon and I (who is also on the team) have choreographed gold winning routines all four years in a row. Words can not express the excitement on our faces this summer when our names were called for hip hop duet. It was the most rewarding feeling to see all of your hard work get rewarded at such a high level.

Although going to the airport on Friday morning wasn't the happiest we had ever been, we all got to walk away knowing that we had just experienced one of the coolest events of all time, and were rewarded with medals to prove all of our hard work. If you are debating going to Maccabi next summer, I say go for it. As you can see, it's an experience I will never forget. One where I got to make new friends, get extremely close to old friends, explore my passion for dance, be surrounded in a space with Jews from all around the world, and most importantly have the best week of my life.



**JOIN TEAM DALLAS FOR THE 2019  
JCC MACCABI GAMES!**

Interested? Contact Abbi at [acook@jccdallas.org](mailto:acook@jccdallas.org)