



ALL AMERICAN TRADITION

Texas Tech University is known for many things: red and black, victory bells, and rowdy football fans. These things are all part of the tradition of what makes Texas Tech thrive. A new tradition at Texas Tech is being an All-American on a judging team because has more judging All-Americans than any other school.

With ten out of 18 in 2011, Texas Tech took more than half of the available spots and the next closet school only has three. Being selected as an All-American is a prestigious honor because it is based on academics, extracurricular activities, and judging success. From this, a committee from across the nation votes on the top eight meats and top ten livestock judging team members who are well-rounded in those three areas.

“Being an All-American isn’t just something I did by myself; it’s something we accomplished as a team.”

Dr. Mark Miller, Texas Tech meat science professor and meat judging coach, said the number is rare and some schools are lucky to even have one member make it. These three things have been vital

to the success of Texas Tech’s judging teams.

“Here at Texas Tech we have all the ingredients to be successful,” Miller said. “Great students, great faculty, and great alumni support.”

Zachary Smith, an animal science major from Sweetwater, Texas, said that being an All-American was not an individual achievement. Smith realized each member of his had an important role to helping him achieve one of the highest honors in judging.

“Being on a team full of good judges made me work harder to be my very best,” Smith said. “Being an All-American isn’t just something I did by myself; it’s something we accomplished as a team.”

Loni Woolley, meat science graduate assistant, was an All-American for both of Texas Tech’s meat and livestock judging teams, this is highly uncommon. She feels that her success has come from good coaching.

“Between Dr. Miller and Dr. Rathmann, we have the best of the best here,” Woolley said. “Without them, our teams wouldn’t be as competitive.”

Woolley said high quality coaching is just part of the tradition at Texas Tech and it is something that is known across the judging world.

“Wherever we go as a team people know who our coaches are because they are highly respected,” Woolley said. “Team success and individual success, like being an All-American, can be accredited to them.”

Smith said alumni support and guidance is always helpful because they are more experienced and the hard work they put into the competitions can be emulated by today’s teams.

“Past judging team members have been around the block and can help us understand what to expect,” Smith said. “Any piece of information they can give us allows our team to step up and be the best we can be.”

At Texas Tech, being an All-American does not come easy like many may expect.

Woolley said achieving this honor takes a lot of hard work.

Countless hours go into being a successful judge,” Woolley said. “You have to know your weaknesses and be able to fix them to be the best.”

Smith agrees with the idea and encourages future judges at Tech to strive to work as hard as possible.

“It doesn’t come easy,” Smith said. “Be willing to work hard for something that’s bigger than you are and in the end it will pay off.”



Zachary Smith, senior animal science major, examines a lamb carcass in practice.