

Four medal at state speech meet

Written by Elizabeth Barrett
Thursday, 28 March 2013 13:35 -



Two bring home gold, Swedes finish fifth in Class B action.

The Swede speech team took nine competitors in six events to the Nebraska State Speech Championships last Thursday.

Once the names of finalists were posted on video screens at the University of Nebraska at Kearney, four had been selected to compete in final rounds.

Those four were guaranteed medals, first through sixth place and a position on the podium during the awards ceremony.

Jon Rehmert and Carlin Daharsh stood taller than their competitors during the ceremony.

Rehmert, a senior and first-time competitor at state, was declared state champion in Class B in extemporaneous speaking.

Daharsh, a junior who competed at state last year with a fourth-place finish in informative speaking, earned her first gold there—this time in poetry.

Senior Madison Costello finished fourth in informative speaking and junior Abbie Mazour took sixth in humorous speaking.

The team finished fifth with 64 points out of 36 teams in Class B.

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Omaha Skutt Catholic won the team sweepstakes with 166 points followed by: Gering, 108; and Minden and Omaha Marian, 88.

Speech team adviser Dan Jensen said there are always many factors that can't be controlled at state.

“What we could control, however, was attitude and effort,” he said.

Before state, Jensen said he asked the qualifiers to view state competition not as an end goal but as one more chance to win.

“I felt they did everything they could have with that goal in mind,” he said.



Despite the disappointment of being eliminated from finals, Jensen said those students did a good job of bouncing back to support the Swedes who qualified for finals.

“And that does make a difference to the team, especially when it's also disappointing to finish behind some of the teams we wanted to beat,” he said.

What contributed to the outcome, Jensen said, was district competition on March 12 in which a handful of events were left at home that may have broken finals at state.

At the state meet, he noted that Mazour and Ashley Wilkerson were close to breaking finals in

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serious prose and extemporaneous speaking respectively.

Both were in eighth place after the preliminary round but only the top six qualify for finals.

“Had those events turned out differently, the outcome of state sweepstakes may have been different, but it didn’t work out that way,” Jensen said.

Jensen said he’s proud of the team and their efforts and positive attitudes and he celebrates the finalists and two state champions.

The Swedes won state speech in Class B in 2010 and 2008 and were C1 champions in 2004 and runners-up in 2005 while Jensen has coached the team.

Swede medalists and their performances include:

Extemporaneous speaking—An event in which students draw a current events question and have a hour to prepare a speech. Rehmert’s final round topic was “Will Civil War Break Out Between The Kurds and The Rest of Iraq?”

Poetry—Daharsh presented a collection of poems about appearance and beauty titled “Finding Pretty.”

Informative speaking—Costello presented a speech titled “Women’s Air Service Pilots During World War II.”

Humorous prose—Mazour shared a controlling mother’s phone messages to her daughter with “Amy’s Answering Machine.”

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Also competing was the oral interpretation team of Rebecca Miller, Rachel Rice, Kennedy Wahlgren and Ashley Wilkerson with a spoof on the "Wizard of Oz" titled "Oz" and Drake Brand who took on an imaginary pirate friend with his humorous prose "Scurvy Gonda."

Mazour's serious prose was about a daughter's journey to freedom from a an abusive mother in "Before Women Had Wings."

Helping Jensen coach the team this year are Angela Piper, Lori Long and Heather Franzen.

Some members of the team will compete at a National Forensic League qualifying meet in Cheyenne, WY, April 4-6.