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Community News

Strath Haven takes Hi-Q title

BETTE ALBURGER, Times Correspondent 03/16/2005

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NETHER PROVIDENCE -- Hosting the Delco Hi-Q championship match for the first time, Strath Haven's student scholars played a near perfect game against finalists from Penncrest and Garnet Valley to win the 2005 title Tuesday.
In the "Battle of the Cats," Strath Haven's Panthers scored 58 points, the Penncrest Lions 51 and the Garnet Valley Jaguars 48.

With the victory, Strath Haven earned its school a cash award of \$1,000 to benefit the entire student body. It also won the right to display the championship trophy for the next year.

Penncrest earned a \$750 cash award for its school, while Garnet Valley took home \$500.

All three schools will receive engraved plaques and their awards, and team members from all 21 participating schools will be honored, at the Partners in Education dinner May 19 at the Corporate Events Center at Drexelbrook. Special guest speaker will be Alex Trebek, host of ABC-TV's "Jeopardy!"

Delco Hi-Q Program Director Donna Zerby noted it was the first time in the 57-year history of the nation's oldest continuous academic quiz competition for high school scholars that Strath Haven, Garnet Valley and Penncrest faced each other in the trophy competition.

"Each school represented is totally committed to excellence," said Strath Haven Principal Albert Bichner in his welcoming remarks.

Among guests were Penncrest Principal Thomas Sebastian, Garnet Valley Superintendent Anthony Costello and Wallingford-Swarthmore Superintendent Sharon Parker. Also on hand were John Unangst and Rick Durante, president/CEO and assistant vice president, respectively, of the Franklin Mint Federal Credit Union, one of this season's two primary corporate sponsors. The other is Kimberly -Clark, Chester Operations.

Other supporters and contributors are Elko & Associates Ltd.; Giant Food Stores; Hilbush Foundation; Sign Concepts Inc.; Southco Inc.; and Sun East Federal Credit Union.

Strath Haven hosted the championship match because it scored the highest total in the first round of competition.

The three teams were tied at the end of the first two categories of questions -- current events and American history. Strath Haven and Penncrest were neck-and-neck through the next three categories -- biology, sports toss-up and literature -- with Garnet Valley just one point behind.

But Strath Haven nailed its math question and was never headed.

The Panthers led at the half with 34 points to Garnet Valley's 27 and Penncrest's 24.

After the break, Strath Haven answered all six of its questions on the first try. It missed only two toss-up questions posed by veteran quizmaster/professional actor Tom McCarthy, including the final toss-up in math.

Each team had 60 seconds to buzz in first with the right answer. Penncrest took the final four points by answering correctly. But its total was eight points shy of outscoring

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Strath Haven. Garnet Valley finished 10 points behind the winning team.

The championship trophy was presented by Unangst, while Jack Holefelder, representing the Foundation of the Delaware County Chamber, offered congratulatory remarks.

Strath Haven team members playing on stage were Max Ruby, Thomas Powers, Daniel Isaacs, Josh Durgin and Ellen Donnelly. Other members were George Beatty, Alena Bortkiewicz, Sneha Narasimhan, Krupa Patel and Andrea Telenko.

"We're really proud. We worked hard for this," said Powers, a senior who 's headed to Yale University in the fall. "But we know some of the questions that went to the other teams were very hard."

"It's the luck of the draw," added Coach Mark Linkins, assisted by Nino DeProphetis. "But it's certainly nice when luck favors your team."

Bichner noted the last time Strath Haven was in the finals was in 1993 when it came in third. He said it began to take Hi-Q seriously several years ago, when students started preparing more intensely for the competition. He also said he 's impressed with how Hi-Q has been elevated and credited the team's coaches and the dedication of its members for their winning performance.

"It's nice to win at home. This will have a very positive impact on our students," he said.

Delco Hi-Q is a joint endeavor of The Foundation of the Delaware County Chamber and the Delaware County Intermediate Unit. David Bramble of the I.U. provided technical assistance.

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