

Mock Trial advances past regionals

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At the Feb. 14-16 Regionals, Wheaton College Mock Trial advanced two teams, team A and team B, to the Opening Round Championship Series Tournament (ORCS). ORCS serves as the second part on the road to Nationals.

At Regionals during the weekend of Feb. 14-16, Wheaton College Mock Trial advanced not one, but two teams to the Opening Round Championship Series Tournament (ORCS), part two on the road to Nationals.

Wheaton was the only school to qualify two teams. Both Wheaton's A team and B team advanced, with the teams ranking 4th and 7th, respectively. This was the first time that two Wheaton teams advanced to ORCS.

Sophomore Anne Davidson, who serves as the mock trial team's public relations manager, said that she credits good leadership, individual growth and bonding experiences as the key factors that allowed for both team A and team B to advance this year.

"This year the leadership on the B team was very strong. The captains, especially Lauren Carini, worked hard to bring the team together," Davidson said. "One thing that really set the stage for a successful team was a tournament we went to the first weekend back from Christmas break. We (B team) went to Missouri without a coach and not only got ourselves to places on time but also competed very well," she said.

There are eight ORCS across the country, and 24 teams attend each one. Wheaton, bringing both team A and team B, will fight for two of the 48 coveted spots of teams that advance to Nationals, which will be held in Orlando this year. This year's ORCS will be held from March 14-16 in

Waukegan, Ill. Only the top six teams from each ORCS will advance, and the mock trial teams are busy preparing.

"We hope to have two teams qualify for Nationals in Florida," Davidson said. "There will be tough competition at ORCS, but we have a lot of young talent on both teams. We definitely expect team Chuggies (A team) to advance. ... Many of us are also staying on campus over spring break to have more mock trial practice and team bonding before leaving for ORCS that Thursday."

Sophomore Kelly Farley, who is vice president of the Pre-Law Society and a captain of the A team, said that both teams are honing in on certain areas of fo

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cus to improve before ORCS. She said that they have "revamped" the theme of the case and are working to utilize their strengths and skills in the right way.

"There are definitely things that we can improve on, so attorneys are definitely studying really hard these next few weeks on case law and rules of evidence. They have to be perfect in that. With our witnesses, we are reformulating all of our characters and making them more likeable and rewriting things and making them more concise," Farley said. "One major thing is that we changed how we are viewing the case, which we call our 'case theory,' so hopefully that will help a lot with making it seem more organized and simple."

Farley said that advancing two teams towards regionals reflects the quality of the mock trial program and the equal attention and resources that each team receives. Sophomore Jasmine Stein, who is president of the Pre-Law Society and captain of the A team along with Farley, added that Wheaton's program has two attorney coaches, which is a huge asset to both teams.

"Not all teams have attorney coaches, and we have two, Diane and Brooks Locke," said Stein. "They do so much work — Diane will come straight from work to practice and stay here until 10 pm. She is no joke."

"We were the only school at our regionals to have two teams advance, so that just shows that

we are not putting all of our resources into our A team," Farley said. "It's good that both A team and B team are getting attention. There are two separate teams, and they both meet with our coach separately, and we do basically our own thing, but it is not like the coaches are focusing only on A and not focusing on B," she said.

Last year, the team won second place at ORCS and placed ninth at Nationals. Farley said that she hopes to see both the A team and the B team advance to Nationals in Orlando, which she believes both teams are good enough to do. She also said that it is about further establishing the Wheaton mock trial team and pushing each person to achieve more than they thought that they could.

"For me, it is making a name for Wheaton and putting Wheaton on the map for mock trial. It is crazy that in just three years, people are already afraid to face us, and we weren't even a name in mock trial before," Farley said. "Also, to see people who, last year, did not know what prosecution and defense was and are now planning to go to law school and are lawyers on mock trial is amazing to see."

Stein said that the team has already accomplished much this year in hosting their own tournament this fall and now advancing both their A and B teams to ORCS. She said that she hopes that the Mock Trial program can continue to achieve and grow.

"Already this year ... we have achieved so much past what I had hoped for the team," Stein