Varsity and Frosh Debaters Wind Up Outstanding Year

As the 1959-60 debating season nears a finish, the MIT varsity and freshman teams both can look back on significant accomplishments with much satisfaction. While the successes of the freshman team far exceed those of the varsity, it must be remembered that the varsity debaters invariably faced a much higher level of competition than those of the varsity.

Freshman Debates

Probably the outstanding freshman triumph was the victory of the team of Steve Wanner and Dan Gourley at a varsity tournament, the Barnard Tournament in February. On the varsity side, the team of Dick Smith, '60, and Wayne Haydon, '60, finished a very creditable eleventh in a highly selective field of thirty-two teams at the University of Kansas Heart of America Debate Tournament, which nears a finish, the MIT varsity and frosh team.

Previous Experience Unnecessary

While most debaters had had experience before coming to MIT, it should be noted that such experience is not essential. Bob Hillman, '60, one of the nation’s top debaters last year who had never debated before coming here, is rated one of the two top debating minds on campus.

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The most common affirmative arguments revolved around the thesis that Congress must often pass legislation relating to social and economic matters which necessarily lie outside the scope of the intended function of the Supreme Court, and therefore Congress must have the power to override our highest Tribunal on such matters as the need arises. The negative arguments primarily relied on an appeal for the maintenance of an effective system of checks and balances, as well as hailing the Supreme Court as a guardian of civil rights and suggesting that realization of the affirmative proposal might lead to gross infringements upon these precious rights by Congress. Freshman debater John Castle pointed out that the reasons for the attractiveness of the negative side are twofold: first, people are prejudiced for the present system, and second, there is not a pressing need for change.

Negative More Attractive

This year's topic for debate, "Resolved: That Congress should be given the power to reverse the decisions of the Supreme Court," has been widely accepted as the most appropriate that Congress possesses. That it is fun, that it develops one's speaking and writing ability, and that by the debaters for willingly sacrificing from five to ten hours of study time weekly for debate were simply that it is fun, that it develops one's speaking and writing ability, and that it offers a person valuable experience in organizing his thoughts.

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