

INDIANA HIGH SCHOOL FORENSIC ASSOCIATION

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State of the State Report—Summer, 2009 INDIANA

By Jeff Stutzman

The 2008-2009 forensics season was much calmer (at least with weather concerns) than the previous year. No sectional or state tournaments were postponed because of weather issues. In response to the use of Joy of Tournaments in the state tournaments last year, the council voted to use the program for sectional tournaments as well. While there were a few glitches (mostly from user error, not computer error), that was expected in the first year of use at our sectional tournaments. Overall, however, the response was positive and I think those who worked in the tab rooms would agree that the program was a help in running the tournaments smoothly, fairly, and effectively.

The state debate tournament moved back to Central Indiana, once again hosted by Kokomo High School and the Kokomo Debate Team, under the direction of Chris Stepp. There were great hosts and we appreciated their hospitality and facilities. Debate Participation rose slightly from last year's tournament, which suffered some because of the necessary postponement. Declining school participation continues to be an issue. More on this issue discussed later in the report. A total of 27 schools [28—2008; 31—2007; 34-2006; 35- 2005] competed in at least one of the four events. Policy rebounded slightly to include 27 entries from 11 schools [25 entries—9 schools in 2008; 27 entries-11 schools in 2007; 33 entries-14 schools in 2006; 30 teams-11 schools in 2005]. LaPorte closed out the final round with the state champion team winning on a 4-1 decision. Lincoln-Douglas maintained itself with 37 entries from 16 schools [37 entries—12 schools in 2008; 43 entries-16 schools in 2007; 50 entries-17 schools in 2006; 49 entries-2005]. Same number of entries but a small increase in the number of participating schools. In the final round, Chesterton beat West Lafayette on a 3-2 decision. Congress was up from 2008 but still down in numbers from previous years at 65 entries [56-2008; 83- 2007; 87-2006; 95-2005]. Northrop won the top senator award, while Plymouth won the President of the Senate for the top Presiding Officer. Public Forum also rebounded with 43 entries from 16 schools [34—2008 46- 2007; 58-2006; 47-2005; 39-2004]. Chesterton closed out the final round, with the state champion winning on a 4-1 decision. The top five teams this year were: Chesterton, West Lafayette, Munster, LaPorte, Columbia City. Barrett Tenbarge of Brebeuf Jesuit Prep was awarded the James Hawker Scholarship for Debate.

The speech season ended with the state tournament at Indianapolis North Central. Joe King and his coaching staff and parents at North Central did an excellent job as hosts. At the sectional level, total entries were down to 1437 entries (99 schools) from 1472-96 schools in 2008 and 1502-105 schools- in 2007 (1557-99 schools in 2006). Sectional numbers fluctuated some based on several factors—programs returning, team sizes increasing/decreasing, etc. Event numbers saw no significant drops or increases with Prose being the largest at 163 entries and International Extemp the lowest with 69 entries. At the state level, 81 schools had competitors qualify. In team awards, Maconaquah won the “A” division with Plymouth High School taking top honors in “AA.” Warren Central won the “AAA” division. Plymouth won the overall Ralph Lawson Trophy for most sweepstakes points. James Hawker Scholarship recipients were Ben Silver, Canterbury; and Rebecca Moberly, Plymouth. No AAA recipient was selected because no AAA schools submitted nominations.

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At the national level, Indiana students represented the state well.

◆ NCFL National Results from Albany, NY:

Brebeuf Jesuit—Double Octa-Finalist in Lincoln-Douglas
Chesterton—Quarter-Finalist in Duo; Octa-Finalist in Drama; Quarter-Finalist in Extemp; Semi-Finalist in Oratory
Columbia City—Quarter-Finalist in Drama
Concord—Quarter-Finalist in Oral Interp
Plymouth—6th in Declamation; Semi-Finalist in Declamation; 6th in Duo; Quarterfinalists in Duo (2); 3rd in Drama;
Semi-Finalist in Extemp; Octa-Finalist in Extemp; Octa-Finalist in Oratory; Quarter-Finalist in Oral Interp

◆ NFL Nationals Results from Birmingham, AL:

Schwan School of Excellence in Speech—Plymouth High School
Bruno E. Jacob National Award in Speech—Chesterton High School
Plymouth—Quarter-Finalist in Oratory; 4th in Humor; Octa-Finalist in U.S. Extemp; 13th in International Extemp;
Quarter-Finalist in Duo; 3rd in Impromptu
Munster—Octa-Finalist in U.S. Extemp; 4th in Prose; 7th in Senate; 3rd in House
F.W. Northrop—Senate Finalist; House Finalists (2); Octa-Finalist in International Extemp
Chesterton—Octa-Finalist in Oratory; 5th in U.S. Extemp; Octa-Finalist in International Extemp; Octa-Finalist
in Duo; Round 9 and Round 10 in Public Forum
Brebeuf Jesuit—Round 10 in Public Forum
Fishers—Octa-Finalist in Duo
Ben Davis—Quarter-Finalist in Humor; Quarter-Finalist in Drama
Connersville—Octa-Finalist in Drama
Valparaiso—Round 8 in Lincoln-Douglas
Hamilton Southeastern—Octa-Finalist in Humor
West Lafayette—Round 10 in Policy
F.W. Snider—Quarter-Finalist in Humor

In other forensic news, Holly Hathaway of Connersville High School was nominated to be Indiana's Outstanding Speech, Debate, and Theatre Educator of the Year for 2009. Holly has served as a sectional representative for several years and has worked both locally and at the state level to encourage forensics.

As I commented last year, the state of speech and debate in Indiana continues to stay relatively static. However, the number of schools involved in debate continues to waver, and as schools face budget cuts, speech/debate programs are at risk of being phased out as well. The skill of communication continues to be listed as one of those 21st century skills essential to a student's education in Indiana. It's our responsibility as an organization to promote ourselves better to those individuals making educational decisions. The council is working on this issue, but we will need the ideas and help of all coaches if we want our activity to grow.

In addition, as more students are involved in multiple activities and more coaches are trying to balance school, coaching, and personal lives, perhaps it's time our organization re-evaluate our seasons of competition and at least examine other possibilities that could better meet our needs while encouraging new programs/coaches to participate.

Respectfully Submitted,

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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, with no serious concerns or complaints offered.

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 affirmative win 59% of the ballots. In Octafinals, affirmatives had the slight edge-5 wins to 3 negatives. Quarterfinals was an even 2-2 win. Semifinals saw both negatives win, but the final was won by the affirmative.

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.