

The Academic Decathlon team studied World War II all year in preparation for the national competition in April.

As the team's nerves reached new heights and the day of the competition grew nearer, the Academic Decathlon team buckled down and studied their hardest. With the passing of each class, the team's goal of winning the national competition was in the near future. The team met after school in study groups to work on becoming skilled in various subjects such as art, music, and social science. Even on Saturdays, the team pushed their brains to the limit to learn all the material needed to win.

"While preparing for the national competition, I ran mostly on coffee, sweat, and coffee sweats," Dean Lester (10) explained about how he prepared for the competition.

After weeks of hard work and studying, the week of competition had finally arrived. The decathletes used every spare second they had on the plane, in the airport, and in the hotel to cram in last minute study sessions. They quizzed each other and rehearsed their speeches around the clock all in preparation for the long-awaited national competition held in Madison, Wisconsin.

Furthermore, Academic Decathlon was a year-round class dedicated to learning about a designated topic for the year. This year the topic chosen for the team to study was World War II. The topics were broken down into 10 subjects. Decathlon members were given written tests on seven topics such as music and science. Once members were well-versed in their respective subjects, they gave a prepared speech as well as an impromptu speech. After every speech was given, the decathletes went before judges for a mock interview. Out of all the members of the club, nine were chosen to represent Mississippi on the team competing at the national competition.

To prepare for upcoming nationals, the team traveled to Rockwall, Texas in October for a mock competition. As the only team from Mississippi the team should have felt out of place, but they rose above the odds as they competed against the best teams from Texas. Their dedication to the club

paid off as Anna Warden (10) and Beza Jupiter (11) both placed in the music category. From there, they competed in the state competition for the spot to be invited to the national competition.

In Wisconsin, one team from each state was invited to compete, as well as teams from China, Australia, and the United Kingdom. The team lived up to their motto of "Show no mercy" as Eli Howland (11) won a gold medal in the interview category, as well as highest scoring person on the team. Emily Harms (11) received most valuable player. Despite having to adjust their entire routine after getting a new coach, the team still lived up to their expectations.

"The team worked incredibly hard all year to help each other and themselves become better students and better decathletes. I'm so proud of everything they have done and am looking forward to continuing Academic Decathlon," Emily Harms (11), a decathlon captain, expressed about the year.

Being a decathlete meant being hardworking, dedicated, and studious. Academic Decathlon tested and challenged its members, but they used all their brain and will power to achieve their medals and turn a new leaf in the Mississippi branch of Academic Decathlon.

"This year we all came together as a team and all became closer friends," stated Anna Warden (10) about how the team grew closer together throughout the year.

above Eli Howland (11) wins a gold medal.

far right above Dean Lester (10) and Wil Peery (11) smile at the awards banquet.

above right Helen Kilgore (11) walks to a competition.

middle right Anna Warden (10), Helen Kilgore (11), and Zoe Bush (11) get ready for competition.

middle far right The decathlon team poses in front of the Capitol.

bottom left Anna Warden, Zoe Bush, and Beza Jupiter pose with their cheese hats.

bottom middle The whole team gets together for a cheese head picture.

bottom right Wil Peery poses with his new sunglasses and cheese hat.