

Gila Monster Wins NephMadness 2024

By Matthew A. Sparks

NephMadness 2024 has come and gone. The 12th iteration of NephMadness produced some surprising and memorable moments.

NephMadness began in 2013 as a way to celebrate World Kidney Day, educate people on important aspects of kidney diseases, and have fun in the process. Based on the annual US college basketball tournament March Madness, the hottest nephrology topics compete in NephMadness each year with an ultimate winner selected by a Blue Ribbon Panel of nephrologists, trainees, physicians, and patients.

The winning team of NephMadness 2024 was the Gila Monster hailing from the Animal House region. Nephrology boasts a rich tradition of leveraging the intricacies of nature and physiology to unearth therapeutic interventions and unravel the complexities of pathophysiology (think angiotensin-converting enzyme inhibitors and pit vipers or the bark of an apple tree and sodium-glucose cotransporter-2 inhibitors). The Animal House region of NephMadness highlights the kidney physiology of

animals, which helps us understand and improve human health. Team Gila Monster (*Heloderma suspectum*) is the latest example and the first time an Animal House region member has won NephMadness in its 4 years in the competition. Team Gila Monster continues to ride the wave of impressive cardiovascular and weight reduction, as well as improved kidney outcomes, derived from its hormone (exendin-4) isolated from its saliva. Exendin-4 is a potent agonist of the glucagon-like peptide 1 receptor (<https://ajkdblog.org/2024/03/05/nephmadness-2024-they-may-look-cute-but-are-all-animals-sweet/>), which has ushered in a revolution in diabetes and obesity care with medications like semaglutide and tirzepatide.

One of the true joys of NephMadness is seeing the parties that take place all over the world. This year did not disappoint with a neon theme, cookies, cakes, and costumes. The winner of the best party category was the General Hospital of Mexico in Mexico City.

Thanks to everyone who participated and helped make the 2024 tournament a success. The NephMadness Executive Team is already constructing the 2025 tournament. What topics will make the field, and what surprises await in 2025? ■

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