

# Debate team falls short of first place at tourney

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Everything was going UK's way at this weekend's national debate tournament.

UK's top team, juniors Paul Skiermont and Jason Patil, had seven wins and one loss after the eight preliminary debates and were the tournament's top seed entering elimination rounds.

Skiermont had been named the tournament's most valuable speaker, an honor he had achieved many times already this season.

But the top speaker award was the highlight of the weekend for the UK squad.

After winning a debate in the sweet 16, Patil and Skiermont ran into a tricky Wake Forest team and lost the debate on a four-to-one decision.

"They ran a new case that we had never heard of," Skiermont said. "We didn't have the arguments to beat it. There was nothing we could do."

The loss was a blow to the hopes of a team determined to bring home a national championship.

It entered the tournament ranked No. 1, ahead of heavy competition by teams from Harvard and Emory.

"We're not too disappointed," Skiermont said.

"Our goal was being the top seed at the (National Debate Tournament). Once you get here, things are too unpredictable to count on winning it all."

UK fell short of one other goal: becoming the first squad in history to advance three teams to elimination rounds at the nationals.

UK's third team, senior Cy Kiani and junior Jay Finch, won only four rounds in preliminary debates and did not advance to elimination rounds for the first time this season.

UK's second team, senior Trevor Wells and sophomore Jason Renzelmann, won five preliminary debates before losing in the sweet 16 to the top team from Harvard.

The UK squad breathed a collective sigh of relief after the tournament, glad that the long season finally is over.

Now, they say, they can finally can forget about long research sessions and concentrate on school.

The squad loses three key members next season.

Two seniors, Kiani and Wells, will graduate, and Patil plans to transfer back to Stanford.