

Four in a row

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Thursday, 24 March 2011 13:38 -



Swede speech team takes district champions, qualify nine for state.

With a two-week lull in competition before District B-6 action last Thursday, Gothenburg High School's speech coaches struggled to keep up the intensity.

But when scores were added and awards given, the Swedes stood at the top—for the fourth year in a row.

Gothenburg edged out Gering for the district crown with 126 points compared to 117 for the Bulldogs. Sidney, which hosted the event, was a close third with 113 points.

Nine individuals, in eight events, are headed for state competition at the University of Nebraska at Kearney this Thursday.

The top three competitors in each event qualify for state.

Four seniors were first in their events—Brennan Costello in informative speaking, Ashlee Bruntz in humorous prose, Elisa Meridith in poetry, and duet actor Christopher Block along with his partner, Jeramie VanAcker, who is a junior.

Meridith placed second in serious prose.

Senior Lauren Schmiett, and her duet acting partner, junior Makayla Franzen, placed third as

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did junior Josh Clark in persuasive speaking.

Sophomore Morgan Kowalewski, who finished second in extemporaneous speaking, will be making her first trip to state.

A district win was the topping for a season filled with success.

The Swedes captured the Southwest Conference crown and placed first in every meet in which a sweepstakes award was given.

In addition to building intensity for the district meet, speech team adviser Dan Jensen said winning involves a lot of hard work and the proper mind set.

“Kids have to believe in what they can do,” he said. “It doesn’t matter what your reputation is or how you did last week, you have to prove yourself brand new every time you get the chance.”

Jensen, who has coached speech for 15 years, has had teams bring home the district championship seven times.

Under his tenure, state titles have been won three times.

On Thursday, Jensen said the Swedes have their work cut out for them in earning another state title.

Because of the strength of the district the Swedes competed in last Thursday, they didn’t qualify as many competitors for state as in past years.

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“There were some heart-breaker ties,” he said about Brennan Costello in poetry, Clark in serious prose, Maddy Costello in informative speaking and an oral interpretation drama team.

All tied for third.

But quality scores and rating points in preliminary and finals rounds broke the ties and the students ended up fourth.

At state, the Minden Whippets will come on strong in Class B as will Gering, Jensen said.

The Swedes edged ahead of Minden last year to win the state title.

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