

# DP Mock earns second straight top-ten state finish

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Santa Barbara County mock trial co-champions and arch rivals San Marcos and Dos Pueblos high schools were all smiles on Sunday as both teams capped their outstanding seasons by winning medals at the California Mock Trial Championships in Riverside.

The tournament brought together 32 county champions for the three-day competition. La Reina High School from Ventura County was crowned the champion and will represent California in the national championships.

In an unprecedented showing, Santa Barbara County teams both placed in the top eight in the state, with San Marcos placing fifth and Dos Pueblos placing eighth.

Both schools went 3-1 after two days of grueling back-to-back trials. The Royals, with victories over Sonoma, San Francisco and Tulare counties,

were a scant three points in one trial short of competing for the championship, while the Chargers, with victories over Los Angeles, Monterey and San Francisco counties, won the eighth-place medal — their second straight top-eight finish in the state tournament.

The state finals are the culmination of a long season of work for the mock trial competitors.

“The ability level of these students is amazing,” San Marcos teacher and coach Luke Ohrn said. “They work all year long and then challenge themselves at the highest level at state. It is a testament to their ability that both teams from Santa Barbara did so well.”

San Marcos senior Ellen Gleason said “mock trial is an incredibly rewarding experience, and this year in particular it was great to have the opportunity to represent Santa Barbara so well at the state competition.”

San Marcos returned to its statewide success in the mock trial competition, earning its fourth fifth-place finish to go along with its state championship titles in 2004 and 2006.

“State finals was an amazing experience,” San Marcos senior Gaby Wildfueur said. “All of our months of hard work were put to the test once again as we fought trial after trial, and I could not be any more ecstatic with the results. Winning fifth in the state is one of my proudest accomplishments. This was a weekend I will never forget.”

In early March, for the first time in history, both teams were named county co-champions after they tied in the championship round. After a

tiebreaking trial was held two days later, the Royals earned the lone state championship slot.

Last Wednesday, however, the Chargers learned that they had secured a wild card slot at the tournament, but the short notice left the team with only two days to prepare.

Still, Dos Pueblos co-captain and lead prosecuting attorney Jeff Campbell was elated to learn that his team was headed to Riverside.

“It was obviously shocking, but also thrilling,” Campbell said. “It sort of felt like an *Oceans Thirteen*-type movie going around campus to get everyone back together for one more weekend. The way the team responded shows how much this team means to us all.”

Having two county teams finish in the top eight at the state finals is a source of pride for Dos Pueblos co-captain Corinne Ruth.

“This year’s county competition was extremely intense and served to remind all of us of the large amounts of talent possessed by the students of Santa Barbara County,” Ruth said. “It was a privilege for us to be given the opportunity to go to the state competition alongside a team as talented as San Marcos. I’m so proud of how well Santa Barbara County did as a whole at the state level, proving how skilled both teams are.”