

## **Boucher Students Rise Up at the ZRT Cup**

Risin' up, straight to the top  
Have the guts, got the glory  
Went the distance, now I'm not gonna stop  
Just a man (and four women) and (their) will to survive  
The eye of the tiger...

These were the fighting words that helped fuel the passion and spirit of Team Boucher at the 2010 ZRT Cup, hosted by National College of Natural Medicine (NCNM) and presented by the Naturopathic Medical School Association (NMSA). On Tuesday, August 10<sup>th</sup>, five BINM students crammed into a 2001 Jetta for a seven hour journey from New Westminster to Portland, Oregon. Led by team captain and 2009 ZRT warrior, Anna Aresenault (ND12), the BINM team went on an amazing journey to the championship finals and carried with them the hearts, minds and spirit of an entire school. This is their story...

The annual ZRT Cup is a collegiate quiz bowl sponsored by ZRT Laboratory ([www.zrtlab.com](http://www.zrtlab.com)) and all seven CNME accredited naturopathic schools are invited to participate. Each school chooses a team of four players and one alternate to compete. The competition is a double elimination game – in order to be defeated, it is necessary to lose two heats. The Cup has been held twice previously with NCNM looking for the three-peat in 2010, but the pressure was on as they were the host school. The competing schools typically hold a competition to select team members and do so many months in advance. They have coaches, practice sessions (complete with buzzers to help ensure their synapses are firing on all cylinders). Teams take this event seriously as it is for bragging rights and there is some big prize money on the line.

While most schools prepared for many weeks, if not months, BINM opted for its own unique approach to team selection and training routine. Instead of holding a school-wide competition to select members BINM asked for volunteers. Anna Aresenault used her magnificent recruitment talents and put together a team that went into the competition with little in the way of expectations (and preparedness) but relied on tonnes of spirit and a common goal; to have as much fun as possible. Joining Anna in representing BINM were ND11's Thara Vayali, Veronic Provencher and Matt Greenwood, and ND12 Danielle Williamson. Team Boucher decided that practice sessions, lots of preparation and having a coach were just not necessary so they used just one resource (The 2008 NPLEX Clinical Study Questions) to prepare on the drive to Portland and crammed as much as possible (hopefully they do not use this strategy for NPLEX!).

When the team arrived they drew reigning two-time champions and host school, NCNM. Team Boucher immediately adopted the underdog role and chose "Eye of the Tiger" as their theme song to help gather strength. However, what really helped boost their morale and gave them an incredible burst of energy was a

video prepared by the Boucher Naturopathic Student's Association (BNSA) which showed the entire school cheering for the team. This video was filmed at the all-school meeting while the team was on the road to the Cup. BNSA President, Ted Chung, posted the video on You Tube so the team could see (and feel) the entire support of the BINM community. According to Anna Aresenault seeing the school come together and rally behind the team "lifted the team spirit" and was a critical element to their success in the tournament as they viewed the video prior to each heat.

On Wednesday morning BINM pulled off the first of several upsets and defeated traditional powerhouse, NCNM. In the next heat BINM faced fellow-Canadian school CCNM who has a huge student body of over 500 to select from. Team Boucher carried their initial success forward and took down another giant to start with a 2-0 record. Next up in heat 3 was Bridgeport University, which is another small school, but unlike BINM, came well-prepared. According to inside sources the BU team had been practicing for the competition since May and took the event so seriously that they declined to go out during their trip to Portland opting instead for more study time. BU established a big lead in the first half of the head to head heat but BINM mounted a big comeback in the second half only to fall just short.

With the victory BU advanced to the finals and BINM was to face NCNM in a showdown to determine the second finalist (remember, the tournament is double elimination). The heat came down to the last two questions and was full of intensity and challenging questions. For the second time in a row and in front of a large partisan crowd, including the NCNM President as well several NCNM faculty members, BINM upset the larger school and was assured a share of the prize money. Anna Aresenault said that "win or lose (in the finals) we would get a huge cheque" and the team was elated. In fact, the entire BINM community was thrilled as the team was providing regular updates to the BNSA by text message.

The championship was held at the Double Tree Hotel in Portland on Thursday, August 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:30pm. The BINM team came prepared as they had won the support of the five eliminated schools because of their great team spirit and positive, fun-filled attitude. Along the way the team acquired a mascot (a large red chili pepper) from the Mexican-themed AANP reception. In addition, the team made pompoms and big blue ribbons which they pinned on their supporters. While there were only three BINM-based supporters in attendance (Erica Kubanek, ND12, Wendy Tao ND14-6 and Mark Williams, Director of Admissions and Alumni Relations) there were many others wearing the blue colors in support of Team Boucher. There was no doubt which team was the loudest and showed the most spirit.

BINM answered the first question as well as the bonus question to take an early lead. Unfortunately, the lead was short lived as BU boasted an incredible talent

(a first year student) who answered about 60% of all questions correctly in the finals, often buzzing in well before most of the question was asked. In the end BU took home the well-deserved championship (and \$7500). BINM was the runner-up and displayed amazing knowledge, teamwork, courage, sportsmanship and energy for which the entire Boucher community is proud.

BINM received a standing ovation after the finals as well as a cheque from ZRT Laboratory for \$2,500. According to the ZRT website the winnings from the ZRT Cup must be used to benefit ND students, schools, clinics or the naturopathic profession. Student competitors will be able to identify a current need and request that funds be used for that purpose. Nominated to the ZRT All-Star team was Danielle Williamson from BINM who contributed 150 points for the team during the event (the third highest individual total overall).

The BINM team felt that the experience represented an excellent networking opportunity as they met and socialized with students from the other six CNME schools. Anna Aresenault says they “had way more fun than anticipated” and it was “fantastic to meet students from the other schools—the event had such a great vibe”. Anna feels they learned a lot and judging by the smiles on each team member’s face it is obvious they will remember this experience as a highlight for many years to come.

Speaking of years to come, the Boucher Institute will host the ZRT Cup in 2011 during the annual Northwest Naturopathic Physicians Convention (in May) and Anna would like to see the school “carry the enthusiasm forward and help put BINM (even more firmly) on the naturopathic map.” She finished by stating that “we need our students to help make the conference and Cup great and leave a positive impression.” Based on the impression left by the five team members of BINM in Portland it is obvious that the school will put on an amazing show in 2011. Congratulations on such an amazing accomplishment, Anna, Veronic, Matt, Danielle and Thara!!