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APPONEQUET STUDENTS WIN DECA AWARDS

By LAUREN DALEY

LAKEVILLE — Apponequet Regional High School junior Andy Bartsch wants to own a restaurant someday, and it looks like he has a promising business future.

Mr. Bartsch, 17, and some of his fellow marketing students at Apponequet took first and fourth places in a national economics competition, Virtual Business Challenge, this month in Dallas at DECA'S 2006 International Career Development Conference.

Delta Epsilon Chi is a student organization dedicated to fostering careers in marketing, management and entrepreneurship.

Doug Hagerty, Mike Mackiewicz and Ben Nicholas, all of Lakeville, won first place by earning record profits with their virtual football franchise by using educational computer software. They could not be reached for comment.

They beat 1,500 teams from across the nation and earned \$1,000 for their achievement.

The fourth-place team, Mr. Bartsch of Lakeville and Tyler Hutchens of Freetown, earned \$100.

All the winners are students of teacher Frank Rosa.

"It was a huge achievement for us," Mr. Bartsch said. "The school itself has never really done that much in DECA; this is the most kids we've ever sent to nationals. We were pleased because we think Mr. Rosa is one of the best advisers in the country, and we think we made him proud. We represented Mr. Rosa and our school and state."

He said that in the competition, each team is responsible for owning a football franchise, and whoever makes the most money wins.

"You have to control all the aspects to make the most total profits — you set up staffing, sign players, do advertising, attract fans."

He said there were about 14,000 students on 2,000 teams vying for eight spots in the national competition in Dallas.

To prepare for the Virtual Business Challenge, students learned to develop pricing, promotion, merchandising and market research strategies for their virtual sports franchises and retailing businesses.

Mr. Rosa "has done a fantastic job with these kids," said Jean Fox, vice chair of the Regional School Committee.

"The kids do an integrated learning program that helps them understand economics. Some of them design shirts to market what they're marketing, some use computer software. Rosa just gets into their innate abilities and taps into it."