

Black Hawk College Livestock Judging Teams are synonymous with winning, but why are they so successful?

It all started back in the 1970s when now-retired professor Dan Hoge started the team with his knowledge and passion for the sport. Over the years, the team has grown and trained some of the best livestock judges from all over the country.

The overall goal from the beginning is to give these students life-long skills to push them further in their professional and personal lives.

What is livestock judging?

Students compete as a team and individually to judge groups of livestock classes. BHC teams compete in cattle, swine, sheep and goats. Competitors meet one-on-one with an official to give their reasons for their placement. Scores are based on presentation as well as the accuracy of placement.



Competitors gain skills in decision-making, critical thinking, oral communication and self-confidence in addition to advancing their knowledge of the livestock industry.

Meet the coaches

Dr. Blake Bloomberg is a graduate of Black Hawk College and started his livestock judging career here. He returned to BHC in January 2020 after coaching at Texas A&M and Oklahoma State universities.

Tim Hubbard was a student of Dr. Bloomberg's at Oklahoma State University and had success coaching in Oklahoma before coming to Black Hawk College to help coach.

What is behind the success?

“It starts with recruiting,” says Hubbard. “Right now, we have students from all across the country. We have students from Maryland to Oregon and all the way south to Texas.”



After those students are recruited and they begin their journey here at Black Hawk College, the focus shifts to getting them prepared for competition.

“When they start, some of them will come with a lot of experience and some will come with minimal experience, but every student gets the same workouts and coaching across the board,” says Hubbard.

According to the two coaches, repetition is most important when it comes to coaching these students. The more they can see others judging, the further along it will push them. The students travel around to local farms three or four days a week seeing livestock to help prepare for competition.

Keeping the tradition going

The Black Hawk College Livestock Judging Team has had success for decades, and it is not slowing down anytime soon. Recently, the teams brought home wins from the North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE), Tulsa State Fair, State Fair of Texas, World Beef Expo and National Barrow Show.



With the right mixture of recruiting, coaching and the hard work that the students put into this passion, it will always remain a huge part of the tradition at Black Hawk College.

For more information or to join the team, contact Dr. Blake Bloomberg at bloombergb@bhc.edu or 309-854-1835 or Tim Hubbard at hubbardt@bhc.edu or 309-854-1836.

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