

# DP Mock narrowly edged in final; takes 2nd place in state

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In a tense, hard-fought championship round La Reina High School's mock trial defense team narrowly edged out the Dos Pueblos prosecution team to capture first place Sunday in the 31st California Mock Trial finals held in Sacramento.

It was the second straight California title for La Reina which advances to the National Mock Trial Championship in Albuquerque.

The Chargers were hoping to capture the school's third state title and first since 1987.

The 140 spectators who packed the Sacramento Federal Courthouse for the final round witnessed a dramatic and hard-fought final presided over by U.S. District Court Judge William Shubb.

For members of the Dos Pueblos Mock trial team, earning a place against the defending champions in the coveted final round is a source of pride.

"It was an honor to face a team of La Reina's caliber in the state final," said DP defense witness Ryan Polito. "We congratulate our friends from Ventura County and wish them the best at nationals."

"I could not have asked for a better end to this season and my high school mock trial career," said team captain and prosecution pretrial attorney Connie Wang.

"If at the very beginning of this year, someone had told me that our team would be competing in the state finals, that our team would be one of the top two teams in the entire state of California, I would not have believed them for a second."

The Chargers advanced to the final round with four victories in the 32-team tournament. On Friday night, the Dos Pueblos Prosecution team defeated Oakmont High School from Placer County.

The baton was passed on Saturday to the DP defense team, led by captain Cheryl Wilson, who were selected for each of the three trials.

In the morning round, the Chargers defeated Tulare Union High School (Tulare County).

The Chargers then earned victories over Riverside Poly High School (Riverside County) and Woodbridge High (Orange County) in the afternoon to advance to the championship round.

For Wilson, who has been a four-year starting attorney and was participating at the California finals for the fourth straight year, the announcement that the Chargers had advanced to the final round was “surreal.”

“For the past four years, I’ve waited for the Saturday night announcement of the teams proceeding to the final round. It was the culmination of all the hours of hard work, patience, and dedication, and was a moment we will never forget.”

The teams argued the fictional case of People vs. Buschell in which the defendant is charged with the second degree murder of Becca Ables, a childhood friend of Buschell’s who had threatened to get the defendant expelled from college and thus deny the defendant a 20 million dollar trust. The victim is found dead of a stab wound at a Coachella-like music festival.

“This is a case about a cheater, who became a killer,” argued DP prosecution attorney Alison Mally in the final round.

For defense pretrial attorney Jake Wiener, the disappointment of coming within a few points of the state title was negated by the team’s performance during the tournament.

“This weekend showcased Dos Pueblos’s Mock Trial team at its best,” said Wiener. “From stunning individual performances to seamless teamwork, we earned our place in the finals.

“The prosecution presented a case as elegant as the courthouse they performed in, and the defense fought through three difficult trials to bring the team to finals. I could not be more proud of my team members, nor of the way in which the team performed as a whole.”

DP’s Yibing Zhang also took home the third place medal in the courtroom artist competition.

The California Mock Trial Finals are organized by the [Constitutional Rights Foundation](#).

The Dos Pueblos Mock Trial team:

Prosecution Pretrial Attorney: Connie Wang

Prosecution Attorneys: Paisha Fellows, Alison Mally, Madeleine Centrella (understudy: Sean Strong)

Prosecution Witnesses: Emma Steinkellner, Nadine Pearson (playing Devin Lin), Hannah Cruz (playing Kai Mauer), Agnetta Cleland, Sophia Zheng (playing Dr. Marion Schwartz), Wes Cooperman (playing Detective Kennedy Shephard)

Clerk: Ami Thakrar

Defense Pretrial Attorney: Jake Wiener (understudies: Delia Bullock, Niranjanna Jeeva)

Defense Attorneys: Cheryl Wilson, Madeline Matthys (understudy: Bela Lafferty)

Defense Witnesses: Ray Cothorn (playing Ryan Buschell), Nimisha Shinday (playing Sasha Fain), Brian Pinner (playing Dr. Jan Shartsis), Ryan Polito (playing AG Prout)

Bailiff: Camille Wyss

Attorney Coaches: Joel Block, Scott Campbell, Maureen Grattan