



UNDEFEATED

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Mock Trial team wins national championship

Team beats wins out over two-time champion UCLA

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Cavalier Daily Associate Editor

The University of Virginia mock trial team won the Collegiate Mock Trial National Championship, held in Des Moines, Iowa this past weekend.

Competing among 64 teams over the course of two days the University's team beat Harvard in the final round to win the championship.

"This was one of the toughest weekends in mock trial," fourth-year College student and mock trial secretary Benjamin Sachs said. "We faced some of the toughest teams."

Members of the University's team include fourth-year College students Benjamin Sachs and team captain

Samantha Batemen, third-year College students Mostafa Abdelkarim and team captain Daniel Young, second-year College students Sean Hamidi and Jamar Walker and first-year College students Ryann Burke and Steve Kanjo.

According to Sachs, a mock trial tournament consists of prosecution and defense teams arguing a single case in four separate rounds. In various tournaments throughout this year, teams from colleges and universities across the country argued a criminal case in which the plaintiff was charged with kidnapping a child, Sachs said.

"In every round, you direct your witnesses and cross examine the other team's witnesses, and that's what makes it so adversarial," he said.

According to Young, teams compete at invitational tournaments in the fall. Then, each of the 600 teams in the country is assigned to a regional tournament.

"If you finish first or second [at the regional tournament], you get a bid for the national championship," Young said.

The University's team won the Gettysburg Regional Tournament and was one of 64 teams to advance to the national level, Young said.

"We beat Harvard to win the national championship," Young said. "That makes us the number one team out of 600 in the country."

In securing the championship, the University's team ended the winning streak of two-time defending champions UCLA, Sachs said.

"Our extraordinary preparation led to this win," Sachs said, citing five to eight hours of practice each day in the weeks leading up to the tournament. "In mock trial, you have to think on your feet. We

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tried to stay two steps ahead of our opponents, and it really paid off."

Besides the national championship, the University's team won several individual awards this past weekend as well.

The All-American Attorney award was given to Young, and Abdelkarim received

the All-American Witness award. These awards are given to the top 10 attorneys and witnesses in each division, Young explained.

According to Young, the University sent two teams to the national tournament in 2004, finishing in 12th and 14th place. Last year, the University's team lost a tiebreaker in the final round of regionals and did not

qualify for the national tournament.

Both Young and Sachs said they are very pleased with the national title.

"Over the past couple of years, mock trial has become one of the most competitive pre-law organizations on Grounds, and we're very happy to have had such a successful season," Sachs said.



Courtesy Benjamin Sachs

The winning U.Va. Mock Trial team gathers around the National Championship Trophy.