

INDIANA HIGH SCHOOL FORENSIC ASSOCIATION

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State of the State Report—Summer, 2008 INDIANA

By Jeff Stutzman

The 2007-2008 forensics season brought a few changes and a whole lot of that “quality” Indiana winter weather that we Hoosiers all love and come to expect. Weather issues forced the postponement of the state debate tournament by two weeks which, in turn, forced the cancellation of one local speech tournament and postponement of North East Indiana’s NFL District Congress tournament. Based on my recommendation, the executive council voted to use the Joy of Tournaments software program for both the state debate and state speech tournaments, bringing both state tournaments into the technological age. With just a few minor issues, the program worked wonderfully well, and we plan to possibly expand its use to our sectional speech tournaments as well.

The state debate tournament was held at Concord High School, with Concord’s staff and students serving as excellent hosts. Normally the tournament is held in a more central part of the state, but with no school willing or able to take on host responsibilities, Concord volunteered its facilities. To offset the longer and more expensive drive for those programs south of Indianapolis, entry fees were waived for any participating school south of Indianapolis. This allowed the Evansville area schools some financial relief in making the 8 hour trip north. Debate participation at the state tournament dropped slightly again for the third year in a row, both in event entries and schools attending. Some of the drop can be blamed on the postponement with a 2-3 schools not able to attend on the new weekend. A total of 28 schools [31—2007; 34-2006; 35- 2005] competed in at least one of the four events. Policy dropped again with 25 entries from 9 schools [27 entries-11 schools in 2007; 33 entries-14 schools in 2006; 30 teams-11 schools in 2005]. Munster won the state championship by beating West Lafayette in a 3-2 decision. Lincoln-Douglas also dropped to 37 entries from 12 schools [43 entries-16 schools in 2007; 50 entries-17 schools in 2006; 49 entries-2005]. Unlike policy, however, LD’s drop was directly due to the change of date. Several schools and participants originally scheduled to compete were unable to make the new date. In the final round, Northrop beat West Lafayette in a 4-1 decision. Congress dropped considerably because of the new date to 56 entries [83-in 2007; 87-2006; 95-2005]. Penn won the top senator award, while South Side won the President of the Senate for the top Presiding Officer. Public Forum lost some momentum with only 34 teams entered this year [46- 2007; 58-2006; 47-2005; 39-2004]. Chesterton won the final round, beating West Lafayette in a 4-1 decision. Maintaining programs while encouraging new ones continues to be a high priority. The top five teams this year were: Chesterton, West Lafayette, Munster, Northrop, Valparaiso. Pat Naples of Penn was awarded the James Hawker Scholarship for Debate.

The speech season ended with the state tournament at Lafayette Jefferson. The coaching staff and parents at Lafayette Jeff did an excellent job as hosts. At the sectional level, total entries were down to 1472 entries (96 schools) from 1502-105 schools- in 2007 (1557-99 schools in 2006). Most sections stayed relatively close to their average sectional entry from the previous year, except for Section 4 which dropped from 255 entries in 2007 to 165 entries in 2008. Probable causes for this drop were losing some programs who entered larger entries and other programs not entering as many as they have in the past. Because of this, at the summer meeting the council moved two schools from Section 1 into section 4 for this coming season to help bring that number back up. Event numbers saw no significant drops or increases with Prose being the largest at 160 entries and International Extemp the lowest with 72 entries. At the state level, 80 schools had competitors

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qualify with 12 different schools having state champions in the 14 different events. In team awards, Maconaquah won the "A" division with Plymouth High School taking top honors in "AA." Warren Central won the "AAA" division and the overall Ralph Lawson Trophy for most sweepstakes points. James Hawker Scholarship recipients were Ronnye Rutledge, Canterbury; Nancy Tyree, Plymouth; and Kenneth Luu, FW Snider.

With the use of the Joy of Tournaments software, awards were finished between 9:00 and 9:30pm, the earliest in several years. With continued tweaking of the program for our specific needs, I'm confident that 9:00pm will become a regular end date in future years.

At the national level, Indiana students represented the state well. At NCFL nationals in Appleton, Wisconsin, Indiana students placed in the following: **Declamation**—Plymouth, Quarterfinalist; **Dramatic**—Plymouth, Semifinalist and Octafinalist; Connersville, Quarterfinalist; **Duo**—Chesterton, Quarterfinalist; Columbia City, Semifinalist; Plymouth, Quarterfinalist and Octafinalist ; **Oral Interp**—Connersville, 5th place; Plymouth, Semifinalist and Octafinalist; **Oratory**—Chesterton, Semifinalist; **Extemp**—Chesterton, Octafinalist; Munster, Octafinalist; Plymouth, Semifinalist and 2 Octafinalists; **Lincoln-Douglas**—Chesterton, Octafinalist.

At NFL nationals in Las Vegas, Nevada, Indiana results were: **Schwan School of Excellence in Debate**—Chesterton High School. **Bruno E. Jacob National Award in Speech**—Munster High School. **Humor**—Plymouth, 6th. **U.S. Extemp**—Munster, 10th. **International Extemp**—Northrop, 8th. **Public Forum**—Chesterton, 12th. **Congress**—Munster, Semifinalist; Northrop, Finalist; Chesterton, Semifinalist; Brebeuf Jesuit, 2 Semifinalists; Leo, Finalist, West Lafayette, Semifinalist.

In other forensic news, Chris Stepp of Kokomo High School was nominated to be Indiana's Outstanding Speech, Debate, and Theatre Educator of the Year for 2008. Chris has served the forensics community in Indiana in many capacities and is always willing to assist new programs and coaches.

Finally, competitive forensics in Indiana continues to stay relatively active and healthy. However, I believe that for our activity to continue growing and staying relevant, our organization faces some tough decisions and challenges in the very near future. Since the state eliminated the speech certification for teachers, we are seeing fewer schools offering speech classes and those schools having speech mandatory for graduation are beginning to eliminate that requirement. Budget constraints are also starting to impact programs as well, with transportation costs being passed on to teams, forcing coaches to either limit the number of tournaments to attend or step up the fundraising efforts.

We, the IHSFA, will need to make some serious plans and decisions in the next 2-3 years to stay relevant in education in the state of Indiana and offer our students the best possible means of success as communicators.

Respectfully Submitted,

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IHSFA Executive Secretary

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State of the State Report—Addendum Policy Debate Topic Discussion

Policy Debate as a whole continues to struggle some with participation limited to about a dozen or so programs across the state. The varsity teams appeared to enjoy the topic, although some felt it was broad and offered a challenge as a negative team.

As per tradition, the novices were limited in their case areas for the first two months (October/November) of competition. We chose to use the novice areas as defined by the National Federation speech committee. Negative teams were prohibited from running counter-plans, kritiks, or discourse. Novices did debate both sides. These limitations put less stress on novice teams, so they could focus on learning debate structure and style as well as researching the topic. After Thanksgiving, the novice limitations were eliminated.

At the state tournament, the decisions were virtually even, with neither side truly having an edge. Preliminary rounds saw the negative win 56% of the ballots. In Octafinals, it was even—4 affirmatives and 4 negatives. Quarterfinals also had an even 2-2 win. Semifinals saw both affirmatives win, but the negative won the final round.

Results from the regular season weren't collected, but if the state tournament is any indication, the topic overall was evenly matched for both affirmatives and negatives.