



WNHS Math Team trophies are multiplying

Over the past few years, one of the most difficult geometry calculations for the Woodstock North High School Math team is finding space for all of those Thunder trophies.

Since 2018, the WNHS team has won five first-place trophies including three this year alone in Stillman Valley, Rockford and Hononegah. The team will compete in Regionals, where it came in second last year, on Feb. 22 at Rock Valley College.

Math team coaches Sarah Pigman and Erin Scott said winning has been a tradition for Thunder “mathletes” for several years and success has become an expectation, although they acknowledge it still takes considerable effort.

“I think we hook the kids when they go to their first competition as freshmen, and they get a medal. They think, “That’s awesome. I can do math and get a medal?” Pigman said.

Younger siblings want to replicate their older siblings’ success, and there is chatter in the honors math classes at each high school level about what it means to be a Math team member.

“We have athletes. We have theater people. We have kids who do so many different things,” Pigman said noting that the time commitment isn’t so strenuous that students can’t participate in the other activities they enjoy.

Students compete in various team-size configurations in algebra, algebra II, geometry and pre-calculus depending on their grade level. Pigman said this year’s algebra II and pre-calculus skills are particularly strong.

Seniors Keegan Given and Olivia Pigliacelli have been math team members since freshman year and credit the team’s attitude and work ethic for their success. Students come at lunchtime and after school to work on practice packets for upcoming competitions.

Olivia, a pre-calculus student who finds working with integers and derivatives “relaxing,” said team members take considerable pride in the Thunder’s success.

“There’s a lot of dedication. We want to get the highest score we can and make a name for ourselves,” she said.

Keegan said what he likes most about math competition is watching the group attack a particular problem they initially have no idea how to solve from different angles like solving a mystery.

He said students join the team because of the common interest in math but stay because they’re having fun. “During our last competition, we had a group event where our whole team was laughing for three minutes straight, and we still won. We’re just having a good time.”