

Western Kentucky Forensics Team prepares for 2020-21 season

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The 33 members of the Western Kentucky University Forensics Team have returned to campus and are preparing for the unprecedented 2020-21 season.

The champion speech and debate team welcomed seven new members this fall, recruited from across the nation, and pursuing a variety of academic programs at WKU.

The team will begin its season Sept. 25 when it hosts the annual WKU Fall Tournament and Alex Elliott Memorial Lincoln-Douglas Debate Round Robin. Given the travel restrictions of campuses across the country, speech and debate tournaments will be virtual this fall. WKU's tournament will use a variety of video conferencing and tabulation platforms to host one of the country's first online competitions of the season.

The work to prepare for this ground-breaking season started when WKU hosted its first-ever online preseason camp the week of Aug. 16.

“Jumpstarting our season in a virtual setting was a challenge,” Director of Forensics Ganer Newman said. “The coaching staff put countless hours into preparing for this unique season. Though we have obstacles ahead of us, we are confident our approach will translate into any modality.”

In the 2019-20 season, WKU won its 28th consecutive Kentucky Forensic Association state championship. The American Forensics Association and National Forensics Association championship tournaments were unfortunately canceled because of the global pandemic.

“We will continue building on our focus of community and campus outreach,” Newman said. “Beyond preparing for new online formats, we are proud to contribute to the WKU's Strategic Plan and help our university climb to greater heights with another championship season.”

The 2020-21 WKU Forensics Team includes local students, Parker Anderson, a junior from Hodgenville; Stefani Giles, a first-year student from Hodgenville; and Symone Whalin, a senior from Sonora.