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UK Debating Team's Success Not Debatable

By CAROLYN GATZ
OF THE HERALD STAFF

It's only logical that the debate team from Henry Clay's hometown should be pretty good.

It is.

But ask the first string of the University of Kentucky debate team exactly how good they are. "It's debatable," they say.

Actually, Gil Skillman and Gerry Oberst, UK's "star" debaters, didn't say that when they were asked to rank UK's team during an interview.

They said it depended on the basis of comparison used.

But they agreed the team was pretty good — no matter what criteria were used. Pretty good — like up among the two or three best teams on the national collegiate debate circuit.

Skillman, 20, a junior from Parkersburg, W. Va., is a personable guy who slips back and forth from the eloquence expected of a debater to an idiosyncratic slang.

One minute he says, "Essentially it's who most effectively argues the major issues in the controversy — whether the current policies are bad, and if they're

inherently so and if there's any way to change that policy without being more deleterious to society." (He was explaining what determines the winner in a debate.)

The next moment, he gulps, a little self-consciously, "When you're a little goober in high school, you don't think about much more than competition." (He was explaining the force which pulled him into debating during his senior year.)

His partner, Gerry Oberst, is 21 and a senior philosophy major from Owensboro. He began debating when he was a junior in high school.

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SKILLMAN

OBERST

PATTERSON