

Coronado High wins national academic competition

By David Hernandez



Rudy Gutierrez—El Paso Times Coronado students Luke Minton, left, Sheel Patel, center, and Andrew Paton hold the KCOS-TV High Q trophy they have won the past three years. Lead by their coach, Matthew Ballway, foreground, the team won a national trivia competition this past weekend. Not pictured is team member Teddy Cai.

Coronado High School won first place at a national academic competition in Washington, D.C., on Saturday and will head to Chicago this weekend

to compete against other national winners.

After placing second at the National Academic Championship the last two years, the school's High Q team hoped this was the year. And it was.

"Third time's the charm," team coach and Coronado High math teacher Matthew Ballway told the tournament's director as they shook hands after the victory.

The competition, formatted like a trivia show, tests students on a variety of subjects such as math, science, art, history and music.

Luke Minton, 17, a junior; Teddy Cai, 17, a senior; Sheer Patel, 17, a junior and team captain Andrew Paton, 18, a senior, eliminated three schools before moving on to the final round against West Chester East High School from Pennsylvania.

The Coronado High Q team members solved a trigonometry problem, arranged four wars in correct chronological order and identified Venus of Urbino, a 1538 Italian oil painting during this final stage, contributing to their winning score of 355-310.

At one point, the teams were given clues to identify the word excelsior. The clues were Stan Lee's favorite word, a brand of wood chips and others. It was a turning point when Paton answered correctly because it gave the members one of the greatest leads during the competition.

"I'm so proud of them," Ballway said. "Sometimes I may not show it. But I brag on them all the time."

He said the competition requires "quick retrieval" of knowledge and demands that students not hesitate in answering but be right at the same time.

Minton was named Most Valuable Player of the competition for the second consecutive year.

"I felt very excited and grateful that I was named MVP," Minton said. "It made me feel good about myself and it made me feel that I was contributing to the team and

contributing to our victory."

During a music question, he identified Alexander Nevsky before music from the film began playing, solely based on the facts the teams received.

"It feels really fulfilling to Luke and I who have been doing this for three ears now," Paton said.

Ballway said he has noticed the Coronado students are building a reputation as a top team because competitors recognized the school's name at the national

competition.

The team practices Mondays and Fridays during lunch time. On Mondays, the students face-off against Ballway and other teachers.

"I would say 70 percent of the time they beat us, and humble us," Ballway said.

The school will travel to Chicago on Sunday and compete on Monday against two other national champions from New Orleans and Chicago. The National Academic Championship was divided into three regions.

The team is in the last week of school and undergoing finals. The members said the work between school and High Q has been hard to balance but it has been worth it.

"This is a once-in-a-lifetime experience and something you can't do at school," Patel said.

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