

One-Act Play places fifth in tight competition at State

Written by Wauneta Breeze

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Wes Anderjaska, Sydnee Harchelroad, Christi Christner, Landon Jutten, Cameo Rector and Hayden Pollmann were recognized for their acting talents at the One-Act Play Production Championships Dec. 11 in Norfolk. Jutten was named the Class D2's Best Actor. Anderjaska and Pollmann were recognized as Outstanding Actors and Harchelroad, Christner and Rector as Best Actresses. (Courtesy Photo)

By Diane Stamm

The Wauneta Breeze

The Wauneta-Palisade High School production of "How to Kiss a Girl" placed fifth at the State competition Wednesday, Dec. 11 in Norfolk.

It was a tight competition. While first place Hyannis finished with 174 points, second through

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sixth ranged from 166 points to 161.

WP's trip across the state was the longest of any D2 participant. The bus ride took between six and seven hours.

"The drive was really long," said Director Liz Noler. "We really wish we had that short drive to Kearney as we have in years past!"

The team was able to stop at Gothenburg for a practice session. Gothenburg's stage is set up like the one at the Johnny Carson Theatre in Norfolk and gave everyone a better sense of what was to come.

After spending the night in Norfolk, WP took to the stage at 10:00 a.m. CT.

Noler said it wasn't one of WP's best performances. Performing in the State Championships since 2001 and performing in such a different environment led to some early jitters.

"I think I could feel the kids' nerves 50 feet from the stage," Noler said. "About half way through the play the tension and nervousness eased up significantly and we were able to perform more like normal."

"I think we could have improved our ranking a placing or two had we settled down earlier into the play. The judges did pick up on the line/timing stumbles we made due to nervousness."

The highlight of the weekend was Landon Jutten's lead performance as Ken, the boy trying to win the girl.

Jutten won Best Actor at all three of the team's previous meets and he kept the streak alive,

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winning the Outstanding Male Performer award for Class D2.

Noler said, "Having Landon bring home the gold medal for best male actor has really topped off our season! I am so very proud of his performance at every competition."

She added that Jutten did a great job finding the nuances in his character to give him a competitive edge.

"He really had this role nailed."

Overall, Noler said the judges liked WP's creativity of using the one box for three different scenes and praised the costumes.

The judges also loved the strong cast of well-developed characters.

Wes Anderjaska, Hayden Pollmann, Christi Christner, Cameo Rector and Sydnee Harchelroad all won Outstanding Actor/Actress awards for their supporting roles.

Like Jutten, Christner and Pollmann had been recognized in each of WP's previous performances.

The play is about a boy getting ready for and going on a date with advice from self-help books downloaded on his phone.