

'DANCING' TO

Soap diva
Susan
Lucci
twisted
her ankle

Ricki Lake is latest star to

By Eva Fellows

OUCH! It's plain to see that competing on *Dancing With The Stars* is no walk in the park — hours and hours of grueling practice easily takes its toll on the non-professional hoofers who strut their stuff on the wildly popular ABC show.

But many participants — including new Season 13 prancer Ricki Lake, 42 — have suffered actual injuries in their quest to win the coveted Mirror Ball trophy awarded to the last dancer waltzing.

"I injured myself yesterday by hitting my heel into my shin,"

Ricki recently related as she hobbled out of the DWTS rehearsal studio getting ready for the September 19 pre-

miere. Ricki's an early fave for the newest season, thanks mostly to her fancy footwork in the original 1988 film *Hairspray*, and hopefully she won't be sidelined by her bruising.

But many fans think a ruptured cyst behind *The Karate Kid* icon Ralph Macchio's knee last season cost him the top spot! Ralph, 49, ended up taking fourth place after plummeting in the standings when his injury prevented him from practicing for a few days.

"The problem with *Dancing With The Stars* is that the contestants are overachievers," says Beverly Hills orthopedic surgeon Dr. Bal Rajagopalan. "They vie for the prize and don't take the time to prepare their bodies properly."

"Dancing is a very demanding sport that pushes the body way beyond the normal movement we experience in our daily lives."

'I couldn't continue'

Tell that to statuesque volleyball champ Misty May-Treanor. The 34-year-old, two-time Olympic gold medalist was so badly hurt during Season 7 that she had to take nine months off the volleyball circuit.

"I ruptured my Achilles tendon and from that point on I knew I couldn't continue," Misty moaned.

Believe it or not, Dirty Dancing sweetie Jennifer Grey beat the odds to win it all in Season 11. On the first night of the DWTS finals, Jennifer, 51, felt pain in her lower back. The next morning, according to her doctor, Dr. Robert S. Bray, she was



Volleyball beauty Misty May-Treanor had to sit out her sport for nine months after getting hurt on DWTS

"in tears. She absolutely could not move. Pain was shooting down her leg."

An MRI revealed a ruptured disc. Bray treated the actress with steroids, and she bravely competed — but a month later, she had to undergo surgery to repair the damage in her back.

TV personality Nancy O'Dell and singer Jewel didn't even make it to the first broadcast of Season 8 — both bowed out before a single episode aired!

"Beyond disappointed doesn't even begin to describe how I feel," said Nancy, 45. "But I have torn the meniscus in my knee in two places, which requires surgery."

And Foolish Games singer Jewel, 37, fractured her tibia in both legs. "When the doctors

Private Practice hottie Cristian de la Fuente ruptured a tendon in his arm

