

Scholars' Bowl: A Team to be Recognized

by Coach Huggins



Looking back on this year's Scholars' Bowl team, I can honestly say it is the finest group I have ever had the privilege to coach. Although it was disappointing to these young men to work so hard and to lose the championship by such a vanishingly slim margin (the smallest, in fact, that it is theoretically possible), I would rather say of these young men that they are men of character than that they were state champions. No one who meets them in the future will know whether they were champions; everyone who matters to them will know their character.

By all measures, this was the finest team since the State Championship team in 2006. They won 3rd Place in both the East Tournament and the Tournament of Champions at Bishop Carroll, two of the toughest tournaments in the city. At Bishop, they lost only to Maize and to Wichita East, and the very next week they came back to defeat both of these rivals, claiming the championship at Kapaun's Invitational. This would be the same Wichita East team that just won the 6A State Championship.

Did you read that? Our team defeated, not the 3A State Champions, but the 6A State Champions, a feat that I am not sure is equaled in the history of the school.

The team brought back the Central Plains League Championship for the fourth time in five years. They won invitationals in Chaparral and in Hesston. This team never failed to place in any tournament in which they competed, and they asked me to practice! They devised strategies. They pushed themselves through this difficult year when I (dealing with a toddler and a newborn) could not push them. By the time we got to selecting a team for regionals, I could have fielded two teams, and I never faced a harder decision than who to pick to staff that regional team. But, I can guarantee you all the ones I didn't pick will be back next year.

So these young men (and a couple of young women) are more than conquerors this year. They are leaders who fight for the honor of their school, and in so doing, equal the best the state has to offer. We'll see you next year!

Comparative Perceptions: An Educational Historical Workshop

This past summer I, Mr. Huggins, was given the opportunity to attend a workshop at the Harry Truman Museum in Independence that compared and contrasted the lives of George Washington and Harry S. Truman. It was a valuable learning experience that gave me new insight into the lives of these two men. Perhaps most importantly, it humanized them for me, making them something more than the icons we see of Washington, standing in the bow of the boat crossing the Delaware, or even the more accurate picture of Truman waving the "Dewey Defeats Truman" copy of the *Chicago Tribune*.

One of the things that impressed me the most was the character of these men. Although they were flawed individuals, both seemed instinctively to shy away from dishonest dealings. This integrity shone forth in their lives, and made even their personal enemies treat them with respect. But more than that, I note that both men maintained a strong marriage in the center of their lives. They never failed to treat their wives with courtesy and love.

To be sure, they were very different men as well. I learned to appreciate Washington's keen business sense, which made him one of the wealthiest men in America, a trait that obviously served the impoverished Continental Army well. Though Truman does not seem to have had the same business acumen, he certainly displayed the mind of a leader; one who would make honorable decisions even if they were not popular. These qualities are all too rare in the leaders of a democracy, where power and popularity must go hand in hand.

To preserve one's ethics in the face of temptations to power and popularity is a lesson it is imperative to bring to our students, who deal with popularity in a way that is often much more immediate and threatening than we face in the adult world, where public decorum and professional courtesy sometimes shield us from the worst effects of unpopularity. But it is a vital lesson if we are to teach children to become true adults.