You mockin’ ta me?

The Mock Trial team continues to win with “conviction”

BY MATTHEW J. PIERALDI
CRUSADER FEATURES STAFF

While New England won its first Super Bowl and Matt Gogol won his first PGA event at Pebble Beach, the Holy Cross Mock Trial team was busy winning another kind of competition. The fifth-year old team brought home two berths to the National Tournament in St. Paul, Minnesota, which will be held on St. Patrick’s Day weekend. March 15-17. Holy Cross sent two teams to the Regional Championships in Manchester, CT, both of whom finished with a 5-3 record. Out of the 20 teams competing, Holy Cross finished in fifth and fourth places, distinguishing itself as one of the best programs in what is considered by many the toughest region. Competing against schools such as Yale, Harvard, Boston College, Boston University, and Fordham University, Holy Cross managed to turn heads by being one of two schools (the other being Yale) to have two teams finishing in the top six (only teams finishing in the top six qualify for nationals).

Since the program’s inception in the fall of 1997, Holy Cross has established a record of excellence and a formidable reputation. Founder and four-year captain Ryan Haywood ‘01 led the team to two national championships, a formidable reputation. Founder and five-year captain John O’Donnell ’04 continued to keep Holy Cross on the winning track. Coached by practicing attorneys Ed McDermott and Carey Smith and run by Professor Scott Sandstrom, Holy Cross Mock Trial met almost daily since returning from break in order to prepare for the tournament.

With newfound depth, Holy Cross was able to field two teams at the Regional Championship, both of whom were considered formidable foes by all who faced them.

The Regional Championship consisted of four trials, two on Friday and two on Saturday. Each trial is scored by two judges, both of whom are either practicing lawyers or courtroom judges. Teams face a new competitor each round, the first of which is decided randomly. The second, third, and fourth rounds are decided by a team’s record; those with the strongest record face each other. In the trials, each team features three lawyers and three witnesses to help them not only advance their case, but also score points in areas such as courtroom demeanor, portrayal of their character, objections, and legal knowledge. Each team must prepare both sides of the case, which is a murder trial this year.

Students began preparing to convict or acquit the defendant, an associate at a fictitious advertising firm, back in September. Try-outs for the 24-person roster were held in October. This year nearly 60 students tried out. After the Ivy League Tournament in November at Yale, where team captain John O’Donnell took home best attorney honors, the team trimmed down to a 16-person roster and began preparing for the Regional Tournament. After hosting a scrimmage against Clark University and Manchester College (the second finisher at this year’s Regional Championships), Holy Cross headed into the Regional Championships on the first weekend in February, hitting on all cylinders.

The four-place team, captained by Cecilia Kelly ’04 and consisting of Elizabeth Crowley ’02, Erin Hickey ’03, Erin Tierney ’03, Heather Stanga ’04, Ruth Demeter ’05, Amanda DeVuono ’05, and Rian Romeo ’05 defeated the University of New Hampshire 2-0 and tied eventual third place finisher Yale. Their only outright loss was to eventual Regional Champion Boston University. The team’s strong performance showcased Holy Cross’ depth.

The fourth place team, captained by Rian Romeo ’05, Amanda DeVuono ’05, and Rian Romeo ’05 defeated the University of New Hampshire 2-0 and tied eventual third place finisher Yale. Their only outright loss was to eventual Regional Champion Boston University. The team’s strong performance showcased Holy Cross’ depth.

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Jazz clarinetist entertains at Holy Cross

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“Byron was hesitant to attempt it in concert. Nevertheless, and Cooligan started the piece with great gusto for a few minutes and then gave up as the difficulty increased. Professor Ashe said, “He was a great sport to try to ‘Siberian Sleighride’ for his children. He gave it the Holy Cross try.”

Patricia Milner ’03, a clarinetist in the Holy Cross Chamber Orchestra, found Byron to be “technically impressive,” but “not interactive enough” with the audience. Byron began the concert with his back to the audience, holding his clarinet into the piano. There was little physical engagement by Byron as a performer, but the music he played was quite expressive, revealing both his authentic passion for jazz and his many musical influences.

Professor Carol Lieberman of the Music Department and a faculty member of this First Year Program, rather impressed by Byron’s performance, thought it was a great concert. “It was a great honor and privilege for the First Year Program to have him here,” she said.

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