

Newton South Speech & Debate Team Sweeps State Tournament

Newton, MA April 16, 2021 – **History was made virtually** last weekend (April 10th & 11th) as the Newton South High School Speech and Debate team swept the Massachusetts Speech & Debate League (MSDL) State tournament in both Speech and Debate. Doing what no school has ever done before in Massachusetts history, Newton South took first place in all three levels of Public Forum Debate -- Varsity, Junior Varsity and Novice.

The team also won First Place for both DUO interpretation and a multiple speaker piece called “Selfie,” fourth place overall in Speech, and near or at the top in many of the 20 MSDL events competitions such as Poetry Reading, Original Oratory, and Dramatic Performance.

Over the last decade, Newton South Speech & Debate has won first-place five times in Varsity Public Forum, the most popular type of debate in the Massachusetts league. Newton South continued its legacy as the only school in Massachusetts to have a pair of female students win the Varsity championship, doing so for the third time.

The team has 132 students who compete throughout the academic year, led by head coach and Newton South Math and Statistics teacher Lisa Honeyman. Sarah Culpepper, a math teacher and Joshua Cohen, a former NSHS parent, coach the debate squad. All three coaches work to prepare for and manage the 30+ weekend tournaments the kids compete in each year.

“Everything about living during a pandemic has been a challenge, but these students have risen above ... and fully committed their energies to being powerful members of our Speech & Debate Team. They adapted well to the online format and have been working hard all year. It is exciting to see them do so well at States!” says Mrs. Honeyman, who founded the Speech team 24 years ago.

#GirlsRule

More than half of the debate captains on the South team have been female, many of the top debaters on the team have been female, and all of the team’s *head captains* during the team’s history have been female. When the team won the National championship in 2018, one of the two debaters on the winning team was female, also historic in an activity in which males have traditionally been more dominant.

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For more information, contact:

(415 words)

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Photos are available, contact Kim Smith, debate parent 617-905-2004 4sg@comcast.net
Newton South Speech & Debate Speech Division Champions

Newton South Speech & Debate Speech Champions
Pictured L to R
Adele Fegley, Aseel Rafat, Benjamin Moshes, Maya Zeldin, Stephanie Tian, Shona Goodkin,
Speech Captain.

