

# UK debate team prepares for National Debate Tournament

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## Extensive research is vital

Adding to the regular jumble of newspapers, magazines and books researched in the many UK libraries, Skillman and Oberst have turned to congressional hearings to beef up their evidence preparations. "Debate now is really technical in nature because you delve so deeply in issues," said Oberst. "A debate is developed mainly for the debate officials and people in the audience, not for the layman."

Debating ordinarily takes much serious rehearsal by a team, but Skillman and Oberst, who have worked together for so long, practice informally at home instead. In the past, they held intrasquad practice debates two or

three times a week in the office tower.

The format of an intercollegiate debate is probably unknown to the peaceful, nondebating student, so Skillman offered this description of the confrontation:

The debate setting consists of one or more judges and two two-man teams which have their materials laid out in front of them. The debate begins. Member 1 of Team 1 has ten minutes to present the affirmative case. He argues for a change and gives his team's plan.

Following his statement, a member of Team 2, the negative side, cross-examines his foe, trying to find weaknesses in the presentation and the logic of the case. Meanwhile, his partner prepares for the upcoming ten-minute

negative constructive in which he argues against the change, or sometimes offers an alternative solution.

Both teams are tense, alert for openings. After the first negative speech an affirmative team member has three minutes of cross-examination to attack. His teammate gathers facts and logic for his ten-minute second affirmative speech which will follow.

The purpose of his speech is to rebuild the affirmative case while refuting the first negative attack. After cross-examination by Team 2, there is a final negative speech and cross-examination.

After the first speeches, there are four rebuttals lasting five minutes, with the negative side going first. After the final affirmative rebuttal, the judge consults

his scoring notes and prepares his verdict.

"Last year we won four tournaments, which was the most for any one team," said Skillman. "We won our Kentucky Round-Robin, going through eight teams undefeated, and also went undefeated in the Georgia Round-Robin." He and Oberst also walked away with firsts in the Redlands and Kansas Invitationals.

Although excellent debaters, Skillman and Oberst are, to individual extents, capable of keeping their argumentative outbursts under control. "Debate is also the process of diplomacy," said Oberst, authoritatively. "We don't always walk around with a chip on our shoulders." But, as Skillman admitted, "You will get the tendency to debate with people."