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NEWS



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Mock Trial team named
regional champions**

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The Blind Brook Mock Trial team and their coaches after their regional victory last Saturday, Apr. 30 in Goshen.

Blind Brook Mock Trial team named regional champions

By LORI JANJIGIAN

The Blind Brook Mock Trial team has claimed another title: 2011 regional champion. They were named regional champions after winning three trials last Saturday, Apr. 30 in Goshen, N.Y. Six counties were represented in this Region IV Lower Hudson Valley competition: Westchester, Putnam, Orange, Dutchess, Rockland and Ulster.

In the team's first trial, Blind Brook was matched up against Mahopac High School. Blind Brook was on the defense side. Blind Brook's lawyers were senior captain Alex Drechsler, junior captain Nikta Daijavad and junior Julia Klein. Drechsler did the opening and Daijavad did the closing statement. Blind Brook's witnesses were junior Rachel Coby, senior Ashley Mango and freshman Jason Rosenberg.

In the second round, Blind Brook competed against Nyack High School. In this trial, the team was on the plaintiff side. Drechsler did the opening statement and Klein did the closing. Junior Jason Adler, Mango and senior captain Spencer Jardine were the witnesses. In the third round, Blind Brook competed against Fox Hills High School. The team was on the plaintiff side again and had the same lawyers and witnesses.

The regional competition was very different from any of the other competitions this team has been through. The team had to compete in three trials, each about 2 and a half hours long. They only had about 10 minutes between each. In addition, the team was only given about five minutes notice

of which side they were to represent. In that five minutes, the team would have to completely change their mindset. "We do not use any notes," said Drechsler when discussing challenges the team faces. "When you have five or six different things memorized, it can be difficult to remember what you are doing when."

Because of this victory at regionals, the

They're now on to the state competition in Albany later this month

team will be competing in the state competition from May 22-24 in Albany. It will work the same as the regional competition did. There will be six teams from six different regions. Two teams will earn a bye in the first round. All the other teams will compete in three different trials until a winner is determined. This will be Blind Brook's first time at the state competition since 2007 when they came in second.

Despite the team's success, they are still incredibly humble and excited about their victories. "I was really impressed with how well we did in regionals because it was totally unexpected," explained Drechsler. "The Mock Trial competition is extremely competitive as it is, but these were the best teams in their county, so the competition was even more intense than usual. What I think made us stand out from the other teams,

however, was that all of our materials were very clean and you could tell that we put a lot of effort and thought into it. As well, more than the other teams, you could tell that we understood the case, what point we were trying to prove and how we were going to prove that point."

Now that the team is going to states, they must continue practicing to have the best opportunity to be successful. "The thing about Mock Trial is that there is always something that can be done to improve," stressed Drechsler. "At this point, we have a very solid base to work with, of course, but because the trials are something very unexpected, the most important thing we have to do now is to do our best to

anticipate the unexpected, find ways to make our directs and crosses more flexible, to be able to deal with objections, to be able to make our own objections and know what we are going to say."

Drechsler believes that much of this year's success is due to the fact that the team has "worked really hard to understand the case thoroughly, rather than simply on the surface, so that we can react in the trials to those things that we were not expecting."

"I am very grateful that we have the opportunity to extend our season," said Daijavad. "I really think it has been the greatest experience to be able to learn so much about the case while seeing other schools' interpretations of the fact pattern. I am really excited to have a great learning opportunity."

Blind Brook made it to the regional

competition after going 6-0 in the county competition and becoming Westchester County champions. The team defeated Rye Neck High School in the county championship. In the past three years, Rye Neck has won the county championship twice. Thus, defeating that team for the county title was a tremendous accomplishment.

Because of the team's success this year, they understand what it will take to be victorious again next year. The captains for next year have already chosen. Nikta Daijavad and Julia Klein will be the senior captains and Jason Adler will be the junior captain.

"This year we have had a relatively young team," said Daijavad. "We have had witnesses and lawyers that are younger than usual, so we have a lot of people with a good amount of experience that will definitely help us in the long run."

This year was a learning experience for the entire team. "Mock Trial is difficult in that it requires a huge amount of knowledge that lawyers spend years learning," concluded Drechsler. "It can be a daunting amount of information. All the team members have really made the extra effort to not just copy down a direct or cross, but to understand the law and the meaning behind what they are writing, and that has really shown."

As one of the top six mock trial teams in the state, Blind Brook continues to work hard to prepare for their trials on May 22-24. "I really have to say that I am impressed with everyone on the team's dedication," said Drechsler. "Everyone really put so much time and effort into Mock Trial, and everyone has put everything aside for the competition."