

# It's debatable

## Some call UK's debate team the best in the country, but 'winning not everything'

By CARY WILLIS  
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Football has Larry McCrimmon and Tim Gooch.

Basketball has Sam Bowie and Dirk Minniefield.

And debate has Jeff Jones and Steve Mancuso.

Who?

Their names may not be household words, and you might not see features done on them for the 6 o'clock news, but the debate team needs Mancuso and Jones just as badly as the basketball squad needs Bowie and Minniefield.

"Some people would say we have the top team in the country," said J.W. Patterson, director of debate at UK. "And Jeff is our top debater. He's been with us four years."

The coach said he shouldn't try to rate his team, but said it does compete against some very good ones —

Georgetown, Harvard and Northwestern, for example. Patterson said tiny West Georgia may have the strongest program in the nation this year.

The debate season runs from September through March, with the national tournament in April. Last year, UK was eliminated just before the quarterfinals at the national competition in Arizona. If invited to next April's meet, UK will battle 61 other teams in Pomona, Cal.

So far, UK's top varsity team (Jones and Mancuso) has won two tournaments and lost one. It will compete in about 10 more tourneys before April.

"I spend 10 to 20 hours a week researching the topic, depending on how close we are to a tournament," said Mancuso, an economics junior from Cincinnati. "It takes a lot of time and sacrifice to be good. I miss a

lot of football and basketball games and other student activities."

But he said the time spent is worth it.

"You see people (competing debaters) from all around the country and you develop good, close relationships with some of them. Doing well in competition isn't as important as meeting the people."

Jones, a senior majoring in philosophy and business, said he spends an average of 25 hours a week preparing for debates, but may spend up to 60 hours when a meet is near. "It definitely interferes with studies, but if you plan ahead, you can get by."

Both men said they do most of their research at the M.L. King Library, but like to use other libraries when the topic calls for it. Communications freshman Paul Kopasz, another UK team member, said he reads "a lot of magazine articles" and

sometimes practices his speech delivery.

Jones has been involved with debate since his sophomore year in high school in Toledo, Ohio, and said he enjoys the competition. "My biggest thrill is when we represent the University of Kentucky. Against some schools we're the underdog, and it's a great feeling beating the Dartmouths and Harvards," he said.

Jones, who plans to go to law school after graduation, said debate is competitive, instructional and "socially enjoyable. The only thing is, it requires almost too much to be really good at it."

According to Patterson, one topic is chosen each year by a panel of coaches, and every tournament is based on variations of that subject. This year's topic is, "Should the United States significantly increase foreign military commitments?"

Mancuso said the topics are almost always political in nature. "I don't like that a whole lot," he said. "Maybe we could have more value-oriented debates for a change... but then again, this year's topic is better than I thought it might be before the season began."

At a meet, each two-man team must be prepared to argue both sides of an issue, and a judge or panel of judges decides which squad is best-prepared and most persuasive. Mancuso said a good argument is more than just facts and figures. "It's really analyzing the facts that's more important than the research," he said.

Debates last up to two hours, and any team can expect to compete in as many as 10 debates in one tournament. Normally, only the two primary debaters, plus one or two extras, will represent a school at a given tournament.

The second and third teams travel this weekend to Morehead University for a tournament, while the top team will go to Wake Forest University in North Carolina Nov. 22 and 23.

Patterson said there are "about 10 members of the team" this season; one of whom is female, and a few of whom are on partial scholarships. "A majority of our members go into law school, but we by no means try to restrict it to that," he said.

"The basis of this program is to learn logical analysis of thought, research and the application of thought to problem-solving."

Mancuso attributes a good deal of the team's success to Patterson.

"Well, he keeps us on the right track and working hard," he said. "He's not in just for the competition like so many are. Most are hung up on winning. He's a great believer in making us teach ourselves."

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