

Hans Herr FFA Mechanics Team Wins National

EVERETT NEWSWANGER
Managing Editor

KANSAS CITY, MO —
Pennsylvania 793 points.
Minnesota 792 points.

When you are high school seniors and you win a national event by one point, you know you have been in a contest. When the team you edge out has won 10 out of the last 26 years and includes college students, you know you have reached your goal even though you didn't expect to win.

This is what happened to the agricultural mechanics FFA team from the Hans Herr Chapter at Lancaster Mennonite High School that placed first at the National FFA Agriculture Mechanics Career Development contest at the 70th National FFA Convention late last year. The award is the first for both LMH and for the state of Pennsylvania. In order to qualify for national competition, the LMH team placed first locally and in the state of Pennsylvania.

The winning team members are Jeff Nissley, son of Melvin and Marilyn Nissley, Middletown; Eric Martin, son of Galen and Nancy Martin, Mt. Joy; and David Smoker, son of Paul and Doris Smoker, Oxford. Andrew Harnish, son of James and Lois Harnish, Washington Boro, served as an alternate. Teacher Lem Metzler is the FFA advisor.

The team members are very modest in their appraisal of their abilities. They said they were surprised by their first place finish but admitted it was one of their goals. Actually they would have been happy to come in around 15th place out of 44 teams.

Metzler said that because the youths work so well as a team they came to the top. From the section that required all members of the

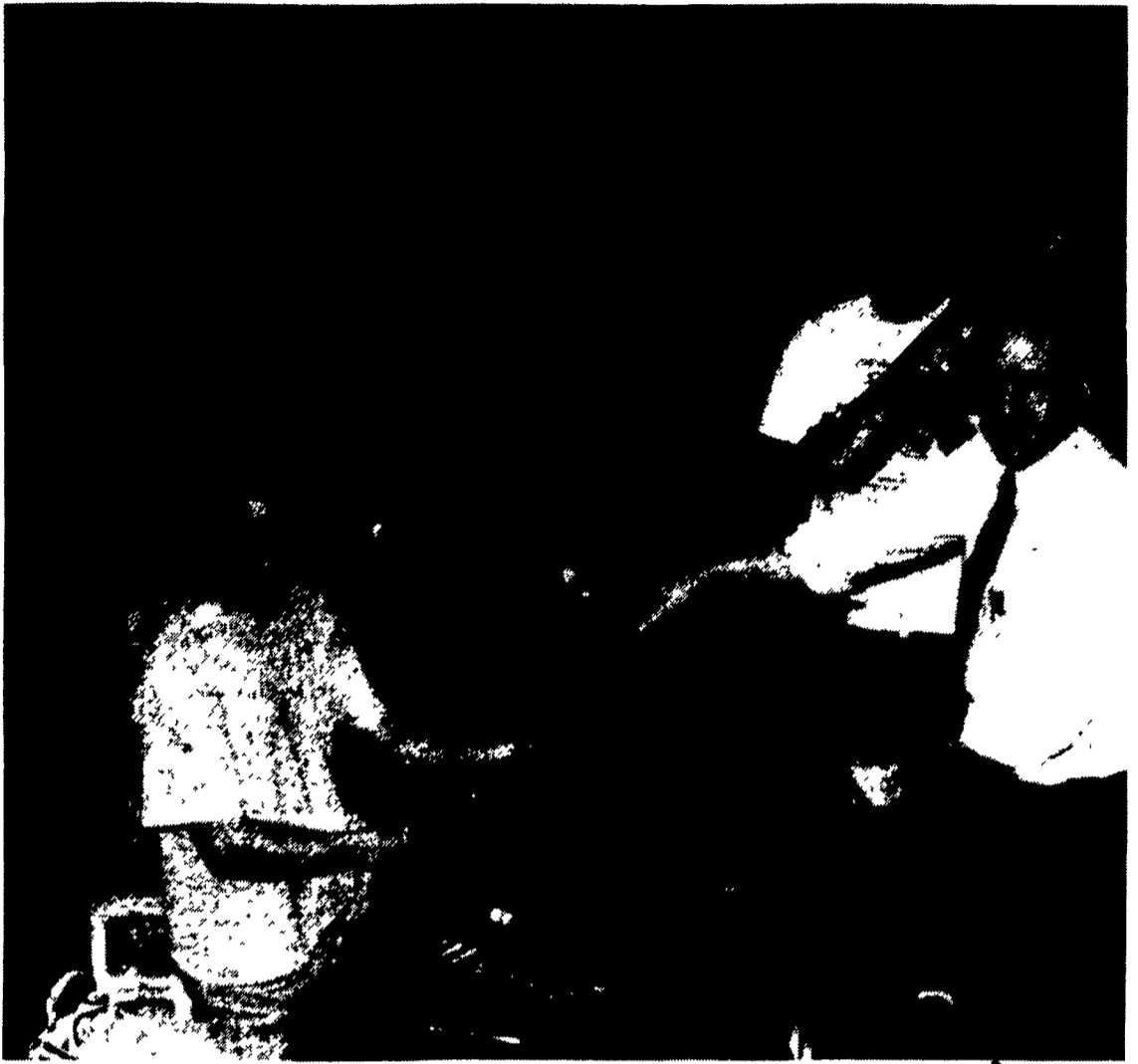
team to be involved in developing a computer model of a farm with all the components in place, they came in second in the nation. But the individual scores were good too. Nissley, Martin, and Smoker placed fifth, seventh, and ninth respectively.

The agricultural mechanics event is one of 18 national competitive events held each year at the national FFA convention. The event is sponsored by the Firestone Agricultural Tire Company in conjunction with the Bridgestone/Firestone Trust Fund, and the National FFA Foundation.

In competition, the team was required to take a two-hour written test and complete a two-hour team problem that involved making major systems changes in an agriculture production unit and reporting their analysis and solutions with a computer generated document. On the second day of competition, team members demonstrated their skills and knowledge through hands-on activities in five ag mechanics systems areas. For example, contestants were required to calculate the percentage of a farm land slope and determine if it would be safe for farm equipment. The areas in which the participants were tested included: energy systems, industry/marketing systems, machinery and equipment systems, environmental/natural resource systems, and structural systems.

Metzler was thrilled with his students' accomplishments. He said it is nice to win, but it is even greater to have students win with the high personal integrity and standards found in these young men. Each winning team member received a \$1,000 scholarship for post-high school education.

FFA is a national organization of 448,954 members preparing for



The national winning FFA mechanics team gather around a project in the shop at school. The are from left, Eric Martin, Dave Smoker, Andy Harnish, alternate, Jeff Nissley, and Lem Metzler, teacher.

leadership and careers in the science, business, and technology of agriculture. The organization has 7,263 local chapters located in the U.S., Puerto Rico, Guam, and the Virgin Islands.

FFA's mission is to make a posi-

tive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth and career success through agricultural education. Local, state, and national activities and award programs provide opportu-

nities for students to apply knowledge and skills learned in the classroom.

LMH is a parochial school headquartered east of Lancaster. The Hans Herr Chapter was chartered in January, 1993.



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