

# Debaters win tourney during holiday break

By Don Puckett  
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After two impressive performances at California tournaments over the holidays, UK's top debate team, juniors Paul Skiermont and Jason Patil, think they are the best team in the country.

UK's national championship hopes received a boost when the two won the Redlands College Invitational Tournament in December. Only a few days earlier, Skiermont and Patil were in the semifinals of the University of Southern Califor-

nia Tournament.

Skiermont was the top individual debater at both tournaments. He has won the top speaker's award at five of the six tournaments in which he has competed this year.

By beating Texas in the final round of the Redlands tournament, UK's top team not only avenged a semifinal loss to the same team at USC, but also convinced many that they deserve the Copland award, which is presented to the National Debate Tournament's top seed.

"If the award were given today, it

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would be between us and Harvard," UK debate coach J.W. Patterson said.

Harvard's top team has competed at only three tournaments this year and has won two of them.

The Redlands tournament was the first win at an invitational for UK this school year, despite the team's impressive performances at every tournament this season.

Skiermont and Patil also won the Thoroughbred Round Robin in October, proving that they can compete head to head with the nation's most elite debate teams.