

# THE EX FILES

**MBA Special Edition  
Volume 1, Issue No. 4**

## From the Publisher

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The first semester of the season has come and gone and Extemp Question Central is happy to be part of it. After the recent tournaments at Glenbrooks and George Mason University, the National Points Race standings have seen more of a shakeup and the second half of the year looks to be even more exciting, with nationals only six months away.

This edition of *The Ex Files* is a special edition for the Montgomery Bell Extemp Round Robin, a prestigious tournament held in Nashville, Tennessee in early January that features sixteen of the most talented extemporaneous speaking competitors in the country. In this edition, *The Ex Files* had sat down with Adam Johnson, the man behind the tournament, to uncover some of the history of the tournament as well as how participants are selected. Also, MBA champion David Tannenwald has made a guest appearance and provided insight in a special MBA roundtable discussion to help those competitors attending the tournament and inspire those who may one day like to compete there. Finally, there is a special breakdown of this year's field as well as past MBA results.

Keep in mind that the MBA Extemp Round Robin is a "second tier" tournament in the Extemp Question Central Nationals Points Race, meaning that the winner will receive 100 points. This has the possibility of creating a whirl-wind in the standings. The second half of the year will have lots of these changes, with the Extemp TOC and nationals' providing more volatility until the first National Points Race champion is crowned.

Expect the next edition of *The Ex Files* to be released the week of the Barkley Forum, which will include a tournament preview, updated rankings, a recap of the MBA round robin, and further topic briefs.

The staff of *The Ex Files* thanks you again for your continued support and wishes everyone a very happy holiday season!

-Logan Scisco



### Volume 1, No. 3

#### PUBLISHER

Logan Scisco

#### EDITORIAL

**Editor in Chief**, Logan Scisco

**Layout Coordinator**, Logan Scisco

#### ART

**Graphic Designer**, Mason Scisco

#### CONTRIBUTING STAFF

Logan Scisco

Michael Garson

Omar Qureshi

Hunter Kendrick

Sebastian Pyrek

Mark Royce

Sarah Anand

Akshar Rambachan

Bill Thompson

Colin West

Ian Panchevre

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# MONTGOMERY BELL ACADEMY EXTEMP ROUND ROBIN RESULTS 1999-2008

*The Montgomery Bell Academy Extemp Round Robin has included some of the biggest names in extemp over the last decade. Below are the results of each tournament from 1999-2008.*

## 1999

### Exhibition Round Champion:

Lucas Kline (Blacksburg HS, VA)

### Round Robin Results:

*Champion: Jay Cox*

*(Milton Academy, MA)*

2<sup>nd</sup>: Lucas Kline

(Blacksburg HS, VA)

3<sup>rd</sup>: Ted Murphy

(Milton Academy, MA)

4<sup>th</sup>: John Breon

(Dallastown Area HS, PA)

5<sup>th</sup>: Jason Warren

(Plano Senior HS, TX)

6<sup>th</sup>: Gwen Arnold

(Notre Dame Academy, OH)

### Other Participants:

\*Adam Johnson

(Montgomery Bell Academy, TN)

\*Megha Subramanian

(Monte Vista HS, CA)

\*James McFarland

(Oakwood HS, OH)

\*Kate Vogel

(Lexington HS, MA)

\*Amy Moffett

(The Colony HS, TX)

\*Tom Relf

(Texas Military Institute, TX)

\*Jonathan Mott

(Montgomery Bell Academy, TN)

\*Ian Turnipseed

(Saint James School, AL)

\*Ben Grover

(Mars Hill Bible School, AL)

## 2000

### Exhibition Round Champion:

Brian Garfield (Dowling HS, IA)

### Round Robin Results:

*Champion: Brian Garfield*

*(Dowling HS, IA)*

2<sup>nd</sup>: Jason Warren

(Plano Senior HS, TX)

3<sup>rd</sup>: Adam Johnson

(Montgomery Bell Academy, TN)

4<sup>th</sup>: Amy Moffett

(The Colony HS, TX)

5<sup>th</sup>: Gilbert Lee

(Raritan HS, NJ)

6<sup>th</sup>: Andrew Barron

(Mauldin HS, SC)

### Other Participants:

\*Inbal Alon

(Needham HS, MA)

\*Kim Cantor

(Dallastown Area HS, PA)

\*Neha Joshi

(Monte Vista HS, CA)

\*Jason Mehta

(Eastside HS, FL)

\*David Mints

(Allen HS, TX)

\*Justin Slaughter

(The Westminster Schools, GA)

\*Laura Soto

(Albuquerque Academy, NM)

\*Ian Turnipseed

(Saint James School, AL)

\*Frank Wu

(San Marino HS, CA)

## 2001

### Exhibition Round Champion:

Jason Lear (Hollywood Hills HS, FL)

### Round Robin Results:

*Champion: Andrew Korn*  
(Syosset HS, NY)

- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Jason Lear  
(Hollywood Hills HS, FL)  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Matt Williams  
(Payson HS, AZ)  
4<sup>th</sup>: Ariel Schneller  
(Blacksburg HS, VA)  
5<sup>th</sup>: Rana Yared  
(Nova HS, FL)  
6<sup>th</sup>: Justin Slaughter  
(The Westminster Schools, GA)

### Other Participants:

- \*Ryan King  
(Mars Hill Bible School, AL)
- \*Amanda Knight  
(Friendswood HS, TX)
- \*Jonathan Mott  
(Montgomery Bell Academy, TN)
- \*Matt Possivak  
(Saint Joseph's Prep, PA)
- \*Pablo Ros  
(Milton Academy, MA)
- \*Peter Rough  
(Dowling HS, IA)
- \*Mark Royce  
(TL Hanna HS, SC)
- \*Amaris Singer  
(Albuquerque Academy, NM)
- \*Andrew Swan  
(San Roman Valley HS, CA)

## 2002

### Exhibition Round Champion:

Ariel Schneller (Blacksburg HS, VA)

### Round Robin Results

*Champion: Rana Yared*  
(Nova HS, FL)

- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Ariel Schneller  
(Blacksburg HS, VA)  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Amaris Singer  
(Albuquerque Academy, NM)  
4<sup>th</sup>: Michael Knight  
(F.J. Reitz HS, IN)  
5<sup>th</sup>: Lily Wang  
(Plano East HS, TX)  
6<sup>th</sup>: Joshua Johnson  
(Lewisville HS, TX)

### Other Participants:

- \*Josh Bone  
(Milton Academy, MA)
- \*Jake Glickfield  
(J.P. Taravella HS, FL)
- \*Amanda Knight  
(Friendswood HS, TX)
- \*Lauren McCarthy  
(Dowling HS, IA)
- \*Joseph Pounder  
(Gettysburg Area HS, PA)
- \*Derek Remund  
(Ronald Reagan HS, TX)
- \*Mark Royce  
(TL Hanna HS, SC)
- \*David Tannenwald  
(Newton South HS, MA)
- \*Kelli Trent  
(Rowan County HS, KY)

## 2003

### Exhibition Round Champion:

Josh Bone (Milton Academy, MA)

### Round Robin Results:

*Champion: David Tannenwald*  
(Newton South HS, MA)

2<sup>nd</sup>: Josh Bone

(Milton Academy, MA)

3<sup>rd</sup>: Amaris Singer

(Albuquerque Academy, NM)

4<sup>th</sup>: Dan Hemel

(Scarsdale HS, NY)

5<sup>th</sup>: Ron Kendler

(Newton South HS, MA)

6<sup>th</sup>: David Tucker

(Dallastown Area HS, PA)

### Other Participants:

\*Clare Lascelles

(The Westminster Schools, GA)

\*Adam Lessne

(Nova HS, FL)

\*Ben Newman

(Montgomery Bell Academy, TN)

\*Jessica Ponn

(North Broward Prep, FL)

\*Niraj Rath

(Plano Senior HS, TX)

\*Bryan Reinholt

(Holy Ghost Prep, PA)

\*Logan Scisco

(Danville HS, KY)

\*Scott Stewart

(Collierville HS, TN)

\*Nick Timmons

(Dowling HS, IA)

## 2004

### Exhibition Round Champion:

Josh Bone (Milton Academy, MA)

### Round Robin Results:

*Champion: Josh Bone*  
(Milton Academy, MA)

2<sup>nd</sup>: David Tucker

(Dallastown Area HS, PA)

3<sup>rd</sup>: Ron Kendler

(Newton South HS, MA)

4<sup>th</sup>: Elizabeth Kraut

(Mounds Park Academy, MN)

5<sup>th</sup>: Kate Rice

(Iowa City West HS, IA)

6<sup>th</sup>: Logan Scisco

(Danville HS, KY)

### Other Participants:

\*Varun Akula

(Lake Highland Prep, FL)

\*Brian Donahue

(Saint Thomas Aquinas School, FL)

\*Weston Elkins

(Lamar Consolidated HS, TX)

\*Adam Hoffman

(New Trier Township HS, IL)

\*Kenny Li

(Syosset HS, NY)

\*Jonathan Ray

(Montgomery Bell Academy, TN)

\*Christos Theophaneous

(Miramonte HS, CA)

\*Kevin Troy

(Eagan HS, MN)

\*Patrick Whitty

(Dowling HS, IA)

## 2005

### Exhibition Round Champion:

Kevin Troy (Eagan HS, MN)

### Round Robin Results:

*Champion: Kevin Troy  
(Eagan HS, MN)*

- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Ron Kendler  
(Newton South HS, MA)  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Dan Rauch  
(Millburn HS, NJ)  
4<sup>th</sup>: Courtney Otto  
(Kentucky Country Day School,  
KY)  
5<sup>th</sup>: Anish Mitra  
(Lincoln East HS, NE)  
6<sup>th</sup>: Michael Hoffman  
(Holy Ghost Prep, PA)

### Other Participants:

- \*Daniel Berring  
(Miramonte HS, CA)
- \*William Bloom  
(The Montgomery Academy, AL)
- \*Scott Cheesewright  
(Durango HS, CO)
- \*Christine Halbert  
(Southlake Carroll HS, TX)
- \*Adam Hoffman  
(New Trier Township HS, IL)
- \*Tazewell Jones  
(The Montgomery Academy, AL)
- \*Jonathan Ray  
(Montgomery Bell Academy, TN)
- \*Merry Regan  
(Shadow Mountain HS, AZ)
- \*Josh Rovenger  
(Nova HS, FL)
- \*Whitney Willits  
(Massillon Perry HS, OH)

## 2006

### Exhibition Round Champion:

Dan Rauch (Millburn HS, NJ)

### Round Robin Results:

*Champion: Alex Stephenson  
(Eagan HS, MN)*

- 2<sup>nd</sup>: Dan Rauch  
(Millburn HS, NJ)  
3<sup>rd</sup>: Josh Rovenger  
(Nova HS, FL)  
4<sup>th</sup>: Charlie Alderman  
(Scarsdale HS, NY)  
5<sup>th</sup>: Tex Dawson  
(Plano West HS, TX)  
6<sup>th</sup>: Colin West  
(Rocky Mountain HS, CO)

### Other Participants:

- \*Larissa Atkinson  
(Plymouth HS, OH)
- \*Bharat Ayyar  
(Ridge HS, NJ)
- \*Trevor Bakker  
(Holland HS, MI)
- \*Fernando Cutz  
(J.P. Taravella HS, FL)
- \*Christine Halbert  
(Southlake Carroll HS, TX)
- \*Joseph Kapusnick  
(Saint Joseph's Prep, PA)
- \*Chase Nordengren  
(Valley HS, IA)
- \*Akshay Rao  
(Leland HS, CA)
- \*Brian Stephan  
(Bellarmine Prep, CA)
- \*Gautam Thapar  
(Leland HS, CA)

## 2007

### Exhibition Round Champion:

Alex Stephenson (Eagan HS, MN)

### Round Robin Results:

**Champion: Tex Dawson**  
(Plano West HS, TX)

2<sup>nd</sup>: Alex Stephenson  
(Eagan HS, MN)

3<sup>rd</sup>: Aaron Mattis  
(Scarsdale HS, NY)

4<sup>th</sup>: Spencer Rockwell  
(Palisade HS, CO)

5<sup>th</sup>: Akshay Rao  
(Leland HS, CA)

6<sup>th</sup>: Charlie Alderman  
(Scarsdale HS, NY)

### Other Participants:

\*Markus Brazill  
(San Marino HS, CA)

\*Mark Isaacson  
(Bay City HS, TX)

\*David Kumbroch  
(Collierville HS, TN)

\*Addie Lerner  
(Newton South HS, MA)

\*Charlie Metzger  
(Suncoast Community HS, FL)

\*Austin Siegel  
(Spanish River HS, FL)

\*Fiona Sloan  
(Albuquerque Academy, NM)

\*Brian Stephan  
(Bellarmine Prep, CA)

\*William Strong  
(Roosevelt HS, IA)

\*Max Webster  
(Montgomery Bell Academy, TN)

## 2008

### Exhibition Round Champion:

Aaron Mattis (Scarsdale HS, NY)

### Round Robin Results:

**Champion: Rebecca Goldstein**  
(Newton South HS, MA)

2<sup>nd</sup>: Max Webster  
(Montgomery Bell Academy, TN)

3<sup>rd</sup>: Hunter Kendrick  
(Danville HS, KY)

4<sup>th</sup>: Aaron Mattis  
(Scarsdale HS, NY)

5<sup>th</sup>: William Strong  
(Roosevelt HS, IA)

6<sup>th</sup>: Evan Larson  
(Bellarmine College Prep, CA)

### Other Participants:

\*Sarah Anand  
(Desert Vista HS, AZ)

\*Reid Bagwell  
(Scarsdale HS, NY)

\*Markus Brazill  
(San Marino HS, CA)

\*Nicholas Cugini  
(Cypress Ridge HS, TX)

\*Ian Ferrell  
(Massillon Perry HS, OH)

\*Matt Gottesdiener  
(Milton Academy, MA)

\*Jack Grennan  
(North Allegheny Senior HS, PA)

\*Henry Litman  
(Milton Academy, MA)

\*Charlie Metzger  
(Suncoast Community HS, FL)

\*Ian Panchevre  
(Tom C. Clark HS, TX)



# Inside the MBA Round Robin: An Interview with Adam Johnson

Interview by Logan Scisco

*The Montgomery Bell Extemp Round Robin is a tournament that has occurred since 1999 and has featured the best extemporaneous speaking competitors the nation has ever seen. The list of participants over the years includes six CFL national champions, ten NFL national champions, and twelve NFL final round national champions. While the tournament is prestigious, it has often been shrouded by misconceptions about how it evolved and how its participants are selected.*

*Adam Johnson, a former extemporaneous speaking competitor for Montgomery Bell Academy and who has run the Round Robin for nearly a decade, was nice enough to sit down with Logan Scisco for this exclusive interview to clarify the misconceptions that has existed over the years about the Round Robin and to provide his insight into current trends in the extemporaneous speaking community.*

**Logan Scisco:** First of all Adam, thank you for being willing to do this interview about the Montgomery Bell Academy Extemp Round Robin. For readers who may not know the history of MBA, could you give us a brief summary of what the purpose of the tournament is and how long it has been around.

**Adam Johnson:** MBA had been running an LD Round Robin since the early 1980s when we added the Extemp half of our round robin in 1999. The basic goal is to bring together the top 16 competitors in the country and place them into a format where the “best” person can emerge. During the first 5 rounds, each competitor meets every other competitor exactly once – the same process is then repeated in round 6-10. We have cross examination in every round and the top 5 (of the 16 competitors) advance to the exhibition round. Our ultimate goal is to create a tournament that is an “extemper’s Extemp tournament.” We send out invitations to competitors throughout the fall – starting in September and sending the last invites the first week of December. This year’s tournament runs January 9-11.

**LS:** Who came up with the format of the MBA Extemp Round Robin?

**AJ:** While that sounds like an easy question, it is somewhat difficult to pinpoint honestly. Having competed for MBA in the 1990s, I was always helping out at our Policy Debate / LD tournament. I would always sorta suggest to Billy Tate that we add Extemp, but we really just didn’t have enough room on campus to add anything else. I can really credit two people with inspiring the idea. In the summer of 1998, I attended an Extemp camp at the University of Texas and worked at a camp at Samford University. At UT, I floated the idea of an Extemp Round Robin with Randy Cox. At the time, he was a coach at Milton Academy. We talked about it a bit and he suggested that he had thought about running one at Milton. Later that summer, I was working with Dan Mangis at Samford and we started talking about how the tournament could work. I guess I credit myself with designing the actual format. Since we always had 12 people at the LD round robin, the original vision was to have 12 people with 2 sections of 6 each round. At the time, I talked with then Executive Secretary of the NFL Jim Copeland a great deal. We talked about 5 sections of 3. We finally settled on 3 sections of 5 with CX each round before we sent out invites in December of 1998 for the first Round Robin. With such a late delivery of invites, we actually barely even got the thing off the ground at first.

**LS:** What is the biggest misconception people have about the Round Robin?

**AJ:** I'm not really sure. I feel certain there are hundreds that I'll learn about in the future!! Probably the biggest area would be rules about entry. To clear the air, there are no rules about entry. People have always thought we had a 1 student per school rule – that's sorta true. We need compelling evidence to invite 2 people from a given school, but we've done it several times. In fact in year 1, we had 2 people from the same school. Within the past 5 years, I've even considered three people from 1 school once, but just didn't quite do it. We really just look for the 16 best people and constrain ourselves to the smallest extent possible.

**LS:** When you are making selections for participants, what criteria do you use?

**AJ:** Great Question!! I love answering that because so many people suspect that it is so weird. What I always tell people is that the first 10 picks just jump of the page. If you locked a random person in a room and handed them a stack of Extemp results, they would produce the first 10 in about an hour. After that, it gets harder. Every year, I take about a 5 month break after the round robin. I will save the results from Harvard, Berkley, state tournaments, the Extemp TOC, and NCFLs but I don't pay much attention to them. After NFL Nationals, I compile it all into a spreadsheet so I can look at how people do throughout the year. I continue adding tournaments throughout the Fall. When someone accomplishes enough that I determine that I would invite them "no matter what they did after that," I email their coach an invite. I specifically look for consistent success and elite success. I want competitors who have distinguished themselves by defeating other top notch competitors. That can happen at the national or local level. I have invited people in the past that have surprised people – then the person goes on to win Nationals. But, I saw them beating a national circuit competitor at every local tournament they attended. I do rely on a small committee of regionally dispersed individuals that give me results and suggest people. I also welcome people just emailing me with their results. I have certainly taken many of those sorts of people. It is impossible for me to have results from every tournament that takes place, but we get all the big ones and word of mouth recommendations and personal nominations fill out the field.

**LS:** Several years ago, the MBA field was expanded from 15 entries to 16. Why the change?

**AJ:** Well, we've really been tweaking things since the first year to accomplish 2 goals: 1. Balancing the number of times people meet 2. Gathering enough ballots to create separation in the field. The first two years of the tournament we had 7 rounds. Each round had 3 sections of 5 with 2 judges in each section. That format worked ok, but we decided we really needed more rounds and had plenty of time for more rounds. So in year 3, we expanded to 9 rounds. That started to spread things out a bit, but we had two years in a row in which the top 3 at the tournament were separated by 1 rank. To spread things out a bit we added an additional judge in year 6. Having resolved the closeness of the results, we turned to the way we paired the tournament. It turns out that 3 sections of 5 is a format that is extremely difficult to pair. Some people met twice, some three times, and some four times. That was fine, but it was inherently unequal – it wasn't a true round robin. Every year, the pairings got "better," there was still imbalance. After working with a few people, we discovered that adding a round and adding a competitor would resolve the problem if we moved to 4 sections of 4. Now, the pairings are simple to make – each competitor meets exactly once in the first 5 rounds then exactly 1 more time in the second 5 rounds. I'm very pleased with the format of the tournament and have not changed it in about 4 years now – I don't anticipate any additional changes.

**LS:** When assigning judges, do you like for there to be a balance between delivery and analytical judges or a bias towards analytical ones?

**AJ:** No. I think I end up with more analytical judges, but that's just symptomatic of where I get my judges from. I have the coaches of the round robin who tend to be hard core Extemp fans. Those people tend to like deep analysis. I have judges from the LD round robin who often coach Extemp as well and tend to be very analysis focused. Then I have a combination of college coaches / competitors and MBA Extemp alums – both of those groups are biased towards analysis. When I'm assigning judges, I don't pay any attention at all to whom I am assigning. Each competitor is going to have 30 ballots determine their ultimate placing in the field. No judge will see a given person more than 3 times and most judges will see everyone twice. Within that framework, it is my opinion that it doesn't matter when you get a particular judge. So some panels might have more of a tilt one way or the other, but the randomness of it all tends to mitigate bias – though I do acknowledge that there is an inherent pro-analytical bias to some extent.

**LS:** Over the years, what is the strangest change you've made over the years to the Round Robin?

**AJ:** Well, we actually stopped including the results sheet in the final ballot packet about 5 years ago. Instead we email the results that night. At the awards assembly, we announce the top 6, but wait until later for people to see the rest. We did this for a very specific reason – it is hard to see a cum of 100 when you are used to winning tournaments. Because we have 10 rounds and 3 judges per section, someone gets to a cum of 100 every single year. I have seen so many top notch competitors just break down after seeing that results sheet. It made for an unpleasant ending to the tournament to have some guy crying behind the library. So we email things out now and that has made for a more enjoyable time when people are departing.

**LS:** The MBA Round Robin has had many great champions over the years. Which one do you think was the best?

**AJ:** I'll go with Josh Bone. He won the exhibition round in 2003 and 2004. He lost the 2003 round robin to his in state buddy David Tannenwald by 1 rank – Bone took a 2 in the last round and Tannenwald took three 1s to win. Then, Bone just blew out the field in 2004 by 28. The combination of those two years is far better than anyone else has put on the board. Just watching the ballots come in during the 2004 round robin was unreal. By Saturday morning (round 4 of 10), it was clear that the tournament was going to be a race for second since the championship had really slipped away from the field. It was pretty impressive.

**LS:** The round robin is known for its impressive fields over the last ten years. Which year do you think had the most competitive round robin field?

**AJ:** That's a seriously tough question. I can answer the opposite much more easily – the first year had the worst field!!! I know that for sure. We started so late and had so little time that it was hard to assemble a really top notch field. In general, I think the fields have been getting better every year as I've been able to extend my reach in terms of getting people from across the entire country. If I had to pick a year, I would say 2007. Our final round was Tex Dawson, Alex Stephenson, Aaron Mattis, Spencer Rockwell, and Akshay Rao. Show me a tournament that has ever had a final round that good! Charlie Alderman, Markus Brazzill, Mark Isaacson, David Kumbroch, Addie Lerner, Charlie Metzger, Brian Stephan, Billy Strong, Max Webster are notable names in that field that didn't even make the exhibition round. In terms of having great

people at the top, our 2003 final with Tannewald, Bone, Singer, and Hemel was incredibly good though as well. 2007 beats 2003 top to bottom though. A final comment though – our first year actually probably landed the very top talent out there. That year, Lucas Kline, Ted Murphy, and Jay Cox had just dominated the circuit (and had done so for a couple years) and we managed to talk them all into coming. I think getting them that year was key to getting the type of draw we've enjoyed in the past several years since then.

**LS:** Are there any dominating performances in the history of the tournament that stand out to you?

**AJ:** The top 2 were in back to back years – 2004 and 2005. For whatever reason, the field has been more competitive at the top since then. In 2004, Josh Bone had a average rank of 1.15 over 27 ballots. That's just incredible. He had a cum of 31 – second place had 59! The next year, Kevin Troy had an average rank of 1.23 over 30 ballots. Both of those years really stick out because the competitors just blasted the competition, but Bone's dominance was even better.

**LS:** MBA was one of the leaders in having an open cross-examination session in extemp as opposed to the old NFL model of a one minute question a and a two minute answer. What benefits do you believe the open cross-examination model has in extemp?

**AJ:** I really led the charge on that change nationally – when I competed, we had the 1 minute question/2 minute answer format and I thought it was so silly for a couple reasons (My 2001 *Rostrum* article details all of my reasons). For the questioner, how on earth are you supposed to ask a 1 minute long question. There was a lot of rambling that went on with the questioning. You basically had to give a 40 second Extemp speech then ask a 20 second question. For the answerer, the format was even more absurd. You had 2 minutes to ramble on about someone's 1 minute question. So I proposed simply using the open CX format that every form of debate used. I do think that format has served Extemp well. First, I think it provides a better check on extempers being loose with the facts. 3 minutes of intense careful questioning and redirecting can really show when someone is being truthful. Second, open cross-examination is the only way to really let the hardest workers be rewarded. They can demonstrate deep knowledge on a question that is not even their own. I think that can be very impressive when someone speaks on say Latin America and then leads a great discussion of an unrelated problem in Africa. Finally, open cross-examination permits us to witness an actual dialogue. It is so easy for someone to unintentionally misconstrue a cross-ex question or even intentionally reframe the cross-ex question to make the exercise easy or make the questioner look stupid. In an open format, that is not possible. The questioner can redirect / cutoff the answerer and place the emphasis back on the originally intended subject. I think those are the three best things though I think there are many more – notably, that this format is so much less boring!!

**LS:** Do you believe that NFL should go back to a three minute CX period or keep its two minute CX period?

**AJ:** Don't even get me started on that one! I feel like this is the classic case of having a solution chasing a problem. Having watched all (and judged most) of the NFL Final rounds with open cx, I (admittedly biased) have really enjoyed the new format. If anything, I thought that elite extempers could probably be assisted by EXTENDING the cx time to 3:30 or 4:00. I never would have advocated cutting the time down. Those minutes really flew by – if you could get out a question and answer every 45 seconds, I was really impressed. That meant you could ask 4 questions – maybe 5 if you were lucky. Now we're talking about as few as 2 questions being asked. That really decreases the impact of the exercise and I think that's unfortunate.

**LS:** Final question, what do you believe it takes to win the Round Robin?

**AJ:** Being really really good!!! More specifically it requires a combination of 4 things – confidence, consistency, great dynamic analysis (having something different to say than other people), and excellent delivery. Delivery alone has earned plenty of 16<sup>th</sup> place finishes and analysis alone has done nearly the same thing. But, when I look back at the people who won I see a lot of creativity – people that really worked hard to have truly unique and interesting things to say about every question. When given a vanilla question about something like an election – they didn't just say that candidate x was going to win because he had more money, people liked them, and they had an early lead. They had something creative to add to the discussion that made people think they were clever – in every case, that dynamic analysis was packaged with high level sources – lots of them and lots of serious journal citations as well. But even more than that, you have to be confident. Having competed in the round robin, I will certify that it is terrifying to walk into that field. You look around and everyone has won something big – or if they haven't won, they've been in the top 3 several times at big tournaments. That is really intimidating even if you've won a lot of tournaments. Being consistent in that sort of environment is extremely challenging. You really have to believe in yourself and believe that you can beat anyone in the country. I have seen so many national finalists crumble under the pressure of 10 rounds against elite competition. It really is a unique and tough game to play. When people relax though, they seem to have a great time.

## The Sweet Sixteen: The 2009 MBA Field

Below are biographical profiles for the sixteen competitors who will compete in Nashville, Tennessee at the Montgomery Bell Extemp Round Robin in two weeks. The participants are profiled in alphabetical order.

**KEY:** DNA = did not attend; DNF= did not finish in the Exhibition Round;  
N/A = non-applicable; NR = not ranked

### Matt Arons

**School:**

Millburn High School (Wyckoff, NJ)

**Graduation Year:** Senior (2009)

**NFL Points:** 641

**Previous Invites to MBA:** None

**Current Ranking in Extemp National**

**Points Race:** T7 (50 pts.)

**Last Year's Ranking in Extemp**

**National Points Race:** 19<sup>th</sup> (66 pts.)

**Notable Finishes This Season:**

1<sup>st</sup> Place (Yale University Invitational)

**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = DNA; NFL (IX) = Quarter-Finalist

**Outlook:**

Arons propelled himself into this year's round robin with a strong performance at the Yale University Invitational, placing first, as well as being a quarter-finalist last year at NFL Nationals...Arons has not registered any new NFL point activity since the Yale tournament, so he might be registering more time off of competitions than most of the other competitors in the field (although most likely not practices)...Arons is the second extemper to be invited from Millburn High School, whose first participant, Dan Rauch, placed third in 2005 and second in 2006 (winning the Exhibition Round in 2006)...A victory by Arons might vault him into first place in the National Points Race and its notable that his Yale victory occurred against points leader Stacey Chen and last year's U.S. extemp national champion Rebecca Goldstein...As nationals approaches, Arons might be the extemper to bring home a national championship to Millburn, who came within one rank of taking the IX title in 2006.

### Jason Bell

**School:**

Ladue Horton Watkins High School (St. Louis, MO)

**Graduation Year:** Senior (2009)

**NFL Points:** 1,736

**Previous Invites to MBA:** None

**Current Ranking in Extemp National**

**Points Race:** T11 (40 points)

**Last Year's Ranking in Extemp National**

**Points Race:** T38 (25 points)

**Notable Finishes This Season:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Place (George Mason University Patriot Games Tournament)

**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = DNA ; NFL (USX) = 9<sup>th</sup> Place

**Outlook:**

Bell has the distinction of becoming the first extemper from the state of Missouri to be invited to the Round Robin...His spot in the Round Robin was likely clinched based on his semi-final in U.S. extemp at NFL Nationals, where he missed the final round by eight ranks, and his runner-up finish to Aaron Lutkowitz at the George Mason University Patriot Games Tournament...Although Bell may not have the national circuit experience of some of his fellow competitors, he is a seasoned competitor, and one only needs to look at his amazing NFL point total to understand that...Also, Bell brings to the table a policy debate resume, which may help him in a tournament that leans towards content and confrontation, with cross-examination in each round...A victory would put Bell directly onto the national extemp map and make him a favorite for NFL in the summer.

## Morgan Booksh

**School:**

McNeil High School (Austin, TX)

**Graduation Year:** Senior (2009)**NFL Points:** 1,484**Previous Invites to MBA:** None**Current Ranking in Extemp National****Points Race:** 6<sup>th</sup> (52 pts.)**Last Year's Ranking in Extemp National****Points Race:** NR**Notable Finishes This Season:**

4<sup>th</sup> place (St. Mark's US Extemp), 4<sup>th</sup> place (St. Mark's International Extemp), 6<sup>th</sup> place (The Glenbrooks)

**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = DNA; NFL (USX) = Octo-finalist

**Outlook:**

In a year that is busy for Texas extemp, Morgan is one of the four extempers to make the 2009 MBA field...Morgan has one of the most busy resumes in the field, making the final rounds of three of the national circuit tournaments that count in the Extemp National Points Race...Finaling at those three tournaments, especially the prestigious Glenbrooks, most likely contributed to his invitation into the field...Morgan is a skilled extemper, Congress competitor, and Original Orator (he semi-finaled at The Glenbrooks)...Morgan is the first extemper to be invited to the Round Robin from McNeil High School...The Round Robin should add to Morgan's wealth of experience that he has gained already this season and a strong showing would continue to build an already lengthy 2008-2009 resume...Also, a victory or top 5 placing at the Round Robin would move Morgan into the top five in the National Points Race.

## Stacey Chen

**School:**

North Allegheny Senior HS (Wexford, PA)

**Graduation Year:** Senior (2009)**NFL Points:** 1,504**Previous Invites to MBA:** None**Current Ranking in Extemp National****Points Race:** 1<sup>st</sup> (120 pts.)**Last Year's Ranking in Extemp National****Points Race:** 13<sup>th</sup> (117 pts.)**Notable Finishes This Season:**

2<sup>nd</sup> place (Yale University Invitational), 1<sup>st</sup> place (The Glenbrooks), 1<sup>st</sup> place (George Mason University Patriot Games Extemp Round Robin), 3<sup>rd</sup> place (George Mason University Patriot Games)

**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = 5<sup>th</sup>; NFL (IX) = Octo-finalist

**Outlook:**

In an event that has been dominated by male competitors, Chen is making a splash on the national circuit this season and is on track to become the second female extemper to end up at the top of the Extemp National Points Race (remember that Rebecca Goldstein would have placed first last season with the current formula), albeit the first officially...Chen was last year's Pennsylvania state extemp champion...Chen has one of the more solid resumes of anyone in the field in terms of national circuit performance this season, but she will need to defeat Matt Arons, Aaron Lutkowitz, and Jason Bell, who defeated her at Yale and the George Mason University Patriot Games, respectively, to come out on top...Chen is the second extemper to be invited from North Allegheny, building on teammate Jack Grennan's invite last season...Chen is also one of three returning national finalists in this year's field...A victory by Chen at this tournament, worth 100 points, would give her a strong cushion in the National Points Race heading into the second half of the year. However, she will most likely need to place in the top 5 to retain her lead...A victory would make Chen the third female extemper to win the Round Robin.

## Nick Cugini

**School:**

Cypress Ridge High School  
(Houston, TX)

**Graduation Year:** Senior (2009)**NFL Points:** 2,022**Previous Invites to MBA:**

One (2008)—DNF

**Current Ranking in Extemp National****Points Race:** 3<sup>rd</sup> (80 pts.)**Last Year's Ranking in Extemp National****Points Race:** NR**Notable Finishes This Season:**

1<sup>st</sup> place (St. Mark's US Extemp), 3<sup>rd</sup> place  
(St. Mark's International Extemp)

**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = DNA;

NFL (USX) = Quarter-Finalist

**Outlook:**

Strong showings at St. Mark's made a strong case for inviting Cugini to the Round Robin...Cugini is the 2008 TFA State Champion in United States Extemporaneous Speaking, which is the portion that he won at St. Mark's before losing the International extemp tournament to 2008 TFA IX State Champion Dillon Huff...Cugini is one of four Texas extempers invited to this year's Round Robin, an amazingly high number, equaling the four extempers Texas had at the Round Robin in 2002 (Lily Wang, Joshua Johnson, Amanda Knight, and Derek Redmund)...Cugini's advantage would appear to be in the United States extemp rounds, and it will be interesting to see him challenge Evan Larson and Alex Draime, two NFL US Extemp finalists, at the tournament...Cugini has a large advantage over many competitors in the Round Robin in terms of experience, having been invited to the tournament last year. This may make Cugini more comfortable and could give him an advantage in close rounds...A victory or top three placing could vault Cugini into the #1 spot in the Extemp National Points Race, depending on the performance of Stacey Chen and in-state competitor Dillon Huff.

## Alex Draime

**School:**

Howland High School (Warren, Ohio)

**Graduation Year:** Senior (2009)**NFL Points:** 1,404**Previous Invites to MBA:** None**Current Ranking in Extemp National****Points Race:** NR**Last Year's Ranking in Extemp National****Points Race:** 23<sup>rd</sup> (55 pts.)**Notable Finishes This Season:** N/A**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = Quarter-Finalist;

NFL (USX) = 6<sup>th</sup> place

**Outlook:**

Draime comes into this tournament short on a national circuit resume, but that is because he does not travel...His national performances, which include a CFL and NFL final (2007 and 2008, respectively), is nothing to take lightly...Those national finals, and Draime's comeback from a disappointing CFL to make the final round of U.S. Extemp in Las Vegas helped Draime seal up this bid...Draime has an advantage in being used to competing on a national stage and weathering cross-examination under the strongest amount of pressure an extemper can experience...Watching a rematch of Draime against Evan Larson, a fellow competitor in the NFL U.S. Extemp final round will be one to watch...Draime is the first competitor to be invited to the Round Robin from Howland High School... In terms of the National Points Race, this tournament provides an opportunity for Draime to stock up points that he can build on for CFL and NFL Nationals. A strong finish here and final placings at CFL and NFL Nationals could eventually result in Draime becoming the National Points Race Champion of the 2008-2009 season... This tournament can also provide Draime with the tools necessary to be Ohio state champion in the second half of the season.



## Dillon Huff

**School:**

Carroll High School (Southlake, TX)

**Graduation Year:** Junior (2010)**NFL Points:** 1, 826**Previous Invites to MBA:** None**Current Ranking in Extemp National****Points Race:** 2<sup>nd</sup> (90 pts.)**Last Year's Ranking in Extemp National  
Points Race:** NR**Notable Finishes This Season:**

1<sup>st</sup> place (St. Mark's International  
Extemp), 2<sup>nd</sup> place (St. Mark's U.S.  
Extemp)

**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = DNA; NFL = Competed in Public  
Forum (made round 10)

**Outlook:**

Huff's strong performances at St. Mark's, which included a first place victory in International Extemp ushered in his first invite to the MBA Round Robin... Huff is the 2008 TFA State Champion in International Extemp... Unlike other competitors in the field, Huff competed in a different event last year at NFL, Public Forum debate, and made the fourth elimination round before going out. His debate experience may prove to be an asset in the cross-examination portions of the ten round competition... Huff is the third of four Texans competing at this year's Round Robin and like fellow TFA champion Nick Cugini, he will need to balance his expertise in International Extemp with domestic issues. However, his strong showing at St. Mark's in United States extemp shows that he can do so... Watching battles with Cugini in the U.S. extemp portions as well as International extemp battles with Stacey Chen and Matt Arons will be intriguing... A win by Huff would nearly guarantee a jump to #1 in the National Points Race standings, and a top three finish could do the same if Chen falters... Huff is also looking for a strong performance to solidify a Round Robin bid for next season.

## Amanda Johnson

**School:**

Eagan High School (Eagan, MN)

**Graduation Year:** Senior (2009)**NFL Points:** 1,022**Previous Invites to MBA:** None**Current Ranking in Extemp National****Points Race:** T28 (12 pts.)**Last Year's Ranking in Extemp National  
Points Race:** T38 (25 pts.)**Notable Finishes This Season:**

6<sup>th</sup> place (St. Mark's International Extemp)

**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = DNA; NFL (USX) = 7<sup>th</sup> place

**Outlook:**

Johnson joins a prestigious list of Eagan extempers have had the privilege to compete at the Round Robin, both of which won the tournament (Kevin Troy and Alex Stephenson)... Johnson's next-out finish at NFL helped her get a bid into this year's field and she has a national circuit final placing this year, a sixth place finish at St. Mark's in International Extemp... Johnson was next out of the NFL US Extemp final round last year by five ranks... She will get a chance to avenge her sixth place finish at St. Mark's against three Texas extempers who defeated her at that tournament, Dillon Huff, Nick Cugini, and Morgan Booksh... Johnson will also get to test her skills in U.S. extemp and measure her improvement in matchups against Alex Draime and Evan Larson, who made the NFL U.S. Extemp final round last year... A victory by Johnson would be the third by a female extemper in the history of the Round Robin and also would be the third victory by an Eagan competitor... A top five finish by Johnson would also vault her up the rankings in the National Points Race, which she can build on at NFL Nationals.

## Jane Kessner

**School:**

Walt Whitman High School  
(Bethesda, MD)

**Graduation Year:** Junior (2010)**NFL Points:** 1,748**Previous Invites to MBA:** None**Current Ranking in Extemp National****Points Race:** T20 (20 pts.)**Last Year's Ranking in Extemp National****Points Race:** 33<sup>rd</sup> (37 pts.)**Notable Finishes This Season:**

2<sup>nd</sup> place (George Mason University  
Extemp Round Robin), 4<sup>th</sup> place (The  
Glenbrooks)

**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = Semi-Finalist;  
NFL (IX) = Quarter-Finalist

**Outlook:**

Kessner is one of the four female extempers at this year's Round Robin and has a credible resume heading into the tournament...Kessner's final at the Glenbrooks and her runner-up finish to Stacey Chen at the George Mason University Round Robin helped her secure her bid into the Round Robin...If the George Mason University Extemp Round Robin counted into the National Points Race, Kessner's place in the standings would be higher as her current point total is solely based on her Glenbrooks finish...Kessner, like Jason Bell, has the unique distinction of being the first extemper invited from her state. In this case, this is Maryland's first bid to the Round Robin...Like fellow competitor Dillon Huff, Kessner will be aiming for a high finish in order to secure a Round Robin invite for next year...Also, Kessner will have rematches against Stacey Chen and Ryan Pereira, competitors who she faced or was bested by at earlier national circuit competitions this season...Kessner may be able to secure an advantage from the George Mason Extemp Round Robin, because she is now more experienced in CX skills and the preferences of national extemp judges.

## Evan Larson

**School:**

Bellarmino College Prep (San Jose, CA)

**Graduation Year:** Senior (2009)**NFL Points:** 1,424**Previous Invites to MBA:**

One (2008)---6<sup>th</sup> place

**Current Ranking in Extemp National****Points Race:** NR**Last Year's Ranking in Extemp National****Points Race:** 3<sup>rd</sup> (275 pts.)**Notable Finishes This Season:** N/A**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = 2<sup>nd</sup> place; NFL (USX) = 3<sup>rd</sup> place

**Outlook:**

Although Larson has not traveled on the national circuit yet this year, he may be the statistical favorite heading into this year's Round Robin...Larson is the highest placing returnee to the Round Robin, having placed just outside of the Exhibition Round last year in 6<sup>th</sup> place. Larson is also the highest ranking individual in last year's Extemp National Point Race to be attending this year's Round Robin...Larson's invite to the field was automatic, with two top three finishes last year at both CFL and NFL Nationals...Larson was also last year's Berkeley tournament champion and the California state champion in United States Extemp...Larson will have an advantage in being familiar with the tournament, its setting, and some of its judges...Matchups between Larson and fellow U.S. Extemp finalist Alex Draime as well as Texas TFA United States Extemp state champion Nick Cugini will be interesting to watch...Being from Bellarmino College Prep, a school known for its strong speech and debate programs, also gives Larson a mixture of skills necessary to navigate the Round Robin...A victory by Larson would make him a strong favorite at this year's national tournaments, although it may not vault him into first place in the National Points Race depending on the performance of Stacey Chen, Dillon Huff, Nick Cugini, Brennan Morris, and Morgan Booksh who are in the top six and are attending the tournament.

## Aaron Lutkowitz

**School:**

Montgomery Bell Academy  
(Nashville, TN)

**Graduation Year:** Junior (2010)**NFL Points:** 543**Previous Invites to MBA:** None**Current Ranking in the Extemp National****Points Race:** T7 (50 pts.)**Last Year's Ranking in the Extemp****National Points Race:** T55 (20 pts.)**Notable Finishes This Season:**

1<sup>st</sup> place (George Mason University Patriot Games), 3<sup>rd</sup> place (George Mason University Extemp Round Robin)

**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = DNA; NFL (IX) = No break

**Outlook:**

If you have never heard of Aaron Lutkowitz before you may want to take notice, especially after his victory at the George Mason University Patriot Games tournament over Jason Bell and National Points Race leader Stacey Chen cemented his bid into the Round Robin...Lutkowitz hopes to follow in the footsteps of MBA alumni Max Webster, who came the closest an MBA extemper has ever come to winning the Round Robin, placing second behind Rebecca Goldstein last year...As with all MBA competitors, Lutkowitz will have "home field advantage" at this tournament and will be used to the cold and layout of the area...Lutkowitz's experience the previous month at the George Mason University Extemp Round Robin may also prove useful...By being one of the handful of junior competitors in the tournament, Lutkowitz seeks to establish a balance between gaining experience at the Round Robin and securing a high enough finish to justify a spot in next year's tournament...Considering that Montgomery Bell Academy does not attend CFL Nationals, Lutkowitz will want a high finish to makeup for a loss of ground in the National Points Race, and a top three finish would vault him into contention nicely.

## Brennan Morris

**School:**

Randolph-Macon Academy  
(Fort Royal, VA)

**Graduation Year:** Senior (2009)**NFL Points:** 1,891**Previous Invites to MBA:** None**Current Ranking in the Extemp National****Points Race:** 5<sup>th</sup> (70 pts.)**Last Year's Ranking in the Extemp****National Points Race:** 14th (116 pts.)**Notable Finishes This Season:**

1<sup>st</sup> place (UPenn Liberty Bell Classic), 4<sup>th</sup> place (Wake Forest University Early Bird)

**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = 4<sup>th</sup> place; NFL (IX) = No break

**Outlook:**

Morris's victory at the UPenn Liberty Bell Classic and his final at last year's CFL tournament paved the way for his entry into this year's field...Morris is a skilled forensic competitor, with strong performances in Original Oratory, Impromptu speaking and extemporaneous speaking categories. In fact, Morris won the Wake Forest National Early Bird tournament this September in Impromptu, which showcases the diversity of his skills in limited preparation events...Morris is only the third Virginian to be invited to the Round Robin, and the first since 2002, when Ariel Schneller of Blacksburg High School last represented the state...Morris was also a finalist at last year's Extemp Tournament of Champions at Northwestern University, where he placed sixth...As one of the regular competitors on the national circuit, Morris will be somewhat familiar with the other competitors he is facing and the judges that he will see, which can lend him a competitive advantage...Interestingly enough, Morris is the only competitor from the final round of the Wake Forest National Early Bird to be in this year's Round Robin field...A victory here could vault Morris into the National Points Race lead and a top five finish is seemingly a must for him to retain his position in the top five in the standings.

## Ryan Pereira

**School:**

Nova High School (Davie, FL)

**Graduation Year:** Senior (2009)**NFL Points:** 1,503**Previous Invites to MBA:** None**Current Ranking in the Extemp National Points Race:** T11 (40 pts.)**Last Year's Ranking in the Extemp National Points Race:** 29<sup>th</sup> (31 pts.)**Notable Finishes This Season:**

2<sup>nd</sup> place (The Glenbrooks)

**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = DNA; NFL (USX): 8<sup>th</sup> place

**Outlook:**

Pereira's high finishes at NFL Nationals last year (8<sup>th</sup> place in U.S. Extemp) and The Glenbrooks this year (second place) created the opportunity for him to be invited to the Round Robin...Pereira is the fourth extemper to be invited to the Round Robin from Nova High School and it is Nova's sixth bid as a school (Rana Yared and Josh Rovenger attended the Round Robin twice)...Pereira missed out on the final round of U.S. Extemp at NFL Nationals last year by six ranks...Pereira will have the opportunity to clash with many opponents he faced in the semi-final rounds at NFL last year in U.S. Extemp such as Evan Larson, Alex Draime, Amanda Johnson, and Jason Bell...Pereira will also get a chance to avenge his Glenbrooks loss against Stacey Chen...A top five placing at the Round Robin would vault Pereira into the top ten in the National Points Race, although acquiring the top spot would require a collapse of Chen since she sits in the top spot with 120 overall points...An advantage of Pereira will be in acquiring knowledge and helpful advice from a coaching staff skilled in the ways of the Round Robin and what it takes to navigate the field because Nova already has one Round Robin champion (Rana Yared in 2002).

## Rahul Sangal

**School:**

Plano East Senior High School

(Plano, TX)

**Graduation Year:** Senior (2009)**NFL Points:** 1,786**Current Ranking in the Extemp National Points Race:** NR**Last Year's Ranking in the Extemp National Points Race:** T38 (25 pts.)**Notable Finishes This Season:** N/A**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = DNA; NFL (IX) = 7<sup>th</sup> place

**Outlook:**

Although Sangal has not accumulated any points in this year's National Points Race, that does not mean that he should be taken lightly heading into the Round Robin. Sangal finished just outside of the final round at NFL in International Extemp last year in 7<sup>th</sup> place, missing the final round by eleven ranks...Sangal is a competitor who excels at limited preparation events, with an emphasis on extemporaneous speaking and Impromptu, although he has also competed in Oratory...Last season, Sangal did register a break at the Extemp Tournament of Champions at Northwestern University, being eliminated in the quarter-final round...Sangal is the last of the four Texas entries at this year's Round Robin and he is the second extemper from Plano East to be invited to the tournament...The last time Plano East received a bid was for Lily Wang in 2002 (she finished in 5<sup>th</sup> place)...A top five placing would get points for Sangal in the National Points Race, although even a victory at the Round Robin will not propel him into first place...Sangal is the highest ranking returning IX competitor from last year's NFL national tournament in the field, which is dominated by US Extemp competitors...Sangal's clashes with last year's TFA International Extemp state champion Dillon Huff will be ones to watch since Sangal will need to depose Huff to win that championship this season.

## Alex Tolkin

**School:**

Newton South High School (Newton, MA)

**Graduation Year:** Senior (2009)**NFL Points:** 1,034**Previous Invites to MBA:** None**Current Ranking in the Extemp National Points Race:** T20 (20 pts.)**Last Year's Ranking in the Extemp****National Points Race:** 27<sup>th</sup> (46 pts.)**Notable Finishes This Season:**

4<sup>th</sup> place (Yale University Invitational)

**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = Octo-finalist; NFL (IX) = No break

**Outlook:**

Tolkin is the only competitor in the field who can boast a national championship on their resume, due to his victory in Extemp Commentary at NFL Nationals last year...Tolkin sits outside of the top ten in the Extemp National Points Race, with all of his points currently coming from the Yale University Invitational in September...Tolkin is the fifth extemper to be invited from Newton South to the Round Robin and it is the seventh bid for the school since 2003...To win the Round Robin, Tolkin will need to defeat two competitors in the field who bested him at Yale, Matt Arons and Stacey Chen...If Tolkin wins the Round Robin it would give Newton South High School the most victories in the history of the tournament and would also be the second time a school has won the tournament in back-to-back years (Eagan High School was the first to do it in 2005 and 2006 with Kevin Troy and Alex Stephenson)...Last year, Tolkin also registered a break at the Extemp Tournament of Champions, being eliminated in the semi-final round with teammate and eventual NFL U.S. Extemp national champion Rebecca Goldstein...Tolkin can rely on the advice of past teammates who have competed at the Round Robin and also the coaching of Lisa Honeyman and Chris Palmer, who have coached two Round Robin champions (David Tannenwald in 2003 and Rebecca Goldstein last year).

## Karen Zhou

**School:**

Lakeville North High School  
(Lakeville, MN)

**Graduation Year:** Junior (2010)**NFL Points:** 1,909**Previous Invites to MBA:** None**Current Ranking in the Extemp National Points Race:** NR**Last Year's Ranking in the Extemp****National Points Race:** T38 (25 pts.)**Notable Finishes This Season:** N/A**National Finishes Last Season:**

CFL = Quarter-finalist;

NFL (IX) = 14<sup>th</sup> place

**Outlook:**

Last year at both national tournaments as a sophomore, Zhou showed that she is an up and coming star on the national stage, registering a quarter-final at CFL and a respectable semi-final finish at NFL Nationals in International Extemp against a strong field of competition...Zhou is one of only four juniors in the field and will look for a strong finish to receive an invite back next season...Zhou is the first competitor to compete at the Round Robin for Lakeville North High School...She will be joined from the state of Minnesota at this year's Round Robin by Amanda Johnson of Eagan High School, who was also a semi-final finisher last year at NFL Nationals...Aside from Rahul Sangal, Zhou is the only IX semi-finalist from last year's NFL national tournament in this year's field...Like Sangal and fellow competitor Evan Larson, a victory by Zhou at the tournament will not give her first place in the Extemp National Points Race, but it will nearly guarantee a top five placing in the rankings by the next edition of *The Ex Files*...A victory by Zhou would be only the third time that a junior has won the Round Robin, although it would be the third time a junior has won the Round Robin in the last four years...A victory would also be the third time a competitor from the state of Minnesota has won the Round Robin and the third time a Minnesota competitor has won it in five years.

# Extemp Question Central National Points Race

by Logan Scisco

The first semester of the extemporaneous speaking season has come and gone with the conclusion of the prestigious Glenbrooks tournament in Illinois on November 23<sup>rd</sup>-24<sup>th</sup> and the George Mason University Patriot Games tournament on December 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> in Fairfax, Virginia. These tournaments were both “third tier” tournaments, with the winner of each receiving 50 points towards the inaugural Extemp Question Central National Points Race standings.

It is worth noting that the George Mason University Extemp Round Robin, which features a very unique head-to-head format, and was won by **Stacey Chen** of North Allegheny Senior High School in Pennsylvania, does not count towards the standings. Instead, only the “open” portion of the tournament where all extempers could compete counts.

The George Mason University Patriot Games tournament, a tournament that grows in stature each year, had a final round that greatly impacted the standings with the third through sixth place finishers already established in the National Points Race. The Glenbrooks tournament also had the unique distinction of putting Nova High School in Florida on the map in the National Points Race team standings.

## Individual Standings

Here are the updated individual standings as of December 8, 2008. The top fifteen in the rankings, including ties, are included below:

RANK	NAME	SCHOOL	POINTS
1	Stacey Chen	North Allegheny Senior HS (Wexford, PA)	120
2	Dillon Huff	Carroll HS (Southlake, TX)	90
3	Nick Cugini	Cypress Ridge HS (Houston, TX)	80
4	Jovalin Dedaj	Fordham Preparatory (Bronx, NY)	76
5	Brennan Morris	Randolph-Macon Academy (Fort Royal, VA)	70
6	Morgan Booksh	McNeil HS (Austin, TX)	52
T7	Alon Elhanan	Bronx High School of Science (Bronx, NY)	50
T7	Matt Arons	Millburn HS (Wyckoff, NJ)	50
T7	Aaron Lutkowitz	Montgomery Bell Academy (Nashville, TN)	50
10	Carl David Goette-Luciak	Blacksburg HS (Blacksburg, VA)	42
T11	Siobhan Tellez	Oakwood HS (Dayton, OH)	40
T11	Michael Watson	Desert Vista HS (Phoenix, AZ)	40
T11	Ryan Pereira	Nova HS (Davie, FL)	40
T11	Jason Bell	Ladue Horton Watkins HS (St. Louis, MO)	40
T15	Rebecca Goldstein	Newton South HS (Newton, MA)	30
T15	Virginia Hogan	Convent of the Sacred Heart (New York, NY)	30
T15	Nick Stevens	John H. Guyer HS (Denton, TX)	30
T15	Jared Odessky	Nova HS (Davie, FL)	30

One of the biggest movers and the name that attracted the most attention during the last month is Stacey Chen. Her win at the Glenbrooks tournament and third place finish at the George Mason University Patriot Games tournament netted her eighty points, enough to move from a tie for seventh into the “shotgun” position in the rankings and give her a thirty point lead over last month’s points leader, **Dillon Huff** of Carroll High School. Chen’s lead would be larger if the extemp round robin portion of the Patriot Games tournament counted for points. The competitor she defeated in the final of the round robin, **Jane Kessner** of Walt Whitman HS in Maryland, sits outside of the top fifteen with the twenty points that she earned for a fourth place finish at Glenbrooks.

The winner of the Patriot Games “open” tournament, **Aaron Lutkowitz** of Montgomery Bell Academy in Nashville, Tennessee, a school that will host the prestigious national extemp round robin in a few weeks, earned fifty points and makes his debut in the rankings in the seventh position, tied with early season winners **Alon Elhanan** of the Bronx High School of Science in New York, who won the Wake Forest Early Bird, and **Matt Arons** of Millburn High School in New Jersey, who won the Yale University Invitational tournament.

Inactivity kept **Nick Cugini** of Cypress Ridge High School in Houston, Texas from moving anywhere in the standings, and his position in the standings, owed to strong finishes at the St. Mark’s Heart of Texas Invitational, slipped from second to third.

As was stated earlier, the George Mason tournament’s bottom finishes played a major role in movements toward the top of the rankings. Outside of Chen’s placing, **Jovalin Dedaj** of Fordham Preparatory in New York, arguably one of the more consistent point achievers this year, finished fourth at the tournament, earning twenty points, retaining their fourth place position in the standings. Also, sixth place finisher **Carl David Goette-Luciak** of Blacksburg High School in Virginia earned twelve points at the tournament, and added onto his Wake Forest Early Bird fourth place finish, to break out of a tie for eleventh position and move into the top ten.

Another mover in the standings, thanks to the Glenbrooks tournament, is **Morgan Brooksh** of McNeil High School in Texas. Fueled by a sixth place finish their, Morgan moved from a tie for seventh into sole possession of sixth place.

To round out the top ten discussion, **Brennan Morris** of Randolph-Macon Academy in Virginia retains sole possession of fifth place despite not accumulating any points for this last cycle of tournaments with seventy points.

What is certain is that these standings will suffer a massive shakeup, because the next tournament to be added to the points standings is the first “second tier” tournament of the year: the Montgomery Bell Extemp Round Robin. Providing 100 points to the winner, this tournament will allow anyone within grasp of Chen to overtake her, or provides the possibility of Chen to build a monster lead heading into the Barkley Forum in late January. Readers interested in seeing how this could affect the standings should check out the “Handicapping the MBA Field” article in this magazine.

### **Team Standings**

The National Team Points Race continues to see a shakeup at the top for the third consecutive month. Here are the updated top ten in the Extemp Question Central National Team Points Race as of December 8, 2008:

RANK	SCHOOL	POINTS	# OF FINALISTS
1	North Allegheny Senior HS (Wexford, PA)	120	3
2	Carroll HS (Southlake, TX)	106	3
3	Cypress Ridge HS (Houston, TX)	80	2
4	Fordham Preparatory (Bronx, NY)	76	3
T5	Randolph-Macon Academy (Fort Royal, VA)	70	2
T5	Nova HS (Davie, FL)	70	2
7	McNeil HS (Austin, TX)	52	3
8	Newton South HS (Newton, MA)	50	2
T9	Bronx High School of Science (Bronx, NY)	50	1
T9	Millburn HS (Wyckoff, NJ)	50	1
T9	Montgomery Bell Academy (Nashville, TN)	50	1

Thanks to Stacey Chen’s performances at Glenbrooks and the George Mason University Patriot Games tournament, **North Allegheny Senior High School** in Pennsylvania has vaulted from sixty-six points down in the last issue of *The Ex Files* into first place in the team rankings. **Carroll High School** in Texas, who also has three finalists, but from two different extempers, dropped from first to second after a period of point inactivity last month. The same is true for **Cypress Ridge High School** in Texas, who drops from second to third place.

Florida powerhouse **Nova High School** makes its debut in the yearly rankings after having Ryan Pereira and Jared Odessky finish second and third, respectively, behind Chen at the Glenbrooks tournament in mid-November. Nova shares a tie for fifth in this month’s rankings with **Randolph-Macon Academy** in Virginia, whose point total is due to the performance of Brennan Morris.

**Fordham Preparatory** in New York, riding on the coattails of Jovalin Dedaj’s third final placing of the year, retains its position in fourth place with seventy-six points. Similarly, **McNeil High School** of Texas, led by their extemper Morgan Brooksh’s three final placings, moves up from eight place to seventh, overtaking **Newton South High School** of Massachusetts, who has not registered any points since September with the placings of Rebecca Goldstein and Alex Tolkin at the Yale University Invitational tournament. The same can be said of **Bronx High School of Science** in New York and **Millburn High School** in New Jersey, who are in a tie for ninth in the rankings.

Rounding out the top ten is **Montgomery Bell Academy** in Nashville, Tennessee, who has registered fifty points based on the victory of Aaron Lutkowitz at the George Mason University Patriot Games tournament.

As with the individual rankings, the team standings could suffer another large shakeup depending on the results of the Montgomery Bell Extemp Round Robin in Nashville in two weeks.

### 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 each tournament will be worth, and who the big winners have been so far.

<b>TOURNAMENT</b>	<b>DATE</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>	<b>WINNER'S POINTS (TIER)</b>	<b>WINNER</b>
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)	Dillon Huff (Carroll HS, TX)
St. Mark's Heart of Texas Invitational (USX)	10/16-10/19/2008	Dallas, Texas	50 (3rd Tier)	Nick Cugini (Cypress Ridge HS, TX)
University of Pennsylvania Liberty Bell Classic	10/18-10/19/2008	Philadelphia, Pennsylvania	50 (3rd Tier)	Brennan Morris (Randolph Macon Academy, VA)
The Glenbrooks	11/22-11/24/2008	Northbrook, Illinois	50 (3rd Tier)	Stacey Chen (North Allegheny Senior HS, PA)
George Mason University Patriot Games	12/5-12/8/2008	Fairfax, Virginia	50 (3rd Tier)	Aaron Lutkowitz (Montgomery Bell Academy, TN)
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)	6/19/2009	Birmingham, Alabama	25 bonus pts. (1st tier)	
2009 NFL Final Round (USX)	6/19/2009	Birmingham, Alabama	25 bonus pts. (1st tier)	

## MBA Roundtable

The Montgomery Bell Extemp Round Robin is a unique experience for those extempers who have attended it. For the participants that are getting ready to compete, as well as those extempers who one day aspire to compete in the tournament, *The Ex Files* has assembled a panel discussion of four extempers who have competed at the tournament over the last several years, including one overall tournament champion, David Tannenwald. This panel discusses their experiences at the tournament in the hope that competitors can learn more about how the tournament works, what they should expect in Nashville in a few weeks, and advice to extempers who won day hope to receive an MBA bid.

### Panel:

**David Tannenwald:** As an extemporaneous speaking competitor at Newton South High School(NSHS), David won the MBA Round Robin and the Harvard National Tournament in 2003; placed third at NFL's in IX in 2003; and was a two-time finalist at CFL Nationals (3<sup>rd</sup> place in 2002 and 5<sup>th</sup> place in 2003). After graduating from NSHS in 2003, David attended Brown University from 2003-2004 before transferring to Harvard College in the fall of 2005. In the interim academic year (2004-2005), David took time off from school. During his time off, he served as a field organizer for John Kerry's presidential campaign in Pittsburgh in the fall, and he worked as a research assistant at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government in the spring. While in college, David remained involved in forensics by working as a coach at summer forensics institutes in Massachusetts, Texas, and Virginia. After graduating from Harvard College in June 2008 with a degree in government, David spent the summer continuing to do research on his college thesis topic, subsidies for professional sports stadiums. In the fall of 2008, David biked down the U.S. Pacific Coast from Seattle to Los Angeles. David returned from his bike trip a month ago, and he is currently working part-time as an independent consultant for a law firm in NYC while he looks for a full-time job.

**MBA FINISHES: 1<sup>st</sup> place (2003); 2<sup>nd</sup> place in Exhibition Round (2003); 7<sup>th</sup> place (2002)**

**Hunter Kendrick:** Kendrick is a 2008 graduate of Danville High School in Danville, KY. He competed in speech and debate for four years, and over that period of time he amassed fourteen different state championships in six different individual events – including eight different titles in Extemporaneous Speaking. Nationally, Hunter is most notable as a two-time finalist at the Barkley Forum of Emory University, the 3<sup>rd</sup> place finisher at the 2007 NCFL National Championships, the 3<sup>rd</sup> place finisher at the 2008 MBA Southern-Bell Round Robin, and as the 4<sup>th</sup> place finisher in International Extemp at the 2008 NFL National Championships. In the summer of 2007 Hunter was named an NFL “Academic All-American,” and by the end of his forensics career he had earned the degree of “Premier Distinction” from the NFL. Hunter is a freshman at the University of Kentucky where he is pursuing degrees in History and English.

**MBA FINISH: 3<sup>rd</sup> place (2008)**

**Ian Panchevre:** Ian graduated from Tom C Clark High School in San Antonio, Texas in 2008. Throughout his career he has won several national tournaments in Extemp including The University of Texas, St. Marks, and the Glenbrooks. He competed at MBA, placed fourth at the Extemp TOC, and was a national semi-finalist in IX. Ian is attending Yale University where he plans on majoring in Ethics, Politics, and Economics as well as International Studies.

**MBA FINISH: Participant (2008)**

**Logan Scisco:** Logan 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 finalist, 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 and coaches for Grant and Boone County high schools.

**MBA FINISHES: 6<sup>th</sup> place (2004), 9<sup>th</sup> place (2003)**

**TOPIC #1: How did it feel to get an MBA bid?**

**Tannenwald:** I was pleasantly surprised to get an invitation to MBA during my junior year because of my limited competitive success up to that point. During my sophomore year, I didn't even break at NFL Nationals, and my resume during the fall of my junior year was fairly thin. In late October of that year, I won a Massachusetts local tournament against outstanding competition (Josh Bone, Pablo Ros, Hays Golden, Brendan Jarboe, etc.), but, still, it was only a Massachusetts local tournament. Then, a few weeks later, I placed second at Villiger behind Ariel Schneller, the previous year's NFL IX final round champion. Both of these results were great, but I wasn't sure it constituted a portfolio that warranted an MBA invitation.

After Villiger, I e-mailed Adam Johnson (who I had gotten to know at UTNIF that summer) with hopes that he would invite me to MBA. I didn't hear back from him, so I assumed it was not going to happen. However, a few weeks later, Adam e-mailed me to see if I'd like to attend the tournament. My invitation came after the initial round of MBA invitations, so I'm pretty sure I was an alternate. Overall, I felt very fortunate to get the invitation. I was really an unknown commodity at that point, so I appreciated AJ taking a chance on me.

During my senior year, it was also very nice to get the invitation. Because I had enjoyed MBA my junior year, I was very excited to have the opportunity to return.

**Kendrick:** Getting the invite was probably one of the high points of my competitive career. One of my coaches, Logan Scisco, had been to the RR twice before, and he had some pretty exciting/funny stories about his experiences there, which really made me want to experience it for myself. I was PUMPED beyond belief when I finally got that e-mail from Adam Johnson!

**Panchevre:** It was very exciting. I hadn't even heard of the RR until early in my senior year, and didn't even consider it as an option until after St. Marks. Getting the invitation was easily one of the most exciting moments of my extemp career.

**Scisco:** I remember that I was in the school computer lab during my economics class when my coach, Steve Meadows, stopped by, pulled me out, and showed me the letter that I had been accepted for the Round Robin. He had contacted Adam Johnson about the possibility of inviting me since I had placed 13<sup>th</sup> in U.S. extemp the year before at NFL, but since it was very late in the semester I had given up hope of being invited. I remember as a freshman and sophomore reading about the Round Robin and how it had the best extempers in the country such as Jason Lear,

Jason Warren, Gilbert Lee, Rana Yared, Ariel Schneller, Amanda Knight, etc. so I was very happy to be selected for the tournament.

### **TOPIC #2: Were you nervous heading into the MBA Round Robin?**

**Tannenwald:** I was nervous heading into the RR during both my junior and senior years but for different reasons. During my junior year, I wondered whether I realistically could compete at the RR. I had not even broken at NFL's during my sophomore year, and, though I had some success during my junior fall, a part of me feared getting blown out of the water.

In my senior year, I was nervous for the opposite reason: I felt like I had a shot to win the tournament but wasn't sure I would do it. After placing third at CFL's and seventh at NFL's during my junior year, I really thought I had a chance to be one of the top extempers in the country during my senior year. However, during the first half of my senior year, I had good but not great results. I was beginning to wonder if I would ever win a major tournament, and, as MBA approached, I had four chances left to win a big one: MBA, Harvard, CFL's, and NFL's. That made me incredibly nervous.

**Kendrick:** Of course. Then again, I was nervous about every tournament I went to. But, yes. I was more nervous than normal about the RR. Just think about it: only 16 people get invited each year! The level of competition speaks for itself... It would almost be silly NOT to be nervous about going to MBA...

**Panchevre:** A little bit. I knew that the competition would be tough and the format exhausting, but I had faith that if I stuck to my general game plan I would be fine. I was nervous enough so that I worked to prepare myself for it, but I don't believe the nerves impaired my performance.

**Scisco:** I was very nervous and intimidated going to the Round Robin for the first time. I never traveled the national circuit when I was in high school and the only national circuit tournament I ever attended was the Barkley Forum, but that was my senior year. I had talked to Amanda Knight before the tournament about what to expect and she gave me some good information, but the element of the unknown made me very nervous. I was afraid of embarrassing myself and ending up in 15<sup>th</sup> place, especially because I did not want to look bad in front of the best extemp coaches in the country who I had heard and read a lot about. My senior year I was not as nervous and actually looked forward to attending because many of the participants in the 2004 Round Robin were also at the 2003 tournament such as Josh Bone, Ron Kendler, and David Tucker.

### **TOPIC #3: How did you prepare heading into the Round Robin?**

**Tannenwald:** My preparation for the RR was drastically different during my junior and senior years. During my junior year, I had little time to prepare because, during winter break just before the tournament, I was on a family vacation in Hawaii. I spent a bit of time filing in the hotel business center, read the newspaper, and gave a couple speeches to my older brother (he was in college then but had competed in student congress in high school). With all of that said, it was virtually impossible to prepare for such a big tournament while on vacation.

During my senior year, my family was once again taking a Hawaiian vacation, but I decided to skip the trip and stay at home to prepare during winter vacation. I still spent time hanging out with friends that winter break, but, with time running out on my extemp career and still no major

championships on my resume, I decided to go "all in" so to speak. I filed fastidiously, gave numerous practice speeches, and read extensively.

**Kendrick:** I read more in December 2007 than at any other point in my life. Ever. I felt the company I was buying my highlighters from should have sponsored me... I would have put their company's logo in decal form on my boxes and everything...

I didn't get to do much actual practicing, though - my area practically had a blizzard and my coach (who lived out of town) couldn't make it into the school without dying. I resorted to doing fluency drills ad nauseum.

**Panchevre:** My preparation was research intensive, and light on developing the actual mechanics of the speech. Everyone prepares differently, but I think it's important that you strike the right balance.

**Scisco:** I went through my usual routine and throwing away old information in my files, reading newspaper articles, and reading some of the VictoryBriefs brief books that I had received for Christmas. I read a great deal of *Economics for Extempers*, but I did not do anything out of the ordinary. My junior year, my coach had me come to the school and give two practice speeches, which were cross-examined by an ex-teammate. This gave me some background into the three minute cross-examination format, which I was very unprepared for since I was not a debater and was only used to the old one minute question and two minute response format from NFL Districts. I also watched the 2000 NFL IX final round several times, which is the only tape my team had of extemp at the time, to see if I could pick up any new techniques.

<b>TOPIC #4: What do you remember about your first speech at the Round Robin?</b>
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**Tannenwald:** Unfortunately, I don't remember the speech itself, but I do remember the immediate aftermath of the speech. I was in the prep. room, and I overheard two separate conversations about my speech. In one instance, a competitor said to another competitor in a surprised tone, "my coach [who judged my round] gave Tannenwald the one in the round." In the other conversation, another competitor said to her chaperone (who had watched my round), "What did you think of Tannenwald? I thought he was pretty good." The chaperone replied, "Nah, you have nothing to worry about with him." I found this to be simultaneously a comical and disconcerting introduction to RR extemp. It was comical to hear people gossiping about me within earshot, and it was disconcerting that people gossiped so much.

**Kendrick:** Ha! Train wreck! The timer and I apparently had a communication block, and he didn't understand how I wanted my time signals given. So, I ended up only getting a signal when I had 5 SECONDS LEFT to speak! Luckily, I had been moved to my conclusion with enough time to wrap everything up, but overall the speech was still shakier than it could have been.

**Panchevre:** My first speech concerned the state of democracy in Georgia. The speech went well but the impacts at the end of my points were weak. At most tournaments, making errors like this don't cost you much in terms of ranks. However, at MBA, when the pool is so competitive, any little mistake will put you at the bottom of the room. It wasn't my strongest round, but I felt that it was a decent start to the tournament.

**Scisco:** I remember that the night before my coach and I drove down to Nashville that I had received an instant message on AOL from Clare Lascelles and she told me what the pairings were

for the first round. My first round included her, Jessica Ponn, Ron Kendler, and Amaris Singer, who had been to the Round Robin twice before and had placed third the previous year. I was nervous about hitting Amaris, but eager to test my skills against one of the best, and arguably the best female extemper in the country that year. The panel for that round was Joe Vaughan of Scarsdale, Lisa Miller of Nova, and Jonathan Mott of MBA.

The question that I drew for the first round was on whether Tom Daschle was a viable presidential candidate. Keep in mind, this was before Tom Daschle would lose his Senate seat in the 2004 elections. I thought my speech was pretty good, and I was relieved when it was over and I survived by first bout of CX with Clare okay. I also remember cross-examining Ron Kendler and I did a really bad job of it. I ended up going 1-4-5 in that round, but what stands out is that Amaris and Jessica introduced themselves to me after the round, which I thought was nice of them. It made me feel very welcome to the tournament.

**TOPIC #5: What experience at the Round Robin stands out the most to you and why?**

**Tannenwald:** Two experiences at the RR stand out. First and foremost, I will never forget the feeling I had when Adam Johnson announced me as the RR champion at the tournament my senior year. I felt immense pressure to win my senior year because, though I had appeared in the final round of many major tournaments, I had never won one. I felt tremendous relief, happiness, and satisfaction when I won the tournament.

Second, while at Logan Airport in Boston en route to MBA my senior year, Lisa Honeyman (my coach) received a phone call from Ron Kendler (my teammate and a sophomore at the time). Ron was calling us to let us know that he had just received a call from Adam Johnson and found out he was getting a last-minute invitation to the RR because someone dropped. It was great to have Ron join me and Josh Bone (another Massachusetts extemper) in Nashville, and it was also really exciting to have all three of us in the exhibition round.

**Kendrick:** Um... My favorite memory doesn't involve the competition, but here goes. The weekend we were at the RR the Pittsburgh Steelers were in a playoff game. Jack Grennan - who is from Pittsburgh - was sporting a Steelers hoody when he, Billy Strong, and I watched the game in the hotel lobby while our coaches went to the grown-ups-only soiree. The Steelers ended up losing that game, and Billy and I gave Jack hell over it. Good times.

**Panchevre:** There were many experiences that stood out. I think it'd be difficult to select just one. However, one that I remember particularly well was the experimental round. The year I attended we drew political cartoons out of a bag and had to develop our own question based on our interpretation of the cartoon. I really enjoyed the round and in terms of ranks it was my best round of the tournament.

**Scisco:** When people say MBA, what I remember most is getting annihilated by Dan Hemel during cross-examination on a speech I had given about poverty in South Africa. I finished what I thought was a pretty good speech, but then Hemel came up and put me through the longest cross-examination I had ever experienced by blitzing me with questions on patent information I had never heard of before.

Outside of the tournament, I remember standing around a small computer screen with most of the competitors watching the ESPN Gametracker for the Miami-Ohio State national title game in 2003 and watching Ariel Schneller play poker hands between rounds in 2004.

**TOPIC #6: Was there ever a disappointing experience for you at the Round Robin? Explain.**

**Tannenwald:** No disappointment for me. I felt incredibly fortunate to be there twice.

**Kendrick:** Well, MBA is notorious for using special question rounds. I don't want to go into detail, because I don't want to ruin the surprise for this year's group if Adam ends up using the same round format again. So, very vaguely, let me say that one round required you to use a certain medium to craft your own question. I thought that I had blown the round away, but then Jason Warren (who judged my round) stopped me in the hall afterwards and said something along the lines of "you missed something." When I looked at my prompt again, I noticed a portion that I had completely overlooked - so, in other words, I gave a speech about something completely different than I should have. Needless to say, didn't do so hot that round.

**Panchevre:** I had a few rounds half way through the tournament that I felt went rather poorly. It was rough knowing that I didn't do my best and it was difficult to focus on future rounds when I was so shaken by my performance in earlier rounds.

**Scisco:** While I am very grateful to have been invited to the Round Robin twice, I was disappointed my senior year (2004) to have missed out on the Exhibition Round by two ranks. Although I was very nervous about having to possibly compete in the Exhibition Round, it would've been nice to know that I had an opportunity to compete in it and you never know, one of the ten competitors judging the round may have been able to give me some advice that would have improve my extemp abilities my senior year, a year I thought was very flatline in terms of development.

**TOPIC #7: Do you feel the Round Robin was beneficial to your extemp career? Why?**

**Tannenwald:** The RR was tremendously beneficial to my extemp career. In my junior year, I learned a tremendous amount from watching the more experienced seniors, and I gained a lot of confidence from placing in the top-half of the field. I really think that confidence was integral to my competitive success later that year. In my senior year, winning the tournament was critical for my extemp career. In some sense, it was a capstone experience for me in extemp. After competing well but never winning a major tournament, I was extraordinarily proud to be the RR Champion. In addition, the RR win gave me momentum going into the second half of my senior year. After finally winning one of the big ones, I was a far more relaxed competitor and had what I felt was the best tournament of my career at Harvard a month after winning MBA. In the final of that tournament, I felt like I was "in the zone." I felt incredibly relaxed and spoke really well. Had I not won MBA, I would have still felt tremendous pressure to win a major and would not have been able to relax as much at Harvard.

**Kendrick:** Very. Every round you see the best extempers in the nation. You see what they do well, what they don't do so well, and you see how their styles differ from yours. Seeing new takes (15 new takes) on something you have been doing for a while can be very beneficial for your "self-discovery" in extemp. I recommend watching any rounds that you can, especially when your fellow competitors are as high-caliber as the RRs.

**Panchevre:** The RR is one of few opportunities for elite extempers to learn in a competitive context. For myself, the RR proved to be the most educational tournament I ever attended. The comments I was getting on my ballots were the best I had ever received. The feedback that judges



were more than happy to offer throughout the tournament was incredibly insightful. Also, you learn a lot from your competition. It's customary to watch the remainder of each round after you have spoken, and you pick up a lot of new things from your competitors.

**Scisco:** Without a doubt, if it was not for the Round Robin in 2003 I would never have won my final round national title in U.S. extemp, or much less finalized at CFL or NFL that year. Truth be told, I may not even be writing *The Ex Files*, coaching, or teaching if it was not for MBA. In 2003 I was very rough in finding “my style” of doing extemp, I was merely copying other competitors. Getting feedback from all of the coaches at the tournament and watching other competitors helped me find the style that best worked for me. Finding this style made me more confident as a speaker and that confidence helped me win my first extemp state title in Kentucky three months later and propelled me to a lot of success on the national stage that summer.

Also, I gained a lot of good friendships from MBA that made CFL and NFL a lot of fun in 2003. I remember at those tournaments that the people who had been to MBA sat close in the prep room and we all rooted each other on. It was an atmosphere that made the competition less stressful and more fun than I ever realized it could be.

<p><b>TOPIC #8: If you had to go into the Round Robin and do anything differently what would you do?</b></p>
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**Tannenwald:** I would have prepared far less thoroughly for the tournament going into my senior year. During that year, I spent nearly my entire winter break preparing. In retrospect, I had a skewed sense of what was most important. Though I am proud I won the tournament, I wish I had taken more time to be a kid and spent time with my family and friends.

**Kendrick:** I would have foregone the haircut I got the week of. It was nippy down there. Short hair + cool winds = discomfort. Hard to focus on Middle East Peace when you think your ears are suffering from frost bite...

**Panchevre:** I didn't prepare as prudently as I should have. I anticipated the questions to be so obscure that I devoted the majority of my preparation to research. Though the questions were challenging, they weren't impossible to address. In hindsight, I would have been better off collecting more general knowledge and devoting the additional time to more practice speeches.

**Scisco:** During the U.S. politics round my senior year, I drew a question on Carol Moseley Braun and while I thought my speech would be good on it, I could tell ten minutes into prep time that it was just not going to work. While I gave it my all in that round, the judges all said that I simply did not have enough specific information to answer the question and that I should have chosen another topic. The 5-5-5 I received in that round crippled my overall ranking, sent me from second place to about ninth, and I spent the rest of the tournament fighting my way back into the top five, which I almost did over the last two rounds. However, I sometimes think about where I possibly could have placed without choosing that topic and giving a speech instead of the Bush Medicare plan, which is one of the other topics I chose.

**TOPIC #9: What advice do you have for those going to the Round Robin?**

**Tannenwald:** For first-time RR attendees, my advice is do not get intimidated. Despite all of the pomp and circumstance, it's just a tournament. To people who are considered favorites to win, I would say don't put too much pressure on yourselves. Again, despite all of the pomp and circumstance, it's just a high school speech tournament.

To all RR attendees, I would say three things. First, watch the rounds after you speak. Normally, extempers do not stay and watch rounds, but Adam Johnson encouraged us to do so at MBA. I learned a lot from watching the other competitors. Second, enjoy hanging-out with your fellow competitors. I had a lot of fun spending time with the other kids at the tournament. Third, do not let the competitive crock bother you. For example, Adam Johnson used to post this chart which tracked the standings anonymously. In other words, one could see fluctuations (for example, the person leading after round two would be in sixth place after round five), but, because it was anonymous, people guessed who was who. This guessing game is unproductive. Just focus on your own stuff, and you'll be fine.

**Kendrick:** It is ok, natural even, to be nervous. However, do not let nervousness prevent you from performing to the best of your abilities. Take a breath, it will be ok...

**Panchevre:** Take it round by round and don't let the events in an earlier round impact later rounds. Everyone is going to make mistakes and one or two mistakes here and there will not eliminate you from the running. However, a series of mistakes will be difficult to recover from. When you make mistakes, the best thing to do is to put it aside and not to let them affect your future performance.

**Scisco:** Several items come to mind. First, enjoy yourself while you are there and talk to the other competitors. These are people that you will most likely see again at nationals and it will give you people to talk to and have fun with when most of the people from your state are no longer around, especially because at nationals when there are four to five different sites for competition.

Second, do not obsess over changing too many things in your style or obsessing over becoming the most knowledgeable person alive. You have received an MBA bid because you are one of the best at what you do and you have earned the right to be there. Go in confident. Regardless of where you place at the tournament, use it as a learning experience. Even if you do not win or place where you would like, look over the ballots that you receive back from the tournament and see what aspects of your performance you can change. MBA has the luxury of being sandwiched in the middle of the year and it is not too late to fix parts of your performance that could handicap you at state or national tournaments.

Finally, make sure to thank Adam Johnson, your coaches, and the MBA staff when you can. When I got home after attending the tournament each year, I made sure to e-mail Adam a thank you for inviting me and explaining how much I enjoyed the tournament. Without sacrifices from people like Adam and your coaches, tournaments like MBA would not exist, and receiving some thanks for their hard work and dedication does make them feel good about what they do.

# NOVEMBE/DECEMBER 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](mailto:logan.scisco@wku.edu).*

### **National Circuit Results**

#### **THE GLENBROOKS**

**Glenview, Northbrook, and Northfield, IL  
@ Glenbrook North and South HS and  
Various Sites  
November 22-23, 2008**

**Champion:**

**Stacey Chen**

**(North Allegheny Senior HS, PA)**

2<sup>nd</sup>: Ryan Pereira (Nova HS, FL)

3<sup>rd</sup>: Jared Odessky (Nova HS, FL)

4<sup>th</sup>: Jane Kessner (Walt Whitman HS, MD)

5<sup>th</sup>: Nabeel Zewail (San Marino HS, CA)

6<sup>th</sup>: Morgan Booksh (McNeil HS, TX)

#### **GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

##### **EXTEMP ROUND ROBIN**

**Fairfax, VA @ George Mason University  
December 6-8, 2008**

**Champion:**

**Stacey Chen**

**(North Allegheny Senior HS, PA)**

2<sup>nd</sup>: Jane Kessner (Walt Whitman HS, MD)

#### **GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

##### **PATRIOT GAMES TOURNAMENT**

**Fairfax, VA @ George Mason University  
December 6-8, 2008**

**Champion:**

**Aaron Lutkowitz**

**(Montgomery Bell Academy, TN)**

2<sup>nd</sup>: Jason Bell

(Ladue Horton Watkins HS, MO)

3<sup>rd</sup>: Stacey Chen

(North Allegheny Senior HS, PA)

4<sup>th</sup>: Jovalin Dedaj (Fordham Prep, NY)

5<sup>th</sup>: Megan Race

(North Mecklenburg HS, NC)

6<sup>th</sup>: Carl David Goette-Luciak (Blacksburg HS, VA)

### **State/Local Results**

#### **DANVILLE TOURNAMENT OF FIRSTS**

**Danville, KY @ Danville High School  
November 22, 2008**

**Champion:**

**Jordan Foster (Boone County HS)**

2<sup>nd</sup>: Aaron Williams (Harrison County HS)

3<sup>rd</sup>: Emily Martin (Boone County HS)

4<sup>th</sup>: Sirena Wurth (Graves County HS)

5<sup>th</sup>: Nupur Kantamneni (Ballard HS)

6<sup>th</sup>: Lawrence Rogers (Paul L. Dunbar HS)

#### **GRANT COUNTY "HOME OF THE BRAVE" INVITATIONAL**

**Dry Ridge, KY @ Grant County HS  
December 6, 2008**

**Champion:**

**Emily Martin (Boone County HS)**

2<sup>nd</sup>: Jared Rehberg (Danville HS)

3<sup>rd</sup>: Jamie Mohan (Danville HS)

4<sup>th</sup>: Max Tagher (Ryle HS)

5<sup>th</sup>: Aaron Williams (Harrison County HS)

6<sup>th</sup>: Lilian Rogers (Henry Clay HS)

#### **WKU HILLTOPPER (TOC LEG)**

**Bowling Green, KY @ Western Kentucky  
University**

**December 13, 2008**

**Champion:**

**Emily Martin (Boone County HS)**

2<sup>nd</sup>: Carolyn McBride (Oldham County HS)

3<sup>rd</sup>: Jordan Foster (Boone County HS)

4<sup>th</sup>: Alexis Caddell (Boone County HS)

5<sup>th</sup>: Sirena Wurth (Graves County HS)

6<sup>th</sup>: Lori Lovell (Boone County HS)

**HIGHLANDS "SUPERPOWER OF  
WORDS" INVITATIONAL**  
**Ft. Thomas, KY @ Highlands HS**  
**December 13, 2008**

**Champion:**

**Brian Bickers (Beechwood HS)**

2<sup>nd</sup>: Aaron Williams (Harrison County HS)

3<sup>rd</sup>: Chase Harpole (Scott County HS)

4<sup>th</sup>: Ryan Eldridge (Grant County HS)

5<sup>th</sup>: Nikki Montgomery (Grant County HS)

6<sup>th</sup>: Madeline Delgado  
(Lexington Catholic HS)

