

## Dancing With the Stars: 6 Pairs to Watch



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### AS ABC'S DANCING

With the Stars sambas into Season 23, ballroom dance expert Mary Murphy weighs in on which teams have the skills to land the coveted Mirrorball Trophy.

### 1 LAURIE HERNANDEZ AND VALENTIN CHMERKOVSKIY

Olympic gold-medal-winning gymnast Hernandez is Murphy's pick to win it all. "This power couple is at the top of the leaderboard," she says. "With Laurie's flexibility, charisma, and Olympic athletic mentality, Valentin won't have to hold back. The sky's the limit for these two in choreography and creativity."

### 2 AMBER ROSE AND MAKSIM CHMERKOVSKIY

The model/talk show host is paired with the fiery former pro champ in his return to the series after a four-season gap. Murphy sees these two as serious contenders: "If their chemistry is right, and they do not clash with each other, I think they will be a fierce couple."

### 3 KENNY "BABYFACE" EDMONDS AND ALLISON HOLKER

"Babyface's understanding of music will be a big help, but can he

take his amazing lyrics and translate them through his body onto the dance floor?" Murphy asks of the singer. "If he can dance like he sings, we're in for a real treat." It also helps that he can get extra practice at home—he's married to Nicole Pantenburg, a former backup dancer for Janet Jackson.

### 4 MARILU HENNER AND DEREK HOUGH

The actress is paired with six-time champ Hough, but her real asset is her Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory. "Half the battle when you're teaching somebody is the technique," Murphy explains. "She will latch on to every single bit of knowledge that Derek throws her way." Plus, she has a dance background, which "makes her lethal."

### 5 RYAN LOCHTE AND CHERYL BURKE

The Olympic swimmer's post-Rio PR woes "could hurt his chances since this is a fan-based show," Murphy says. But, "with his athletic ability, competitive nature, and top physical form, no one will beat his stamina for training." If he adheres to Burke's instructions, Murphy says they could go far—she's coached two champs and has a record 88 Perfect 10s.

### 6 CALVIN JOHNSON JR. AND LINDSAY ARNOLD

"He comes to the show with a little wear and tear," Murphy says of the former Detroit Lions wide receiver, "but make no mistake, this guy can move fast—4.35 seconds in a 40-yard dash." And history shows that football players have great success on the show: see Emmitt Smith and Jerry Rice. —Emily Aslanian



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