

Consuming passion

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Burlington County Times

Delran students take a county competition for the second straight year.

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PEMBERTON TOWNSHIP - It came down to one word - slamming.

That is the term used to describe a telephone company who changes a customer's long-distance calling plan without permission.

Victor Canduci, a senior at Delran High School, correctly answered the question, which put his team 10 points ahead of Florence Township Memorial High School to win the county's 10th annual Consumer Bowl.

Canduci played the first round of the three-round final and was substituted during the second round. Team adviser Nathan Marter decided to put him back in for the final round and the move paid off.

Each high school team has four members and one alternate and can substitute players between rounds.

"We made a critical substitution," Marter said. "He was a little nervous in the beginning but he came through in the end."

Delran is the defending champion, having won its first Consumer Bowl last year under the direction of adviser Karen Schmidt, who is on maternity leave.

Captain Oksana Kramar, a senior, said the consecutive win felt "amazing."

"I'm very happy," she said. "I get to go with a good memory of Consumer Bowl and the community."

Kramar has been a member of the team for all three years the school has competed.

Also on the winning team are seniors Lewis "Dan" Dick and Gregory Etter and junior Jason Miller. The team advances to the regional competition April 3.

Delran scored 70 points, defeating Florence, the 2007 champions, who scored 60 points. Seneca High School finished third with 30 points, followed by Cherokee High School with 25 points.

Students answered questions on an array of topics including the Consumer Fraud Act, the Do Not Call Law and the Lemon Law during the game-show style competition.

The event is sponsored by the state Division of Consumer Affairs and the Burlington County Department of Consumer Affairs. It was held at the main campus of Burlington County College.

A record 12 teams participated this year. Pemberton, Bordentown, Burlington City, Burlington County Institute of Technology-Westampton, Cinnaminson, Riverside, Northern Burlington and Lenape were eliminated in earlier rounds.

The traditionally calm competition saw some controversy this year during the final round. Two teams - Florence and Cherokee - buzzed in on a

question about ticket brokers before Consumer Bowl Director Margaret Anastos, chief of staff of the state Division of Consumer Affairs, finished stating the multiple choice answers.

When a student buzzes in before the question is fully stated, he must respond with the letter and full answer. The judges ruled that both Florence and Cherokee only gave partial answers and after some debate over whether Cherokee could add to its response, Anastos decided to discard the question.

In doing so, neither team had points deducted for answering incorrectly, which put Florence and Delran in a tie for the lead.

"It was a little nerve-racking," Marter said.

Marter said the students worked hard and he did his best to psych them for being the defending champions.

"We had to represent the school well," he said.

February 18, 2009 03:20 AM