

“Team THG – you made it to the quarterfinals!” – A student’s perspective

While many things have been very different for our debate team compared to previous years, we still managed to enjoy this year's senior debating tournament just as much (mainly because we could wear sweaters and slippers during debates). Starting the season in December, we have discovered our affinity for impromptu debates early on and were able to improve our structure and strategy working together as a team. With two wins and two losses we entered the highlight of every season in March: the big weekend-long tournament (usually in Würzburg, this year on Zoom). While our planning was not always the best, we still managed to win our first debate on Friday, of course it was the unprepared debate (like I said, we prefer not having to put a lot of effort into planning beforehand). Sadly, we lost the prepared one. At this point, no one could have imagined what would be happening on Saturday.

Starting early in the morning, our team managed to convince the judges that local communities should not be able to cap the number of local tourists entering their regions. We realized: if we won the last debate of the tournament in the afternoon, we could move on to the partial octo-finals. With these thoughts in mind, my pulse started to race and fingers started shaking as we hadn't won a prepared debate all season and our opponent was strong. At 13:45 the debate began and our first speaker started to propose the motion “This House would make companies liable for human rights abuses that occur anywhere in their supply chains”. It was a difficult debate and our teammates were cheering for us behind their screens while Lorenz, Ronja and I tried to defend our case.

After what felt like an eternity the judges announced the winner: “We gave this win unanimously to House Proposition.”

We won! We actually won! An hour later the breaking teams were announced and what we never expected to happen became reality. Ranked on place 7 in total, we qualified for the partial octo-finals the following day.

In an emergency team meeting (online of course), we decided who would have the honors to speak against ISF Frankfurt the next day.

At this point we were still in shock and couldn't believe what had just happened, our expectations were exceeded, but we knew we could go further.

The following day we logged onto Zoom again and prepared ourselves for what might have been the most difficult debate of the season so far. After an hour of preparation, Johannes, Anna S. and I logged into the debate room, turned on our cameras and explained to the three judges and our opponent why attempted and committed crimes should not be punished equally, and we were successful. It felt surreal hearing these words: “We gave this win to the opposition, Team THG you made it to the quarterfinals.”

No one from our team has ever made it this far and it still feels crazy being one of the eight best debate teams of the whole tournament (the good crazy though).

We are so proud and without our coach we would've never come this far, so the biggest thank you goes out to Ms. Sunten who has supported and guided us through this whole journey.

Noa Engländer