

Glenwood High School's mock trial team takes 12th at state

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The Glenwood Springs High School mock trial state team, back row from left, assistant coach Tony Hershey, Travis Whitman, Kevin Carlson, Chuck Bergren-Aragon, Joe Ciborowski, coach Vic Zerbi and teacher sponsor Wes Burke; and front row from left, Cailey Arensman, McKenna Casey, Isabel Carlson and Marissa Molina.

Photo courtesy Wes Burke

GLENWOOD SPRINGS, Colorado — A group of Glenwood Springs High School sophomores and juniors did battle in court with the best mock trial teams in the state last weekend, finishing 12th out of 21 teams at the Colorado Bar Association's State High School Mock Trial Competition.

Considering that GSHS was represented at state this year by its B team, rather than the senior-laden A team, the finish was very respectable, Glenwood mock trial coach Vic Zerbi said.

"This is the best competition in the state, and they represented themselves and the school very well," he said. "They really stepped forward and worked hard going into regionals, and did an incredible amount of work before heading to state."

Glenwood's B team finished second to Durango's A team at last month's regional mock trial meet in Grand Junction, while the Glenwood A team was third. Only the top two teams from each of the 12 regions advance to state.

Last Friday and Saturday, teams from across Colorado competed in the annual state competition at the Jefferson County Combined Courts in Golden.

Zerbi said several of the A team members who didn't have other commitments were on hand to support their younger school mates. And they were done proud.

After falling to Colorado Academy two ballots to one in the first round, the Glenwood team defeated two of the eventual top-10 teams, Regis Jesuit High School (2-1) and Boulder High (3-0).

In the final round, Glenwood fell to the eventual seventh place finisher, Coronado High School (2-1) in what Zerbi described as a "gorilla war at best."

"We had some excellent performances the entire tournament," Zerbi said, noting that the team finished 2-2 and gained ballots in both rounds that they lost.

"Considering we didn't have single senior on the team, it says a lot about the future of the program," he said.

The team was made up of Isabel Carlson, Chuck Bergren-Aragon, Kevin Carlson, McKenna Casey, Marissa Molina, Joe Ciborowski, Travis Whitman and Cailey Arensman. Local attorneys Charlie Willman and Angela Roff, Deputy Ninth District Attorney Tony Hershey and GSHS social

studies teacher Wes Burke assisted with this year's team.

According to the Colorado Bar Association, more than 80 mock trial teams competed throughout the state this school year. Mock trial combines some elements involved in traditional clubs such as debate, drama, student council, team sports and honors society.

Students have all been studying the same fictitious case since September in which the defendant is charged with assault, burglary and theft. In each round, they had to be ready to perform either the prosecution or defense side of the case, raising objections and defending clients before real judges.

In the case, a university professor who claims to have a long-lost journal of Zebulon Pike is in a feud with a rival professor who claims that the journal is a fraud. One evening, the first professor is found unconscious, and the journal is missing.

This year's state championship team is from William Jackson Palmer High School, and will travel to Atlanta for the May 6-10 National High School Mock Trial tournament. Durango finished sixth in the state meet.