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Pupils with same passion compete

By Nikasha Dicks | Staff Writer

Sunday, May 17, 2009

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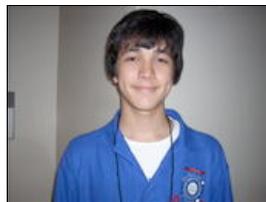
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Video highlights from the Egg-o-Naut competition at the 25th annual National Science Olympiad.

Jessica Hsu couldn't think of a better place to be Saturday than at the 25th annual National Science Olympiad.

2 / 19



Nikasha Dicks/Staff

Andrew Perry, 14, JC Booth Middle School, Peachtree City, GA. "Science brings together different types of people, some you may not have met otherwise," he said. "Because of science, you build close knit friendships with people on your team and from other places."

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"It's amazing to meet so many others who love science in one place," said Jessica, 17, from Green Valley High School in Henderson, Nev. "For students like us, science is a passion. This is what we get excited about."

She was one of thousands who came to Augusta for the national competition in which students competed in more than 30 events at Augusta State University, Episcopal Day School, St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School, Trinity on the Hill Methodist Church and Reid Memorial Presbyterian Church.

This was the second time the national competition has been held in Georgia.

One of the top teams was JC Booth Middle School from Peachtree City, Ga., which has competed for the past 18 years and has placed in the top six in their division for the past 16.

Each time, the team -- which placed fifth

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this year in Division B -- has been led by coach Mary Wilde, who will retire after this school year.

"It's going to be hard to leave the program," she said. "I've been coaching for the past 20 years. It's not something you can easily give up."

She enjoyed seeing the overall experience the team had during the competition.

"They were trading things with other teams (Friday night) and seeing them enjoy that is, to me, one of the highlights of the entire competition," Ms. Wilde said. "They are all here for the same reason and it's neat to see them with other kids who also want to do academically well."

She will pass the reigns to her daughter, who will become the team's head coach next year.

However, Ms. Wildes said she plans to help as much as she can.

Scott Panik, the coach for Green Valley, said the event opens up career possibilities for the competitors.

"I think, ultimately, what this competition does is show the kids that science is a valuable career choice and that they can enjoy it," he said. "It's more than just another subject in school for these kids. It's a passion."

Reach Nikasha Dicks at (706) 823-3336 or nikasha.dicks@augustachronicle.com.



PLACEMENTS

DIVISION B

- First:** Solon Middle School, Solon, Ohio
- Second:** ExCEL Homeschoolers, Washougal, Wash.
- Third:** Community Middle School, Plainsboro, N.J.
- Fourth:** Arden Middle School, Sacramento, Calif.
- Fifth:** JC Booth Middle School, Peachtree City, Ga.
- Sixth:** Muscatel Middle School, Rosemead, Calif.
- Seventh:** White Pines Middle School, Saginaw, Mich.
- Eighth:** Thomas Jefferson Middle School, Valparaiso, Ind.
- Ninth:** Eagle Hill Middle School, Manlius, N.Y.
- 10th:** Lakeshore Middle School, Stevensville, Mich.

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Kudos to the staff and volunteers at ASU who supported the NSO this weekend. A lot of hard work went into setting it up, organizing the events and providing the food to feed 5000 participants and their support folk. Good work, people! Thank you for your efforts.

Posted by [Casting Fool](#) on Sun May 17, 2009 10:11 AM



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