

THE EX FILES

**October Edition
Volume 1, Issue No. 2**

From the Publisher

As we go to press with this second edition of *The Ex Files*, the extemporaneous speaking season has begun for the 2008-2009 year. The Wake Forest National Early Bird Tournament and the Yale University Invitational Tournament are now behind us and the extemporaneous speaking community is abuzz over some of the results of those first two tournaments. Although reports from competitors indicated that the tournaments were smaller than year's past, mostly due to travel costs, one would see very little drop in quality when looking at the final rankings of the competitors at each tournament. Our first-ever Extemp Question Central National Points Race has begun with these two tournaments, and updated individual and team rankings can be found in this edition.

On another note, the first edition of *The Ex Files* received great reviews from extemporaneous speaking competitors and coaches alike. Here at Extemp Question Central, our writing staff is very appreciative of the support we have been given by the extemporaneous speaking community and we hope that you will continue to look to us as one of your premier sources of free extemporaneous speaking materials.

As with last month's edition, this magazine will provide extempers with two topic briefs over international issues, a St. Mark's tournament overview provided by Sarah Anand, a strategy article over impacting in extemporaneous speaking, and an exclusive interview with 2008 CFL and NFL International extemporaneous speaking champion Akshar Rambachan.

Look for the next edition of *The Ex Files* before The Glenbrooks in late November. We hope for that edition to include a Glenbrooks tournament overview from last year's Glenbrooks champion Ian Pachevre as well as further topic briefs to help prepare extempers for questions they may encounter down the road. Again, thank you for your support and we hope that you enjoy this second edition of *The Ex Files*.

-Logan Scisco



Volume 1, No. 2

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Impacting – It’s THAT Important

by Sebastian Pyrek¹

The typical extemper probably has multiple areas in which he/she needs to improve in to reach ultimate perfection, be it delivery, knowledge base, or anything out of the myriad of qualities that makes the ‘good’ extemper good. One thing that is arguably the most important is *analysis*, because we are answering a question, and our ranks depend directly on this answer. Also, after a season, having only 7 minutes to speak is a curse - it is difficult to gather a focus and be deliberate in what we want to say. This is where impacting can come in and save the common extemper and add a whole new dimension of organization to a speech.

You may be asking yourself: “Why is impacting important?” To answer this question, I’ll just tell you that an *impact* probably killed the dinosaurs and you do not need a better example!

Enough with the silliness though, impacts will make a world of difference. It is also very easy to do (it can be broken down into three parts) Just ask yourself these three questions:

1. **What is/will happen(ing)? This could also be an idea** – *This will be one of your main sub-points, for the example of this article we will use the premise of this article as the idea who’s significance we will impact: Impacting is important.*
2. **Why is this the case?** – *With every statement that you make in your speech you need to ask yourself this question. At this point you will cite your sources and use this evidence to bolster your factual position on the issue. Impacting gives the extemper a more rigid structure because it allows evidence and time to be used to its maximal value, as according to an article in the October edition of Ex Files Magazine.*
3. **Why is this important?** – *This is the most important part of your argument and the impact part of the argument. You must ask yourself this question and answer it in your mind. Without this final point your entire idea or sub-point goes to waste. Skipping this part makes you no better than an encyclopedia. This is where you involve your own thoughts and synthesis, and if you can convince your judge that what you said is important for every idea in relation to your question and the wider issue, you will have no difficulty in winning or placing within the top of each of your rounds. Impacting is extremely important because the rigid structure allows the extemper to make sense to the judge and the audience and fully communicate their ideas. This reduces the informational asymmetry that occurs when the extemper assumes that the judge ‘gets’ what the extemper is saying. A properly implemented impact is the key to ‘killing’ the competition.*

This is not difficult to do once you get yourself in the habit of asking these three questions. The overall appearance of your speech will also greatly improve. You will see how many sub-points belong under your main points and you will not blindly scatter your ideas to the four corners of the world. The 7 minutes you receive will also not be as restrictive once you can contain your ideas in these neat little packages, and the clarity of your speaking will also reduce

¹ Sebastian Pyrek is currently a freshman at New York University majoring in Mathematics. He was the 2008 Kentucky High School Speech League State Champion in Extemporaneous Speaking. He has broken to Semifinals at the Barkley Forum and Quarterfinals at the NFL National Championships. He currently is a member of NYU’s Parliamentary Debate Society and also is a Student Congress State Champion in Kentucky.

your need to rush and increase your clarity. If you can speak with a purpose, those who you want to understand you will understand you.

St. Marks – From Sleep to Prep (All in a Day’s Work)

By Sarah Anand²

The St. Marks tournament in Dallas, Texas was unlike a lot of national tournaments I have been to. For starters, it was in the hotel I was staying at, making it truly a bizarre and great experience to take the elevator down to the prep room in the main lobby. But for reasons that did not have to do with the surroundings, St. Marks is also unique because it allows the competitor (if he or she wishes) to double enter in ISX and USX. By the end of the second day, a person who makes it to finals in both fields would have had the opportunity to speak twelve times (six preliminary rounds, six out rounds). With more rounds competed in one day than any day at Nationals, an extemper might be thinking, “How exactly do I keep my sanity and still give a great speech by the end of the day?” For me, preparation for this tournament was not too different than what I normally would do. However, because it was towards the beginning of the season, I did have to make sure my focus was as consistent as it could be.

How the tournament is structured

If you decide to single enter in one extemp division, St. Marks will be a relatively relaxing tournament. If you decide to enter in both divisions, then St. Marks will be a relatively hectic, yet fun tournament! The rounds are essentially one after the other, in two hour intervals (8 a.m, 10 a.m. 12 p.m., etc), alternating between Domestic and International rounds. Some of the round topics that came up last year were (for DX) American economy, presidential election, environment/energy, and judicial/executive issues. For IX, some topics included Europe, the Middle East, and Asia. With the end of the first day, all the preliminary rounds are completed, and breaks are released the following morning (to quarterfinals from my experience). On the second day, breaks are handled like any other tournament, with quarterfinals to semi-finals, and semis to finals (keep in mind that if you have broken in both IX and USX, you will be going to two quarters rounds, two sems rounds, and two final rounds). The final rounds (last year) were hypothetical situations, with a question attached at the end based on the aforementioned scenario. For IX, the six competitors each (in laymen terms) had to choose a country and explain why it should be considered for a permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council. For DX, the competitor was asked to choose a candidate that hypothetically would not get picked for the 2008 presidential election, and explain why he or she would be the best choice as nominee in the 2012 election.

Before the tournament

I was not fortunate enough to attend the Wake Forest or Yale tournament, so St. Marks was my first out of state competition. Before attending, I was puzzled as to how I would be able to get over not only the concept of six speeches in one day, but also speaking on domestic issues. I

² Sarah Anand competed for Desert Vista High School in Phoenix, Arizona, and was coached by Mr. Victor Silva. She was a two time qualifier to the National Forensic League (NFL) Nationals in International extemporaneous speaking, finishing as a quarterfinalist and octo-finalist respectively in 2007 and 2008. She was a double finalist in USX and ISX at the 2007 St. Marks tournament, semi-finalist and finalist in 2007 and 2008 respectively at the Glenbrooks tournament, invitee to the 2008 Montgomery Bell Extemp Round Robin, quarterfinalist at the 2008 Harvard tournament, and attained the level of Premier Distinction in the NFL. She attends the University of Arizona in Tucson, Arizona, studying business and political science.

consider myself an IX-er, so knowing I would have to talk about DX topics at least three times was daunting. I started practicing speeches the week after school started (two to three speeches) so I could build up consistency and familiarity with the event again. The transition from summer vacation to extemp practice was grueling at first, but by the time October rolled around, I felt like the gap had been closed. I worked with my coach on various drills (intro redo's, link exercises, impact statements, timing, delivery, and personality development). Just as important as running speeches, so too was reading! I read the usual papers/magazines (New York Times, The Economist, The Financial Times, etc), and tried to read specific think tank and journal articles on subjects I was unfamiliar with (especially domestic issues). Although it was nerve-racking at first, some of the practice speeches I gave were on topics that I was not too comfortable with; this helped me simulate what I would do if the same situation happened at the actual tournament. On the day that I left for Dallas, I printed out all the major headlines of the *New York Times* to read on the plane ride there.

The final round

All of the questions I answered prior to the final rounds were standard yet upon reading the slips of paper containing what we would have to speak on before the final round, I realized that this scenario was something I had not prepared for! Being first speaker for my first final (IX), I had to immediately start thinking what country I would choose to have a permanent seat on the Security Council. I settled on India, thinking it to be a powerful country in Asia that was not only rising in terms of it's economy, but also politically as well (wielding considerable more influence than it used to). In prepping out the speech, I thought I had made a strong case for why India *had* to be a permanent member, speaking on all its accomplishments in the recent past. However, I forgot one important (and large) detail: analyzing India's relationship with all five permanent members, and how that would play into India's bid for a seat. I think this is a major reason why I placed in the bottom half of the final, and led me to realize an important lesson; whenever faced with a hypothetical situation, your answer as well as the parts of the scenario are equally important and must be addressed in the seven minutes given. Instead of giving a seven minute speech on how much the country has progressed, I should have focused more on what India brings to the table in regards to the issues at hand, and the countries already seated.

For the DX final, my scenario (to the best of my memory) was like this: Hillary Clinton wins the presidency in 2008, but decides not to run in 2012. Which candidate should be the Democratic nominee in that election? I chose Barack Obama, focusing on the experience he would gain by then (foreign policy wise as well as domestic), and the undercurrent of young voters who would help propel him. I ended up placing in the top half of this final round, and I think it might have been because I knew (surprisingly for a DX topic!) more about the subject at hand, and because I was definitely more relaxed.

All in all, St. Marks was a great tournament, and I'm so happy that I attended!

Syria and Iran as Agents of Change in the Middle East

By Omar Qureshi³

The Middle East has long been an area of major misunderstanding for the west. Whether it is the volatile nature of popular will in Iran or the legacy politics in Syria there doesn't seem to be a clear, general regional trend. The challenge of this understanding has led to many different foreign policy approaches towards the region as a whole. Regardless of whether it has been Clinton's "aesthetic peace policy" or the much more expansive "Bush Doctrine" of preemptive war, these policies are specifically developed for the Middle East. Moreover, these policies have embraced the 1975 idea of *Pax Syriana*. This term literally means "Syrian peace," but international relations theorists have taken it to mean the attempted reshaping of the Middle East to the desires of major actors. Clinton wanted peace- or at least the appearance of peace and George W. Bush wants to develop strategic alliances backed by hard power- a move that has substantially disenfranchised the Middle East on the whole. The preeminent actors in the Middle East today are Syria and Iran.

Syrian Political Front

It does not appear that Syrian President Bashar Al- Assad is going to be leaving his position at any time in the foreseeable future. That being said the chief actor –though not the chief power holder- is actually Walid Moallem, the Syrian foreign minister. Moallem has worked in engaging in talks with U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as well as being a relatively supportive agent in support of Michel Suleiman, the newly elected president of Lebanon. More importantly, Moallem has started along the path to engage the new Israeli government over developing a peace deal for the retrieval former Syrian region of Golan Heights.⁴ The responsive nature of Syrian politics is by no means simply reflective of a change of heart from the interior. Instead it has been developed by strategic goals that the Assad administration has failed to ascertain in the past. The goals are three fold. Syria wants to regain Golan Heights, assert itself as a major regional power, and protect itself from an Iraq-esque invasion. With these goals in mind, it is quite apparent to see that Syria is engaging in a more strategic, goal oriented foreign policy.

Iranian Political Woes

In stark contrast with Syrian legacy politics, Iranian politics is heavily dependent upon who happens to be in office at any given point in time. Between 1997 and 2005, Iran was in a very different state. The country was being led by reformist president Mohammed Khatami, who won in successive landslide victories. Khatami was very progressive, allowing for a freer media, a stream lined economy, and a release from the clerical influence in Iran. He championed reforms in the office of the presidency, slowly eliminating some of the power from the institution. All of this was put to an end following his second term, because in Iran no president may be in office for

³ Omar Qureshi was a competitor at Monett High School in Monett, Missouri. While not entering the national circuit due to travel restrictions, Omar won over twenty championships in Extemporaneous Speaking in the state of Missouri. He was runner up at the Missouri State Tournament in Extemporaneous Speaking as well as the Missouri State Lincoln-Douglas Debate Champion. As a national qualifier in Lincoln Douglas Debate and three time national qualifier in International Extemporaneous Speaking, Omar chose to attend the National Forensics League National Tournament in Extemporaneous Speaking for his three qualifying years. After a becoming a national quarterfinalist in International Extemporaneous Speaking in 2006, Omar was a national semifinalist in Extemporaneous Commentary in 2007. He was the Runner-up in International Extemporaneous Speaking at the NFL National Tournament in 2008 as well as an NFL All-American. Omar is currently a freshman at Johns Hopkins University and will be studying Economics and International Studies.

⁴ *The Wall Street Journal*. (September 30, 2008). "Transcript: Syria's Walid Moallem."

more than two consecutive terms. The people of Iran then elected current president Mahmoud Ahmadinejad. Ahmadinejad reinstated the clerical influence, cut off the freedom of the media, and made the office of president more powerful than ever- at the cost of the economy and progressive infrastructure.⁵ Whereas Khatami had every reason to have a frictionless foreign policy because his approval rating was already high, Ahmadinejad is suffering chronically low approval ratings, and in order to compensate is making radical statements against the west. Ultimately, the people of Iran want prosperity in either the domestic arena or they want power in the international arena- not unlike all countries. Ahmadinejad is attempting to use aggressive diplomatic statements along with asserting his power in the Middle East to regain some of that domestic support. Nevertheless, there could be a challenge to his authority come the next elections as Khatami may run for another term. While it is unlikely that there will be a fair election to seek this next term, another possibility might be a Khatami agreement with the conservative administration. The details aren't yet hashed out, but it is sure to bring another change to Iran.

Collective Iranian-Syrian Agenda

A product of history as much as fate, the Iranian and Syrian governments have come together to push forth an agenda of Middle Eastern solidarity. This idea was elaborated by Vali Nasr in his book the Shia Revival. Nasr believed that it wasn't necessarily the Shiite religion that would push the Iranian agenda, but instead the development of strategic allies to spread the influence of Iran. There is no better place this is exemplified than in the presidential office in Syria. Bashar Al Assad and his lineage have not been clearly partial to either Shiite Islam or Sunni Islam. On face, this would seem opposite the Iranian agenda, but Iran realizes that Syria's strategic location as a buffer zone to Lebanon as well as a border state to Iraq makes it a necessary ally. With the support of Syria, Iran has extended its power to Lebanon. This is apparent because Iran has been able to sponsor the Lebanese group Hezbollah by transporting weapons and supplies through Syria. More importantly, Syria and Iran are now a formidable diplomatic bloc. The U.S. *Pax Syriana* idea is centered on dividing and conquering in a political way, by reducing the influence of Iran in the Middle East. Needless to say, with Syria becoming entrenched in Middle Eastern politics specifically with Iran, this is no longer a viable policy option. Diplomacy must involve both Iran and Syria with their new found alliance.

Meaning for the Middle East

Contrary to the example that Iraq has set, the Middle East is becoming substantially more independent as a region. This means that there has actually been a decrease on minor differences and an emphasis on developing bonds that push the west away from the Middle East. The Syrian efforts to reconcile with Israel over Golan as well as their Doha talks over the future of Lebanon indicate that Syria is trying to be a uniting agent. Collectively this will lead to a decrease in the influence of the west. Connecting forces with Iran is a way to show that the Middle East as a whole will pull away from the influence of the United States. The Middle East is amidst its own change. A change that embodies the idea of *Pax Syriana* and in a fashion that makes international political scientists reminisce on regional structures of cohesion, it is an idea being pushed forth by Syria itself. The Middle East will be a drastically different place if the relationship between Iran and Syria is allowed to fully form.⁶

⁵ *The Economist*. (October 9, 2008). "Khatami Returns?"

⁶ To prevent excessive footnoting, all of the sources used can be found at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy Studies at the Brookings Institution, The Washington Institute for Near East Policy Studies, and the Summer 2008 edition of the Yale Journal of International Affairs.

Extempers Corner: Akshar Rambachan

Interview by Logan Scisco

Competing for Eastview High School in Apple Valley, Minnesota for Todd Hering, Akshar Rambachan achieved a high level of success in the 2007-2008 extemporaneous speaking season. By the end of the season, Akshar had won the Minnesota Class 2A extemporaneous speaking state championship and then became only the second extemporaneous speaker ever to win the CFL and NFL national extemporaneous speaking championships in the same year. He also won the Mehta Bowl, awarded to the final round national champion in International Extemporaneous Speaking. Akshar also holds the unique distinction of forming the only brother-sister combination to win an NFL extemporaneous speaking national championship, as his sister, Ishanaa Rambachan, won the 2004 NFL International Extemporaneous Speaking national championship (as well as the final round national championship) in Salt Lake City, Utah.

Logan Scisco: First off all Akshar, congratulations on the victories at CFL and NFL Nationals. It has to be a great feeling to be only the second extemper in history to achieve such a milestone.

Akshar Rambachan: Thanks a lot. I appreciate this opportunity to talk to the extemp community.

LS: So tell us, how did you get started in extemp?

AR: My sister did extemp and my debate coach, Mr. Hering, was also the extemp coach. From the advice of both of them. I took up the challenge.

LS: Who had the most influence on your extemporaneous speaking career?

AR: Two people had an enormous influence on my career: my coach, Mr. Hering and my Dad. Mr. Hering is an extremely dedicated coach and he would spend as much time as we needed to help us out. I never felt that a practice with him was a waste. More importantly, we all got along with him so well, that we enjoyed just hanging out and talking casually about non-speech stuff. This helped me feel comfortable working with him as he is both a coach and a friend. My Dad has helped me with public speaking since the 6th grade when I did serious prose in Middle School Declam. He taught me the importance of being accessible as a speaker and would always come to my final rounds and provide great support for me. Along with my Mom, we would always have dinner table political conversations that would always stimulate my intellect.

LS: Finding your “niche” in forensics is one of the hardest things for competitors to do when they begin the activity. When did you know extemp was the right event for you?

AR: Extemp was my one and only event and I can honestly say that I enjoyed every moment of it. I really loved the atmosphere of my freshman year. I broke to Varsity finals several times and was able to compete on the same stage as Kevin Troy, James Hohmann, and Alex Stephenson. The year before I started Extemp, I would watch my sister's final rounds. It was truly a privilege to watch four different national champions compete and being able to compete head-to-head with three of them. I remember those final rounds being of such high quality that I immediately was drawn to Extemp.

LS: You come from a school with a rich tradition of extemporaneous speaking national champions, with a sweep of the International Extemp and US Extemp titles in 2004 and a US Extemp championship in 2005. Do you believe that helped you achieve what you did?

AR: Eastview's previous success at the National tournament definitely made me aim high from the very beginning. I saw that winning the National tournament was possible. Tradition is always a great motivator.

LS: To build on that last question, you come from a state that has had an enormous amount of success in extemporaneous speaking over the last five years. Two CFL national champions and six NFL champions, excluding final round national championships, have come from Minnesota. Do you believe your years competing in Minnesota helped you develop into a strong extemporaneous speaker? Also, could you share some insight into what it is like to compete in such a high equality environment.

AR: I don't think I would have won Nationals without the quality of competition here in Minnesota- from Apple Valley, Eagan and Lakeville. Many wonder why people from Minnesota do not travel a lot to the big-name national tournaments and it's because we have high quality tournaments every Saturday just a half hour away. When you are competing against national champions and being judged by the coaches of national champions, you're pretty lucky. I found it really enjoyable and surreal to cross-ex Maddie Gardner in IX finals. We had been competing against each other weekly since freshman year, and it just shows how the MN speech atmosphere prepares you.

LS: As you progressed as a speaker, did you model your speaking style after any particular extemp past or present? If so who and why?

AR: No. I really tried to be unique in my presentation. All I wanted to do was be as accessible as possible to the common audience while still demonstrating a wide range of knowledge.

LS: Building on that last question, what was the best piece of advice you ever received in regards to extemporaneous speaking?

AR: "Slow down, pause and explain"- My coach Mr. Hering would tell me this after every practice speech my junior and senior years. I had a speed problem. Once I mastered slowing down and pausing, I was able to communicate my thoughts and utilize my knowledge base 100% better.

LS: In your opinion, what do you think are some traits that all great extempers have had?

AR: All great extempers have extensive background knowledge, the ability to speak in an engaging manner, and a little luck at the draw table.

LS: You had a great deal of success last year, yet never traveled the "national circuit." Was there a national circuit tournament that you wish you could have competed at during your career that you did not have a chance to? What was it and why?

AR: I really would have liked to compete at the MBA [Montgomery Bell Academy Extemp Round Robin]. I was invited my senior year, but was out of town during the tournament. I find cross examination one of the best innovations to Extemp and I feel that it should be utilized a lot

more. The set-up of the tournament was very appealing to me with the cross-ex and the quantity of rounds.

LS: I know that we will have a lot of people reading this interview and wondering how you went about preparing for nationals last year, especially because of your great run through both tournaments. Did you have a specific practice routine? If so, what was it?

AR: During my offseason (after nationals through mid-January), I try to stay on top of news by reading the newspaper and journals. From January through June, I would spend on average 2.5 hours a day reading, highlighting and filing everything I could find. I had a list of about a dozen newspapers (NYT, CSM, Washington Post), a dozen think-tanks (CFR, WINEP, CSIS) and about 3-4 journals (Foreign Affairs, Foreign Policy, WQ). During the month before Nationals, I would give about 3 extended prep practice speeches per week to my coach on variety of topics. These extended prep speeches are where you spend more than 30 minutes preparing and tried to perfect the content of the speech. I would also sit around with my team and discuss topics at length. It was a great environment to work in at Eastview, because we had also qualified other people in extemp as well as in interp and debate. I also found CFL's a great warm-up for NFL's. Having eight competitive rounds before NFL's was invaluable preparation.

LS: I know first-hand that speaking in front of the cameras for NFL finals can be a very nerve racking experience. Each competitor deals with these nerves in their own way and future competitors who will find themselves in this position might want some advice for how you coped with it or prepared for it. Therefore, just before you walked out on stage to give your final round speech at NFL this year, with the cameras rolling and all eyes in the speech world in Vegas focused on you, what was going through your mind?

AR: "I am really going to miss this." Surprisingly, I was not very nervous. I really felt in my element. It is where I wanted to be -- competing on the big stage. I was so happy that I would at least have a shot at the title.

LS: Younger extempers will be a large part of the audience reading this article and they will want to emulate your success on a local and national stage. What advice do you have for them to do well at this event?

AR: There are three pieces of advice I would have:

1) Read, Read and Read- There is no substitute for extensive topic knowledge. Extempdex and topic briefs can't compare to information you actively seek and synthesize for yourself. If you are capable of maintaining a pool of constant background knowledge, you are able to more effectively use to prep time to fine tune your arguments and focus on delivery.

2) Speak Slowly and Passionately- I think too many extempers forget that the activity they are in is called, "Speech." While it is impressive to be able to explain Fukuyama's latest theory or summarize Friedman's new book, if your arguments are not accessible to the common audience, then it does not pay off. Try to be engaging to your audience both intellectually and verbally. Use pauses effectively, speak louder for emphasis, slow down for important points and use facial expressions for emotional parts.

3) Love what you do- I really can't express how much I loved extemporaneous speaking and how much I will miss competing. If you really enjoy the activity, it should all be fun. It shouldn't be work to read the latest Economist. Maybe it's just me, but I never regretted getting up at 6AM on

Saturday mornings. When you love what you are doing, it will be reflected in your work ethic and passion on-stage.

LS: I'm glad you touched on the reading aspect of the event, that is something I emphasize over and over again with students I work with. Are there any books you would recommend to beginning or veteran extempers who are seeking to improve their knowledge base?

AR: My favorite extemp books are the "Shia Revival" by Vali Nasr, "The Post American World" by Fareed Zakaria and "The Second World" by Parag Khana. I think all of those books are essential to understanding the world and provide an excellent background on so many issues. I would also recommend "The World is Flat" by Thomas Friedman, "Hot, Flat and Crowded" by Friedman, "The Future of Freedom" by Zakaria and if you're really ambitious a textbook called, "The Globalization of World Politics."

LS: Akshar, at the end of the day, what do you consider your greatest career accomplishment?

AR: I consider winning the NFL IX National Championship my greatest career accomplishment because that had been my goal since Freshman year. However, I was really thrilled to win the CFL Championship as well because I had no background in Domestic extemp and because it was the first year my school, Eastview, had competed at CFL's.

LS: Do you think the extemporaneous speaking community needs to change in any way? If so, how?

AR: I think my three pieces of advice given above apply here. Furthermore, I think there needs to be less of an emphasis on information cramming and a newfound focus on public delivery and accessibility. I also strongly believe there needs to be serious source checking at all major tournaments. I think source fabrication is like the steroids of extemp. I think in the culture of Extemp, where speakers are expected to cite 12 articles a speech, leads to this and it needs to be stopped. When people make up sources it harms the integrity of the activity. Finally, I would like to see cross-ex implemented at many more tournaments. It forces people to think critically and most importantly, it holds people accountable.

LS: What are your long-term plans in life/college?

AR: I am attending St. Olaf College in Northfield, MN. Right now, I am planning a double major in Chemistry and Political Science. I am really unsure on what my long-term plans are, but I could go in many directions -- either med school or law school.

LS: Do you plan on still being involved with the speech and debate community now that you are finished competing?

AR: Unfortunately, college is taking up a lot of time. However, I hope to be able to judge and help out with the Eastview team whenever possible.

LS: Thank you for your time Akshar to give this interview and to give back to the extemporaneous speaking community.

AR: My pleasure.

Extemp Question Central National Points Race

by Logan Scisco

In our last issue, we broke down the structure of this year's Extemp Question Central National Points Race. Points are awarded to competitors based on their performance in three tiers of tournaments. The first tier is composed of the two major national tournaments, CFL and NFL Nationals, the second tier is composed of skill level national tournaments where extempers must qualify, such as the Montgomery Bell Extemp Round Robin and the Extemporaneous Speaking Tournament of Champions, and the third tier is composed of ten pre-selected national circuit tournaments. At the end of the season, the individual extemper who accumulates the most points will be named the 2009 Extemp Question Central National Points Race Champion and will receive a trophy paid for by Extemp Question Central to commemorate their accomplishment. There is also a team rankings component built into the system, where teams can accumulate points based on how their extempers place in the final rounds of the three tiers of tournaments discussed above.

After the month of September, Extemp Question Central is ready to release its first official rankings for the 2008-2009 season. The rankings are based purely on merit and finishes in the final rounds of tournaments, not based on any pre-rankings before the beginning of the season. Two tournaments have been added into the rankings so far, the Wake Forest National Early Bird Tournament, held on September 12-14th, and the Yale University Invitational Tournament, held on September 26th-28th.

Individual Standings

Here are the individual standings so far this season:

RANK	NAME	SCHOOL	POINTS
T1	Alon Elhanan	Bronx High School of Science (Bronx, NY)	50
T1	Matt Arons	Millburn HS (Wyckoff, NJ)	50
T3	Siobhan Tellez	Oakwood HS (Dayton, OH)	40
T3	Stacey Chen	North Allegheny Senior HS (Wexford, PA)	40
T6	David Goette-Luciak	Blacksburg HS (Blacksburg, VA)	30
T6	Rebecca Goldstein	Newton South HS (Newton, MA)	30
T8	Brennan Morris	Randolph-Macon Academy (Fort Royal, VA)	20
T8	Alex Tolkin	Newton South HS (Newton, MA)	20
T10	Firoz Jameel	Cary Academy (Cary, NC)	16
T10	Jovalin Dedaj	Fordham Preparatory (Bronx, NY)	16
T12	Megan Race	North Mecklenburg HS (Huntersville, NC)	12
T12	Dan Dupont	St. Joseph's Preparatory (Philadelphia, PA)	12

Due to the fact that there was no overlap of competitors who attended both Wake Forest and Yale, there are a lot of ties in the rankings. By our next edition, the University of Pennsylvania Liberty Bell Classic (October 18th-19th) and the St. Mark's Heart of Texas Invitational (October 16th-19th), where extempers can get double points due to there being two tournaments at that

invitational for U.S. extemp and International extemp, will have been completed, bringing our total number of tournaments in the rankings to five.

At the top of this month's rankings are **Alon Elhanan** of the Bronx High School of Science in New York and **Matt Arons** of Millburn High School in New Jersey who won the Wake Forest Early Bird and Yale Invitational tournaments, respectively. They have an early, ten point jump on their other extemporaneous speaking competitors later in the year. Due to the fact that Montgomery Bell Round Robin invites go out shortly, both competitors performance at these tournaments could warrant serious consideration for attending.

One of the names that stands out in the early rankings is last year's NFL United States extemporaneous speaking champion **Rebecca Goldstein** of Newton South High School in Newton, Massachusetts. As was revealed in last month's edition of this magazine, if the rankings system was used for last year, Goldstein would have edged out CFL and NFL National Champion Askhar Rambachan for the national points race championship. This year, based on her third place finish at the Yale University tournament, Goldstein starts the defense of her title tied for sixth in the rankings with **David Goette-Luciak** of Blacksburg High School in Blacksburg, Virginia, who placed third at the Wake Forest Early Bird. Luciak placed 12th last year in International extemporaneous speaking at NFL.

Other notable extempers in this first month's rankings calculation are **Stacey Chen** of North Allegheny Senior High School in Pennsylvania and **Brennan Morris** of Randolph-Macon Academy in Virginia. Chen, last year's Pennsylvania state extemporaneous speaking champion, placed second at the Yale Invitational, and finished 13th in last year's rankings. She currently sits tied for third place in the rankings. Morris, a fourth place finisher at the Wake Forest Early Bird, placed 14th in last year's rankings, one point behind Chen. He is currently situated in a tie for eighth place with last year's NFL Commentary national champion, **Alex Tolkin**, Rebecca Goldstein's teammate from Newton South High School.

What needs to be emphasized, though, is that this is just a mere glimpse at how these rankings may look by the time the end of June arrives and the final publishing of these rankings takes place. With three more tournaments to be added to the rankings by the next edition, much shakeup could occur, especially in terms of breaking the tie at the top of the rankings between Elhanan and Arons.

Team Standings

Here is a look at the current team standings after Wake Forest and Yale:

RANK	SCHOOL	POINTS	# OF FINALISTS
1	Newton South HS (Newton, MA)	50	2
T2	Bronx High School of Science (Bronx, NY)	50	1
T2	Millburn HS (Wyckoff, NJ)	50	1
T4	Oakwood HS (Dayton, OH)	40	1
T4	North Allegheny Senior HS (Wexford, PA)	40	1
6	Blacksburg HS (Blacksburg, VA)	30	1
7	Randolph-Macon Academy (Fort Royal, VA)	20	1
T8	Cary Academy (Cary, NC)	16	1
T8	Fordham Preparatory (Bronx, NY)	16	1
T10	North Mecklenburg HS (Huntersville, NC)	12	1
T10	St. Joseph's Preparatory (Philadelphia, PA)	12	1

Team rankings are determined by applying points extempers earn in competition from the National Points Race to the team that they compete for. If there is a tie in terms of total points, the tie is broken by the amount of finalists a team has had to represent its point total. This is meant to reward teams who have multiple competitors achieve points for them rather than relying on one outstanding extemper.

After the first two tournaments of the season, **Newton South High School** of Massachusetts has made a strong push to the top of the rankings. Newton South is a familiar powerhouse on the extemporaneous speaking circuit and last year they finished twenty-nine points behind **Scarsdale High School** of Scarsdale, New York in the team rankings. This month, led by Rebecca Goldstein and Alex Tolkin's third and fourth place finishes at the Yale Invitational, Newton South has accumulated fifty points. **The Bronx High School of Science** in Bronx, New York and **Millburn High School** in Wyckoff, New Jersey received their fifth points following student victories at the Wake Forest Early Bird and Yale Invitational, but they are both tied for second because they only had one finalist and Newton South had two.

North Allegheny Senior High School in Wexford, Pennsylvania also starts out tied for fourth position in this year's rankings, following up on a tenth place showing in last year's test rankings, which were revealed in our last issue.

More teams will be inserted to shake up the rankings, following St. Mark's Heart of Texas Invitational and the University of Pennsylvania Liberty Bell Classic, after this week. With both tournaments happening on the same weekend and with different regions represented, the rankings are bound to undergo significant change, and tighten even more, by our next issue in mid-November before the prestigious Glenbrooks tournament.

Tournament Overview

Here is an overview of the tournaments that will count for this year's competitive calendar towards the Extemp Question Central National Points Race, how many points they will be worth, and who the big winners have been so far.

TOURNAMENT	DATE	LOCATION	WINNER'S POINTS (TIER)	WINNER
Wake Forest National Early Bird	9/12-9/14/2008	Winston Salem, North Carolina	50 (3rd Tier)	Alon Elhanan (Bronx HS of Science, NY)
Yale University Invitational Tournament	9/26-9/28/2008	New Haven, Connecticut	50 (3rd Tier)	Matt Arons (Milburn HS, NJ)
St. Mark's Heart of Texas Invitational (IX)	10/16-10/19/2008	Dallas, Texas	50 (3rd Tier)	
St. Mark's Heart of Texas Invitational (USX)	10/16-10/19/2008	Dallas, Texas	50 (3rd Tier)	
University of Pennsylvania Liberty Bell Classic	10/18-10/19/2008	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	50 (3rd Tier)	
The Glenbrooks	11/22-11/24/2008	Northbrook, Illinois	50 (3rd Tier)	
George Mason University Patriot Games	12/5-12/8/2008	Fairfax, Virginia	50 (3rd Tier)	
Montgomery Bell Academy Extemp Round Robin	1/9-1/11/2009	Nashville, Tennessee	100 (2nd Tier)	
Barkley Forum for High Schools	1/23-1/25/2009	Atlanta, Georgia	50 (3rd Tier)	
Harvard National High School Invitational Tournament	2/14-2/16/2009	Cambridge, Massachusetts	50 (3rd Tier)	
2009 California Invitational Forensic Tournament	Not available at this time	Berkley, California	50 (3rd Tier)	
Extemp Tournament of Champions (TOC)	5/8-5/10/2009	Chicago, Illinois	100 (2nd Tier)	
2009 CFL National Tournament	5/23-5/24/2009	Albany, New York	150 (1st Tier)	
2009 NFL National Tournament (IX)	6/15-6/19/2009	Birmingham, Alabama	150 (1st Tier)	
2009 NFL National Tournament (USX)	6/15-6/19/2009	Birmingham, Alabama	150 (1st Tier)	
2009 NFL Final Round (IX & USX)	6/19/2009	Birmingham, Alabama	25 bonus pts. to each winner (1st tier)	

South African Politics

By Logan Scisco⁷

Background

Over the last several weeks, international extempers have most likely read about the recent political developments in South Africa, arguably the strongest power on the African continent. For those extempers that have not had a chance to catch up on these developments, Thabo Mbeki is no longer president of the country. After a prolonged political struggle between Jacob Zuma, who was Mr. Mbeki's deputy president (a position most akin to vice-president in the United States) and who deposed Mr. Mbeki as leader of the African National Congress (ANC) in December, it appears that Mr. Zuma has won. This victory came within the span of a month when Mr. Zuma was first acquitted of fraud and corruption charges based on a judicial technicality. The National Prosecuting Authority (NPA), the body of the South African judiciary who initiates criminal cases for the government, was said in the dismissal of the charges to have been influenced in its prosecution by Mr. Mbeki and his supporters. This finding by the judge overseeing Mr. Zuma's case gave weight to charges, long echoed by Mr. Zuma's supporters, that Mr. Mbeki has been an overzealous president who has been intolerant of political opposition and that Mr. Mbeki has been willing to use the instruments of the state to clamp down on this dissent. On September 20th, the ANC decided that Mr. Mbeki should resign his post in order to end the political struggle that has gripped the country for three years.

Having set the background, this brief will give an overview of the structure and history of South Africa's political system, the current state of the government, and what challenges that government faces in the future.

South Africa's Political Structure and History

South Africa was first settled by European explorers when the Portuguese set up trading posts shortly after Bartolomeu Dias became the first European explorer to reach the Cape of Good Hope, the southernmost tip of the continent. In the 1600s, Dutch traders would eventually arrive for the Dutch East India Company and the British would make their incursions into the territory just prior to the 1800s in order to gain a geopolitical advantage over the French. The British would solidify their hold on the Cape Town territory in 1806 when the Dutch East India Company went bankrupt. After two conflicts known as the Boer Wars (1880-1881, 1899-1902), which broke out between British forces and the Boers, a name given to farmers of northwest European descent, over diamond, gold, and land resources, the British were able to combine the Boer-held territories, called the Orange Free States and the Transvaal, with colonies they controlled in Cape Town and Natal. This new combination of territories was called the Union of South Africa and it was granted independence in 1934 by the Statute of Westminster.

⁷ Logan Scisco competed for four years for Danville High School in Danville, Kentucky where he was coached by Mr. Steve Meadows. He also competed for two and a half years for Western Kentucky University. He was the 2003 NFL United States Extemporaneous Speaking Final Round National Champion, a CFL finalist, a two-time NFA finalist in college, a two-time Kentucky state champion in extemporaneous speaking, a two-time MBA invitee, and was a four-time qualifier to CFL Nationals in extemp and a four-time qualifier to NFL Nationals in U.S. Extemp. He has coached two Kentucky state extemporaneous speaking champions, an MBA invitee, ten extemp national qualifiers, a CFL finalist, and a NFL finalist (IX). He currently teaches social studies at Grant County High School in Dry Ridge, Kentucky.

South Africa is known by most of the public as a place where racial problems still persist. This has origins from the colonial era when black Africans were forced to work in diamond and gold mines and were kept apart from the white population. After World War II, the right-wing National Party bulked up racial segregation laws and created a system known as apartheid. This system stripped black South Africans of their citizenship, deprived them of voting rights, forced black Africans to live in economically unproductive areas, streamlined them into careers that paid low wages, and socially segregated them from white society, which did not allow them to enjoy the same public services as white South Africans. Under the apartheid system, which would last in its complete form until 1990, where it would begin to be abolished, a process that finished in 1994, South Africa was like two different countries where the white dominated area of the country resembled the developed world and black dominated areas resembled the Third World. South Africa was encouraged to abolish its apartheid system through sanctions by the outside world, enforced by Britain and the United States in the 1980s.

Following the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in February 1990, South Africa's political system began to change. Mandela was an activist for the ANC, an anti-apartheid group with communist ties that was once declared labeled as a terrorist group by the United States government. By 1994, apartheid measures had been abolished from the law books and South Africa held its first elections open to all races. In these elections, the ANC trounced the opposition, not a surprise considering that the ANC was seen as a champion of black rights, Mandela was put in as president, and the ANC has been in power ever since.

South Africa received a new constitution in 1996, which allowed a division of legislative and executive powers on a local, state, and national levels. On a national levels, South Africa has a bicameral parliamentary structure. The lower house is called the National Assembly and has 400 representatives allotted to it. Representatives are selected via proportional representation based on popular vote tallies. The upper house is called the National Council of Provinces, which has 90 representatives selected by the legislatures in South Africa's nine provinces, with each provincial legislature getting 10 selections. Both bodies members are slated to serve five year terms.

The South African president is the leader of the party that has control of the National Assembly, or in the case of there being a split election result where a coalition government has to emerge, the leader of the coalition government is named as the president. Unlike United States politics, though, the South African president is responsible to parliament, and can be removed by the party they lead. This is why Mr. Mbeki was forced to step down on September 20th when the ANC power brokers turned against him.

Who are the Parties?

Today in South Africa there are four major political factions, but in terms of competitive races there are only two in conflict: the ANC and the Democratic Alliance (DA).

African National Congress (ANC): The African National Congress received nearly 70% of the vote in the 2004 general election. Its leader is Jacob Zuma, the man who pushed Mr. Mbeki out of power, and is a broad coalition of interests that span the political spectrum. The ANC has backing from the now disbanded New National Party, a conservative party that is a legacy of the apartheid era, the Congress of South African Trade Unions, and the South African Communist Party. For there to be a significant opening in South African politics, the ANC will need to split, much like how Japan needs the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) to split to have a fully functioning two party system.

The Democratic Alliance (DA): The Democratic Alliance, created when the Democratic Party and the New National Party briefly merged in 2000, finished in second place behind the ANC in the 2004 general election. However, just to demonstrate the ANC's dominance, the DA finished with 12% of the vote. The DA was led by Tony Leon, an anti-apartheid advocate, from 2000 to 2007, when he stepped down and allowed Helen Zille, the mayor of Cape Town, to take over. In 2006, the DA took control of Cape Town, which is significant as it is the only metropolitan area not controlled by the ANC. The DA is a party which stands for liberal economic policies, federalism, and human rights protections. Its popularity is growing, especially in urban areas and voter disillusion with the ANC could make it a force in the 2009 elections.

The Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP): The IFP finished behind the ANC and DA in the 2004 general election with 7% of the vote. The current leader of the party is Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who founded the party in 1975. The IFP was a supporter of anti-apartheid activism until the 1980s, until it became engulfed in a violent struggle with the ANC for influence in a post-apartheid South Africa. In fact, the IFP hoped this violence would prevent the 1994 election, which did not happen. The IFP's main support comes from the Zulu people, South Africa's largest ethnic group, and one of its stated goals is to prevent the ANC from establishing one party rule in the country. The IFP is also concerned with South Africa's AIDS crisis and high crime and unemployment rates and has currently allied itself with the DA.

The Independent Democrats: The Independent Democrats are new to the South African political scene, having been founded in 2003. They are led by Patricia de Lille and took a mere 2% of the vote in the 2004 election. The Independent Democrats represent a populist brand of politics and favor moderate and pragmatic policies. However, since most of their policies are adopted by the ANC or DA, it is tough for them to establish a foothold.

The Current State of the Government (And What it Means for the Future)

It is not a surprise that the infighting within the ANC has caused massive disruptions for the government, especially since the ANC makes up 70% of the National Assembly. To political observers, the conflict between Mr. Mbeki and Mr. Zuma was dividing the ANC, to the point where one of them needed to go so that the ANC could focus on the next general election, which will most likely be held in April 2009. After Mr. Zuma's victory over Mr. Mbeki in the ANC leadership election, observers knew it was only a matter of time before Mr. Mbeki faded into the sunset. However, the timing of Mr. Mbeki's departure, and forcing him out before his term expired in 2009, was alarming.

To look at the influence that Mr. Mbeki had over the government, all one needs to look at is who left with Mr. Mbeki when he was forced out. Upon Mr. Mbeki's resignation, his deputy president and ten of his ministers left, including the praised finance minister Trevor Manuel. Mr. Mbeki is still supported by loyalists within the ANC, much of whom owe their position in the party to him. While Mr. Mbeki might be riled by extempers as a poor manager of South Africa's AIDS crisis, which affects over five million people, and as coddling Zimbabwe's Robert Mugabe, he is credited by experts as assisting in South Africa's post-apartheid economic recovery. In its briefing on South Africa, *The Economist* on September 27th credited Mr. Mbeki with presiding over a falling unemployment rate and stabilizing South Africa's finances.

In Mr. Mbeki's absence, Kgalema Motlanthe has agreed to lead an interim government. Mr. Zuma chose not to take over the post and instead try to use the time the interim government is in

power and the next general election to build his leadership credentials. However, it is no secret that after the 2009 general election Mr. Zuma will take over the South African presidency.

Mr. Zuma is a controversial figure in South African politics, having been acquitted of rape in 2006 and most recently corruption charges. His fights with Mr. Mbeki have bruised many egos in the ANC and have made him enemies within the party's ranks. Observers worry that Mr. Zuma's ability to get along with political opponents and negotiate on policy issues will be overshadowed by his willingness to stand on the sidelines while political problems develop. Due to the fact that Mr. Mbeki's autocratic leadership style kept ministries in line with government policy, pundits worry that Mr. Zuma's laid back style could lead to turf wars inside of the government, most notably among the ANC's business and trade unionist wings. To add to this, it is still possible that the NPA could try to prosecute Mr. Zuma again for corruption, which would add a new dynamic to the 2009 general election or to a future Zuma administration.

The most immediate impact of these latest developments that extempers need to take note of is that Mr. Mbeki's departure has opened a gaping hole in the ANC's leadership. Supporters of Mr. Mbeki are unhappy and have quietly begun to discuss breaking from the ANC. The only real question is if they would have the political nerve to upset party elders or put the ANC's electoral chances in jeopardy by doing so. The ANC's demise has long been predicted but never quite occurred. If there is a break within the party it could be over economic issues, as Mr. Zuma gets his main backing from left-wing trade groups would want to scale back some of South Africa's free market reforms. If Mr. Zuma veers too far left it could alienate free market supporters and either push them into the hands of the DA or lead them to create their own political party. Therefore, one of the major ramifications of Mr. Mbeki's departure is that it could lurch the ANC back to its far-left basis and open up a power vacuum in South Africa's political center, a spot the DA could be prime to fill.

Issues Facing South Africa

When extempers are analyzing the political situation in South Africa, it is very important to know what issues could decide the 2009 general election so that their speech can touch the issues that are most relevant to South African voters.

The biggest issue facing South Africa is its crime rate, which the UN has said makes it the second deadliest country in the world in terms of murder rates per capita. Due to high unemployment, which is between 25-40%, depending on which economist you ask and which economic measure you use to define unemployment, South Africans have turned to crime. In fact, a TNS research survey from June revealed that 75% of South Africans believe that the crime wave has been fueled by poverty. South Africa's high crime rates of murders, rapes, robberies, and carjackings have the potential to damage the nation's growing economy. For example, the 2010 World Cup is scheduled to be held in South Africa, but may not occur if crime rates are not lowered. Also, South Africa's well educated and best trained workers are leaving the country due to the fact that conditions are unsafe. Furthermore, wealthier, and predominately white, South Africans are creating more gated communities as they fear their possessions are in danger, prompting a return of de facto segregation that could upset the political and social balance in the country that has been achieved since 1994.

Another major issue in the upcoming election will be the state of the country's economy. The DA will try to sell to voters the idea that Mr. Zuma will lurch the country's economy towards state control that existed under the National Party in the apartheid years, which hurt the country's economic growth. The massive unemployment rate will also likely be on voters minds, especially

considering the rising crime rate. Economists argue that for South Africa to continue its economic growth it needs more skilled workers. This is true for two reasons. First, as *The Economist* reveals on September 27th, up to 500,000 jobs are unfilled in the South African government due to a lack of skilled workers, putting a strain on government operations. Second, ethnic tensions are exploding in the country as low skilled South Africans compete with illegal immigrants from economically depressed areas such as Zimbabwe. Look for both parties to argue at making the education system more adaptive to rising demand, as it admits more students, especially from black backgrounds, while retaining quality. Finally, look for both parties to contest the Black Economic Empowerment (BEE) program that the ANC adopted in 2003. The BEE is meant to transform the South African economy to give black workers a broader voice in the economy and to reduce white control over some economic holdings. The BEE mandates that businesses meet certain compliance targets in hiring and ownership. Businesses also are told to take into consideration a worker's previous background as opposed to what economic skills they may be able to bring a business. While the ANC admits that the BEE should be revised, it staunchly defends its core precepts to redistribute economic power along racial lines in the country. In contrast, the IFP, in conjunction with the DA, argue that the BEE is a process of reverse discrimination, is leaving unskilled workers in important positions, and is causing a process of "white flight" where South Africa's best skilled workers are leaving the country.

SEPTEMBER 2008

EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING RESULTS

Note: This section will be used to contain extemporaneous speaking results from around the country. If you have the results of a local/state tournament you would like to see here, simply e-mail them to logan.scisco@wku.edu.

National Circuit Results

WAKE FOREST NATIONAL EARLY BIRD TOURNAMENT *Winston Salem, NC @ Wake Forest Univ. September 12-14, 2008*

Champion:

- Alon Elhanan (Bronx HS of Science, NY)***
2nd: Siobhan Tellez (Oakwood HS, OH)
3rd: David Goette-Luciak (Blacksburg HS, VA)
4th: Brennan Morris (Randolph-Macon Academy, VA)
5th: Firoz Jameel (Cary Academy, NC)
6th: Megan Race (North Mecklenburg HS, NC)

YALE UNIVERSITY INVITATIONAL TOURNAMENT *New Haven, CT @ Yale University September 26-28, 2008*

Champion:

- Matt Arons (Millburn HS, NJ)***
2nd: Stacey Chen (North Allegheny Senior HS, PA)
3rd: Becca Goldstein (Newton South HS, MA)
4th: Alex Tolkin (Newton South HS, MA)
5th: Jovalin Dedaj (Fordham Preparatory, NY)
6th: Dan Dupont (St. Joseph's Preparatory, PA)

State/Local Results

NEW YORK CFL KICK-OFF *New York, NY @ Regis High School October 4, 2008*

Champion:

- Grant Dowling (Scarsdale HS)***
2nd: Ricky Altien (Regis HS)
3rd: Mike Barton (Regis HS)
4th: John O'Brien (Regis HS)
5th: John Brennan (Regis HS)

