Liberty's Quiz Bowl

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The Liberty University quiz bowl team seems indelibly linked with its honors students. Given that it is “the varsity sport of the mind,” this shouldn’t be too surprising.

According to the National Academic Quiz Tournaments, LLC (NAQT), “quiz bowl” is defined as a “game in which two teams compete head-to-head to answer questions from all areas of knowledge including history, literature, science, fine arts, current events, sports, and popular culture.” It very closely resembles the television show Jeopardy! but with teams, instead of individuals, buzzing in to answer questions on a wide variety of topics.

In quiz bowl, it’s good to know a little about everything, but it’s even more beneficial to know a lot about a specific field in order to be able to beat your competition to the buzz by recognizing the more obscure of Shakespeare’s characters in that play or the lesser-known general who fought in that battle. Of course, one does not have to be an honors...
student to compete on the quiz bowl team. However, honors students just tend to have the kind of wide-ranging knowledge and drive to excel and compete. As proof of this, both the varsity and junior varsity team this past year were composed entirely of honors students.

If that weren’t enough, the Honors Director, Dr. Jim Nutter, is also the head coach of the team, which he founded back in 2006. Assistant Coach Jake Rogers is also a Liberty honors program alumnus, who has been competing on or coaching for the team since 2009. Even the Honors Office Manager, Mrs. Laura Kline, gets involved with team, helping them travel to local tournaments to compete a few weekends out of every semester.

Since Dr. Nutter founded the team in 2006, the varsity has been competing in the same conference as many of Liberty’s sports teams, the Big South Conference, winning eight out of the past ten years (2006, 2007, 2008, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, and 2014) and was undefeated for a total of four years, from 2010 to 2013.
At the close of the 2014 season, Liberty’s quiz bowl team was ranked 20th nationwide at the highest level of competition in their division, the NAQT Intercollegiate Championship Tournament held in Chicago. At tournaments during the fall semester, Liberty’s teams scored a total of 19 wins, including defeating teams from universities such as UVA, VCU, Virginia Tech, Johns Hopkins, Georgetown, and the University of Pennsylvania—Liberty’s first Ivy League win. Even Liberty’s novice team, composed of all freshmen, defeated American and Virginia Tech.

Looking forward to the current season, Dr. Nutter observed, “Although we went to the Nationals last year and finished 20th in the country, the 2014-2015 team might be the strongest one yet, because our captain and two other players are all seniors who have played together for three years. In fact, this was the first year that we ever beat an Ivy League team in Quiz Bowl, as we won twice against the University of Pennsylvania—with our varsity team beating them (125-105) and even our JV team beating them (170-135).” Dr. Nutter is incredibly supportive and proud of his quiz bowl teams, and looks forward to bragging about their achievements and displaying the new hardware they earn this year for the honors office trophy case.

In 2014, Liberty had 19 wins in the fall tournaments.

In the ISSC Quiz Bowl Novice Tournament, Liberty beat VCU twice!
In the PADAWAN Tournament, Liberty defeated UVA, Virginia Tech (twice), and the University of Pennsylvania—which was Liberty’s first Ivy League win! In the ACF Fall Tournament, Liberty defeated the University of Maryland (4x), Johns Hopkins, American University, and North Carolina. LU Junior Varsity defeated VCU, Georgetown University, and the University of Pennsylvania. LU Novice won over American and Virginia Tech.

Dr. Nutter said, “Although we went to the Nationals last year and finished 20th in the country, the 2014-2015 team might be the strongest one yet, because our captain and two other players are all seniors who have played together for three years. In fact, this was the first year that we ever beat an Ivy League team in Quiz Bowl, as we won twice against the University of Pennsylvania—with our varsity team beating them (125-105) and even our JV team beating them (170-135).”