

PRESS RELEASE

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Jackson Speech Team Shows Promise at Largest Online Tournament of the Season

On December 17th and 18th the Jackson Hole High School Speech & Debate Team competed in the virtual “Holiday Classic” hosted by Cheyenne East High School. The meet proved to be the largest and most challenging of the year, with 750 entries from 75 teams competing from over 19 different states. The team, coached by Londe and Peggy Gagnon, ultimately finished the tournament with many top individual placements and several near misses for advancement in certain events.

This is the final tournament of the season that will host a novice category of events. Freshman Jasper Brandenburg placed 3rd in Novice Congressional Debate. Sophomore Ventura Garcia Perez rose to the top of the field in the varsity category of the event where he placed 4th. Many of the JHHS team had stellar finishes but barely missed reaching the finals in the event where, due to the size of the field, one needed to place in the top three of their preliminary chambers in order to advance. Senior & team captain Lily Briggs placed 5th in her preliminary chamber, sophomore Jackson Neishabouri placed 4th in his preliminary chamber, sophomore James Neishabouri placed 6th in his preliminary chamber and junior Maya Worcester placed 4th in her preliminary chamber.

In Public Forum Debate, the JHHS competitors showed promising results. Senior and team captain Will Aepli paired up with Briggs and they, along with juniors Alexiz Hernandez and Jheili Montiel Huerta, finished the weekend with a 3-1 winning record, tying for 9th place and barely missing the quarter final round based on a tiebreaker.

Hernandez went on to tie for 9th place in Original Oratory while juniors Nicole Checker and Julieta Anaya finished in the top ten in Dramatic Interpretation. Sophomore Sascha Mizelle tied for 8th in Humorous Interpretation. The tournament also featured asynchronous events where students could submit recordings of certain events. In asynchronous Poetry Interpretation, Anaya finished in 4th place.

In Extemporaneous Speaking, the JHHS team continued to show strength with Hernandez and senior Sarah Schweitzer entering the semi finals round tied for first place after preliminary rounds. Although the pair just barely missed qualifying for finals (they each placed 4th in their section), Aepli was able to continue his season success in this event by placing 3rd overall.

Coach Londe Gagnon commented, “This is a tournament where students need to execute nearly flawless performances to break out of preliminary rounds. Everyone on our team benefited from facing the depth of competition present in Cheyenne. Because this was a Tournament of Champions qualifying tournament, the caliber of students present was very high.

We are very excited for the growth our team continues to show and all the accomplishments they have made so far.”

The team will compete next at a local tournament to be held in Jackson on Jan 8, 2022. The team is in need of judges for that Saturday. If you hold an interest in judging, please sign up here: <https://forms.gle/5UZ3wn7PM6TfgOkU7> or contact Coach Londe Gagnon at lgagnon@tcsd.org

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