

Yantis High sweeps district UIL writing competitions; sends 23 to region

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Yantis High School came in second to host Fruitvale for the District 22A Academic UIL sweepstakes title this week. Of the 32 students competing, 23 placed high enough to advance to the regional contest scheduled May 3 at Stephen F. Austin University in Nacogdoches.

School coaches noted that while Fruitvale won the district championship, Yantis outscored the Fruitvale team by 121 points in head-to-head competition in the events in which both schools were entered.

The YHS academic teams brought home 12 first place medals, five second-place medals, four third-place medals, and many fourth through sixth place medals from the March 19 meet at Fruitvale High School.

Yantis writers won in all five writing competitions — news writing, feature writing, editorial writing, headline writing and ready writing — for the first time. At least one student earned top honors in each writing contest and at least two others placed in the top six in writing events as well, for a total of seven students recognized for their writing accomplishments.

“Winning all five writing contests was an outstanding accomplishment for our students,” said YHS Senior UIL Coach Chip Mathews. “My writers have won four of the five some years, but this was our first clean sweep at district in UIL writing.”

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Earning first place honors for journalism winners were Katlin Davis for news writing, Harley Honea feature writing, Taylor Hathcoat editorial writing and Josey Wetzel headline writing. Cristo Sanchez, who as a freshman last year won a sixth place medal at state, won first place in ready writing Wednesday; Shelby Shoemaker also placed fifth in ready writing. The four journalism champions joined by fourth place feature writer Courtney Ogle to capture the Journalism Team Championship.

“After many hours of Mr. Mathews helping me work on previous state meet papers, which we both found pretty challenging, I was able to walk away with a first place medal and advance to regionals for the first time in three years,” headline writing winner Josey Wetzel said.

The calculator team won the district championship for the fourth consecutive year. Jennie Shoemaker won first place honors, Shelby Walker second and Shelbie Shoemaker sixth. Finishing out the team was Amber Bagwell. The team is coached by David Stribling.

“We’ve worked really hard to be successful this year,” senior district champion Jennie Shoemaker said. “This was my fourth year on a district championship team, and the older competitors always help the younger team members to ensure that the Yantis calculator team remains dominant.”

The spelling and vocabulary teams and the literary criticism teams, coached by Chip Mathews, were also district champs. In fact, the spelling and vocabulary team cleaned up, taking the top four awards. Cristo Sanchez won first place honors, Shelbie Shoemaker second, Lila Hurley third and Dylan Beech fourth in spelling and vocabulary.

The literary criticism team took three of the top six awards, with Caragen Battles earning second place honors, Jennie Shoemaker placing fourth and Colten Burnett fifth. Coupled with teammate Cameron McCrary’s points, the YHS lit crit team posted the highest team score.

“I feel that this year’s Yantis Academic UIL spelling and vocabulary team will be a strong competitor come time for the regional competition,” sophomore gold medalist Cristo Sanchez said.

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The current issues and events team with consisted of Isaac Allen, Michael Carrasco, Destiny Garces and Shelby Young won first place team honors. Allen was recognized for his second place finish. Jamie Van Winkle is the team coach.

YHS students earned four medals in computer competitions. The first place computer science team consisted of Cristo Sanchez, Shelbie Shoemaker and Jennie Shoemaker. Sanchez and Shelbie Shoemaker tied for first place honors, and Jennie Shoemaker was recognized for her fifth place finish in computer science. Ashley Bagwell earned first place honors in computer applications. Laurie Steward coaches both computer science and computer applications.

The first place social studies team included Isaac Allen, Rusty Wilkey, Amanda Hendricks and Bailea Curry. Allen won first place honors and Wilkey third place honors. Hendricks was recognized for her fourth place finish and Curry for fifth. Thomas Copeland is the social studies coach.

Gracie Beech won the Top Scorer award in chemistry, tied for Top Contestant in physics and won second place honors in science. Christi Creager-Quinn is the science coach.

YHS took three of the top six slots in poetry interpretation. Katlin Davis won first place honors and Cameron McCrary third place honors. Hannah Perry was also recognized for her fourth place finish in poetry interpretation. The team is coached by Wendy Stinson.

“This year, I placed first in poetry interpretation and news writing. During the next several weeks before regional competition, everyone will be working extremely hard to prepare for regionals. As Mr. Mathews would say, ‘Take no prisoners!’” YHS junior Katlin Davis said.

The mathematics and number sense teams, coached by Chris McCarty, won second place team honors. The mathematics team consisted of Ashley Bagwell, Hannah Perry, Rebecca Perry and Anna Burgess. Bagwell earned third place honors in math. Jack Phillips was recognized for his fourth place finish in number sense, while Trenton Norris and Lisa Hurley tied for fifth; completing the number sense team was Amber Bagwell.

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In accounting, Breck Barrett was recognized for placing fourth and Anna Burgess for finishing fifth.

— Additional reporting by YHS journalism student Katlin Davis; compiled from information obtained from YHS UIL coaches Kristin McKinney, Chip Mathews and Laurie Steward.