Kanishka Malik recounts his experience of the 55th Chuckerbutty Memorial Debates, held from September 2 to 4, 2011.

At Doon, there is nothing more mortifying for a debater than getting knocked out in the first round of our own Chuckerbutty Debates. It was this apprehension that made me rather pensive a few days before the debate. The four of us (Piroune, Shashvat, Sachit and I) would constantly recall the instance when PKB jokingly remarked, “If we don’t make it to the quarters, I’ll quarter you!” Not surprisingly, we took this to heart. We had prepared as much as any other year’s team would have, but the capriciousness of judging and our own inadequacies constantly haunted us. Fortunately, none of these nightmares manifested themselves during the Debates!

The topic of the prelim round ‘This House Revels in Plebeian Pleasures’, was challenging in its open-endedness. Piroune and I spoke in this round that was held in the conventional, Oxford style. While we defined ‘This House’ as the upper-middle class, a number of debaters defined it as ‘the world in general’, a definition fraught with paradoxes, since ‘plebeian pleasures’ may vary for people all around the world. We had strong arguments, but were afraid of sounding dry. We tried to overcome this by using punch-lines and amusing anecdotes. For instance, I started by quoting from *Sympathy for the Devil* by The Rolling Stones: “Allow me to introduce myself; I am a man of wealth and taste”. Many speakers made generalizations and sweeping statements, giving us enough substance for our rebuttals. We cruised through the first round, coming first in our pool; Piroune won the Best Speaker award.

Amongst the eight schools that qualified, our fiercest competitors were Dubai Modern High School and La Martiniere for Boys, Kolkata, both of whom were fortunately placed in the other pool for the first round.

The Quarter-Final round, held in the Parliamentary style, was the new addition to the tournament. The School has borrowed this format from the World Individual Debating and Public Speaking Competition, where speakers from different schools are teamed up as the Proposition or the Opposition; the participants are not allowed to seek assistance from anyone other than their partners. Piroune and I were teamed up with debaters from Vasant Valley School, against teams comprising debaters from Welham Girls and La Martiniere Boys. The topic, ‘This House is Sceptical of Youth Power’, elicited some high voltage debating. In the other pools, Dubai Modern High put up a good show; it was one of the few schools familiar with the challenging format. La Martiniere for Boys, Dubai Modern High, Assam Valley School and our team qualified to the Semi-Final Round. Doon once again emerged first in this round, with Piroune bagging the Best Speaker award in his pool.

The day didn’t end there; the semi-finals were to be held that evening. The format of this round, being used for the second time, required teams to frame a topic after watching a video (which in this case, was a clip from the movie *Baraka*). Out of these topics, one would be debated on, in the Modified Cambridge format. Doon was up against Assam Valley and Dubai Modern High was up against La Martiniere. The topic, ‘This House Believes that Today’s Wars are Purely Economic’ was one that privileged the propositions of both pools: having to prove any war to be ‘purely economic’ seemed impossible. The proposition in both pools (Assam Valley and Dubai Modern High) faced this difficulty and the oppositions took full advantage. Finally, Doon and La Martiniere were to face each other in the finals. The four of us - Piroune, Sachit, Shashvat and I – knew that La Martiniere Boys had a grand rhetorical style that allowed them to communicate effectively. We had to brace ourselves for a grand debate!

That night there was a wonderful dinner and jam session for the participants and Doscos helping with the event, where we all breathed easy and managed to mitigate the stress of being finalists.

The topic for the finals was ‘This House Believes in America No More’. With La Martiniere as the proposition and Doon as the opposition, the debate was tantalizingly close. As the judges pointed out later, both teams had looked at the debate from an economic standpoint. The proposition argued eloquently that America could no longer be relied on as an economic leader. We, as opposition, had the opportunity of cornering them when they said that “the US of the 80’s was one everyone looked up to”.

(continues overleaf)
Lovedale in the IPSC, In the silver medal. Although La Martiniere must be lauded for their style and delivery, we won the debate by 41 points. While Shashvat thanked PKB, DEB and all others involved in his speech as Secretary of SEDS, Doscos could be seen celebrating the possible holiday that might be declared. I was most happy about being proved wrong in my pessimistic predictions and of not “being quartered”!

***

SOCCER UPDATE

The School Soccer Team played a match against Doon International School in the RIMC Soccer Tournament and won 2-0. The team went on to play against Colonel Brown School and won 2-1, but lost 3-2 (in a tie breaker) against Shri Ram School. The Under-17 School Soccer Team participated in the Council Soccer Tournament and lost in the Pre-Quarter Final Round to Colonel Brown School, Dehradun. Well tried, all!

BASKETBALL ROUND-UP

The School Under-16 Basketball Team played a Semi-Final match against Welham Boys’ School in the District Under-16 Basketball Tournament and lost.

Well tried!

IAYP

The following boys have completed various levels of the IAYP: Bronze Level: Sehaj Singh Jothal, Rajgarh Rajthi, Abhishek Kakkar, Shubham Aggarwal (A-form) Silver Level: Utkarsh Garg, Shubham Aggarwal (Sc-form) Gold Level (including IAYP blazers): Apurv Aggarwal, Ashray Batra, Dhruv Sawhney, Nipun Batra, Anshuman Bhargava, Spandan Aggarwal Congratulations!

COUNCIL SWIMMING

The School Swimming Team participated in the 10th Council Inter-School Boys Swimming Competition. The following boys won awards in their respective categories: Sub Junior Category: Sharat Kumar Nambiar (Silver in 25m Freestyle and 25m Backstroke).

Junior Category: Sumer Sehgal (Gold in 25m Freestyle) and Pratyaksh Parmer (Bronze in 25m Breaststroke).

The Junior Team also won Silver in the 4x25m Freestyle relay.

Senior Category: Charlie Fry (Gold in 200m Freestyle and 50m Breaststroke), Apurv Aggarwal (Silver in 200m Freestyle), Angad Singh (Gold in 100m Individual Medley and in 50m Butterfly), Animesh Jain (Silver in 100m Individual Medley), Jaiveer Jakhar (Silver in 50m Butterfly), Rana Chowgule (Bronze in 100m Freestyle), Aditya Vikram Gupta (Gold in the 50m Breast Stroke) and Raj Surana (Bronze in 50m Back Stroke)

The School Relay Team also managed to win the Gold medal in the 50m Freestyle and Medley relay.

CHUCKS’ RESULTS

The following were the results of the various rounds of the 55th Annual Chuckerbuttery Memorial Inter-School English Debates, 2011:

Preliminary Round:
- Pool A: 1st: La Martiniere for Boys (LMB) 2nd: Dubai Modern High School 3rd: Vasant Valley School 4th: Assam Valley School

Quarter-Final Round:
- 1st: The Doon School 2nd: La Martiniere for Boys 3rd: Dubai Modern High School 4th: Assam Valley School

Under-14 Team Event Category:
- Pool A: (The Doon School vs Assam Valley School)
  - Winner: The Doon School
- Pool B: (La Martiniere for Boys vs Dubai Modern High School)
  - Winner: Akhil Bagaria, LMB

Final Round (The Doon School vs La Martiniere for Boys)
- Best Speaker: Kanishka Malik
- Most Promising Speaker: Piroune Balachandaran
- Winner: The Doon School

Best Speaker: Debayan de Bakshi, LMB
Most Promising Speaker: Yash Saraf, LMB
Winner: La Martiniers for Boys, Kolkata

Well tried!

BADMINTON UPDATE

The School Badminton Team participated in the District Badminton Championship, the results are as follows:

Aabhishek Parasramputra won the Doubles Under-17 District Championship. He was also the runner-up in the Individual Championship in the Under-17 and Under-19 categories.

In the IPSC, the School Team lost to Lawrence School, Lovedale in the Finals of the Under-19 Team Event and secured a silver medal.

The School Team beat Delhi Public School in the Finals of the Under-14 Team Event Category and won a gold medal. Shashwat Agarwal reached the Semi-Finals in the Individual Category in the Under-14 Category.

In the Under-17 Category, Kabir Sethi won a silver medal in the Individual Championship.

Congratulations!

SHOOTING SUCCESS

Samarjit Singh won a gold medal in the Under-19 Category of the Uttarakhand Inter-School Shooting Championship.

Congratulations!

Opinion Poll

Do you believe that Anna Hazare’s method of protest was justified?

Yes 59%  No 41%

(298 members of the community were polled)

Next week’s question: Should classes be recorded?

2. The Doon School Weekly Saturday, September 10
The North-Eastern Story

On a personal note. Raniz Bordoloi comments on the growing frustration amongst the Northeastern people over the ignorance of North-Eastern states by the Central Government and mass media.

I am dismayed whenever I read the front page of a newspaper. Assam, the state in which I reside, rarely receives any mention, at least in comparison to metropolitan and central states. Let’s take the latest example: the bomb blast in Delhi received the attention of every national newspaper. But when a bomb blast occurs in Assam, the media gives it a very lukewarm response. Is it because such events in my state have become routine? Moreover, why does Anna Hazare receive every national newspaper’s attention for a ten-day fast while from Sharmila remains in the background for a ten-year long protest? Every newspaper publishes headlines about Narendra Modi and Sonia Gandhi, how many headlines are concerned with Tarun Gogoi? Regardless of the reasons, one cannot doubt that this aspect of the media sends a very clear message to attentive readers: North-Eastern states have not received their due recognition.

Since the Central Government has repeatedly sidelined the North-Eastern states since independence, development in the seven states has been deplorable. This is probably the reason why several insurgent groups such as the ULFA have sprung up. A feeling of inferiority convinced many that Assam needed to be an independent, sovereign country. This is not just the case with Assam, but also with the six other states that constitute what is popularly known as the ‘Seven Sisters’. It is a pity that even after 64 years of gaining freedom, the ‘Seven Sisters’ are relatively secluded.

Apart from issues of governance, the ‘Seven Sisters’ have also been victims of racial discrimination. Students originating from the North-East studying in Delhi (and other cities) have repeatedly complained about being labeled as ‘foreigners’ and ‘chinkis’. The Media also plays an active role in creating this image of people from the North-Eastern India has been known as a land which unites diverse people and cultures. However, after noting such instances, I have been forced to question this assumption. At times, the narrow strip of land connecting the ‘Seven Sisters’ to mainland India seems symbolic to me. It speaks of the weak association of the North-Eastern states with the rest of India.

I must not discount the fact that the residents of these states are proud to be Indians. It is this knowledge that forces me to urge the Central Government and the mass media to give more recognition to the ‘Seven Sisters’, regardless of how naive I might seem in my suggestion. The region I am referring to constitutes an integral geographic and cultural part of this country and there is no justification for its ignorance or for the discrimination of its people. If this ignorance persists, I will certainly be aggrieved but more importantly, the state’s anger might manifest itself and the narrow link might become even narrower. “At times, the narrow strip of land connecting the ‘Seven Sisters’ to mainland India seems symbolic to me. It symbolises the weak association of the North-Eastern states with the rest of India.”
Yuv Vir Khosla reports on the Popular Band category of the ongoing Inter-House Music Competition held on Wednesday, August 31, 2011

The second segment of the Inter-House Music Competition - the Popular Band performance – was held on the first of this month. The music competition being spread over the course of a month gave the musicians enough time to prepare. In my opinion, the schedule for this year has helped students focus on individual segments of the competition and, consequently, raised the overall standard of the music competition (from whatever we have seen yet). The judges were Ashish Sharma, Winston Balmani and Sanjay Agarwal: all seasoned musicians who play in bands of their own.

The first house to take the stage was Oberoi, performing The Cave by Mumford and Sons and What About Now by Westlife. With problems they had encountered in performing Highway to Hell still fresh in their mind from last year, this year they were less ambitious, choosing pieces that laid more emphasis on instrumentation. Maybe because they were the first house to perform, they were unable to grab the audience’s attention with their Indie Folk and Alternative Rock songs. But they surely did optimize on their strengths, with the mandolin playing a deft and intricate melody-line in the first song and the guitar providing riffs for the second.

Jaipur House, led by Raghav Puri, was next to take the stage playing Boston by Augustana, and Jiyein Kyun. Their vocalists – Karan Singh and Suyash Raj Shivam– stole the show and kept the audience enthralled throughout the performance. It was interesting to see that they managed to add a lot of well-planned instrumentation to both their songs and keep their performance appealing.

A lot was expected from the next house that came on stage – Hyderabad— who were the winners of this section last year. Carrying on their legacy of playing Coldplay, as their popular band leader Rohan Shriram pointed out, they performed God Put A Smile Upon Your Face and The Day That Never Comes by Metallica. With their excellent drums and vocals, they impressed the audience and judges alike. Although heavy metal songs are never easy to pull off, Hyderabad House did justice to the song by their performance. Imaan Mehta’s skill and understanding of the idiom held the song together with wonderful co-ordination by other band members. True to the spirit of metal, it was a bold, even aggressive, performance.

Next to take the stage was Tata House, determined to win this segment too, after their dance performance. Playing Garaj Baras by Coke Studio and Smells Like Teen Spirit by Nirvana they successfully captured the audience’s attention with their interactive performance. With Gurschej Singh Oberoi on the guitar and Pranoy Bohara providing the vocals, Tata House put on a riveting performance with their energetic playing, Garaj Baras had some inspired arrangements of a variety of percussion instruments, and the rhythmic precision was admirable.

The last house to perform was Kashmir House, led by Vigya Singh Dhiman, performing Indisputable by Linkin Park and In My Place by Coldplay. Although their instrumentation was good, in my opinion, they lacked liveliness and failed to connect with the audience. But it was encouraging to watch a number of junior musicians on stage playing for the House. Yash Mall’s performance on keyboard and vocals was a tricky role which he did with flair.

In all, the Popular Band segment went off extremely well with Jaipur House winning the trophy, closely contested by Hyderabad House, which came second by just one point. In the weeks to come we look forward to seeing a number of performances from the choir and solo instrumentalists of each house.