

State competition highlight for culinary arts team

By **DANNIE OLIVEAUX**
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Although they didn't return home with top honors, the Bonney Lake High culinary arts team had a busy day at the Ninth Annual Boyd Coffee ProStart Invitational March 8 in Olympia.

For weeks, the team practiced for hours to compete with other schools in the state. Last year, Bonney Lake finished second in the culinary portion of the competition which features cooking skills and restaurant management.

During the Iron Chef-style measure of kitchen ability, students put their kitchen and restaurant management skills to the test while competing for top honors and a host of scholarship and a place in April at the National ProStart Invitational in San Diego, Calif.

Culinary students competed in contests challenging their knife, cooking and presentation skills on only two portable butane burners. Teams demonstrated their creative abilities through the preparation of a meal consisting of a starter, entrée and dessert.

This year's menu at the

competition included a duck confit Napoleon appetizer, elk meat served with sautéed vegetables on wild rice and topped with mushroom, gravy, and raspberry, mocha custard for dessert.

Member of this year's culinary team were seniors Josh Mason, Paula Brown and Jayme Seger, along with juniors Jesse Lopez and Kyle Vandeevluugt. Mason is the alternate.

Their practice sessions included preparing the foods for cooking, including cutting and dicing vegetables.

Each cooking student had two plastic containers - one for their cooking equipment and the other for used equipment to clean later.

During practice sessions, culinary arts teacher Kahale Ahina timed his students and instructed them on what they would be judged on, including precision of cutting and posture.

Lopez, who has aspirations of being a chef, is taking the culinary class for the first time in high school.

"It my career I looking forward to," Lopez said. "I've learned a lot from my teachers, including nutrition."

He added he loves to bake and cooks whenever he has the chance at home.



Photo by Dannie Oliveaux

Kahale Ahina (right) instructs his culinary arts team during a recent practice session in preparation for the state competition. Pictured are (from left) Paula Brown, Jarmye Seger, Josh Mason and Jesse Lopez.

Teams participating in the restaurant management competition demonstrated their knowledge of the restaurant and foodservice industry by competing in a case study, where students were tested on their communication skills and ability to apply their knowledge of the industry to practical

situations and a question-and-answer, game show-style event.

Last year, Bonney Lake finished seventh at state. Comprising the school's restaurant management team were juniors Kendal Bledsoe, April Williams and Anastasia Jamora, and sophomore Logan Brenner.

University, he taught food nutrition classes at Ocosta High in Westport, Wash., then came to Bonney Lake.

Ahina, in his fourth year at Bonney Lake, said her never dreamed about being a teacher - especially a cooking teacher.

Ahina didn't know which direction he wanted to go in his career. After receiving his associate's degree and getting married, his wife decided to pursue a teaching career, while Ahina was trying to find which career to pursue.

He said he found a job hosting at a restaurant, then serving. Ahina later went to work with a catering company in the kitchen.

"That where the light turned on," he said. "The fun thing about cooking for me was normal, everyday people making fancy meals for the rich people."

He said the catering company catered dinners for high-profile clients, including Bill and Melinda Gates.

He trained to become a chef, but the six-to-seven-days-a-week schedule with no nights or holidays off was harsh.

"I was amazing what my

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chef friends taught me, so I wanted to teach kids cooking," he added.

Ahina said his wife took the Culinary Arts program while attending Shorewood High School in Shoreline, Wash.

ProStart is a school-to-career program taught in Washington high schools through the Washington Restaurant Association Education Foundation.

The ProStart curriculum is nationally accredited and prepares students for successful careers in the food-service industry.

Donors for this year's team were Albertson's of Bonney Lake, Consolidated Foods, Valley Harvest and Dave's Meat and Produce in Tacoma.