

Getting to national speech finals enough

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Friday, 12 July 2013 13:23 -



Speech competitors disappointed but grateful for experience.

Intense and long is how Abbie Mazour and Carlin Daharsh described the first six rounds of the National Forensic League tournament.

The two soon-to-be Gothenburg High School seniors competed in grueling rounds on June 17 and 18 in Birmingham, AL, with 3,500 students.

Although they felt good about how they competed—Mazour in dramatic interpretation and Daharsh in original oratory—both said they were frustrated when they didn't make the first cut.

“The style there is nothing like we do in Nebraska,” Daharsh said. “I was told that how I presented my speech was similar to college competition.”

Daharsh's speech, “Accepting the Ugly Truth” was about covering up mistakes.

Mazour performed “Before Women Had Wings” about a young girl escaping from an abusive relationship with her mother.

While sitting through intense rounds of dramatic interpretations, she said she noticed the performances were not as technical as what she saw performed during the regular speech season in Nebraska.

Getting to national speech finals enough

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Friday, 12 July 2013 13:23 -

“There also weren’t as many characters. It was more of a monologue with lots of movement,” Mazour said.

Speech team adviser Dan Jensen said what’s competitive in Nebraska is often very different than what they see on the national stage.

“The Midwest is very conservative,” Jensen said.

Jensen, Mazour and Daharsh watched six competitors compete for the top prize in dramatic interpretation, humorous interpretation and duo interpretation in the downtown Birmingham Jefferson convention center auditorium—a highlight for both women.

“It seated 3,000 and there was standing-room only,” Daharsh said.

Another highlight, for Mazour, was the first day of competition and “taking it all in.”

Jensen said each competitor is guaranteed six rounds. Each round began with 250 competitors that, over several days, was cut to 60, 30, 15 and finally six finals competitors.

He noted that taking younger students to finals is beneficial because they see “what’s out there.”

“Things click and they can put big-stakes tourneys like this one into perspective,” Jensen said.

Those who make it to national finals also get ideas for speeches for the next speech season, he said.

Getting to national speech finals enough

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Friday, 12 July 2013 13:23 -

ebarrett@gothenburgtimes.com

308-537-3636