

Pupils argue their way to the top

‘They embrace challenges and are inspirational to others’

CLINTON WITTSTOCK

Three teams from the southern suburbs clinched a place in the final round of the 2013 National Schools Moot Court Competition after competing at the Western Cape provincial round held at the Cape Town Magistrate’s Court on Saturday May 25.

Teams from Bergvliet High, Livingstone High, Heideveld High, Bridge House, Springfield Convent, Immaculata High, Pelican Park High, ID Mkize Secondary School and the Cape Academy of Maths, Science and Technology competed for one of the four top spots. A moot competition is a role-playing exercise at which participants are provided with the facts of an imaginary case, which involves human rights issues.

Working in teams of two, they write two short essays, defending each side, using the South African Constitution as a reference. The best essays are chosen and the authors given a chance to present their cases in court.

“It was seriously nerve-wracking initially,” said Sasha Holloway, 16, who represented Springfield.



■ From left, Shamika Johnson and Firouz Daniels from Livingstone High School in Claremont up against Zakariyah Toyer and Kurt Lee Tamon from the Cape Academy for Maths, Science and Technology in Tokai at the Moot Court competition at the Cape Town Magistrate’s Court on Saturday May 25.

“The judges ask hard questions, rapid fire; you have to watch out for confusion or signs of agreement and adjust accordingly.”

The competition played out in three courtrooms with six schools competing at a time.

The remaining three competing schools paced the hallways, eagerly going over their cases with their team members, while they waited their turns.

With only four teams going through to the final national round, to be held in Pretoria and Johannesburg in August, tensions ran high.

Each courtroom had a panel of five judges presiding over proceed-

ings and judging the teams presentation of their case, whether as a defendant or applicant.

“The competition was very good, I would think twice about taking some of them on in court,” said Junaid Baig, an attorney at Haldy Attorneys.

Justin McBride, an attorney at Marais, Muller and Yekiso, was encouraged by Mr Baig, who was a judge at last year’s competition, to volunteer his time to be a judge this year.

“I was very impressed by the standard of competition, these teams could give more than half the practicing attorneys a run for their money,” Mr McBride said.

Representing the Cape Academy of Maths, Science and Technology in Constantia, Zakariyah Toyer, 17 and Kurt Lee Tamon, 17, did their school proud. “We really enjoyed the experience, we have learnt a lot,” they said.

In the end though, the team from Immaculata High School took top honours, with the team from Bergvliet High School coming in a close second. Springfield Convent took the third place and the only school in the top four, not from the southern suburbs, Bridge House in Franschhoek, took the last spot.

Immaculata’s convenor for the competition, teacher Beverley Mc Arthur said their team was goal



■ The winning team from Immaculata are Olivia Habonimana and Danielle Dallas. They were assisted by attorney, Matilda Smith.

directed and motivated.

“They embrace challenges and are inspirational to others. In their dignified, respectful manner they are true ambassadors for the motto and ethos of the school,” she said.

The winning team at the national rounds will receive financial support towards their first year to study law at a South African university of their choice.

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