

# THE SCIENCE OLYMPIAD

## HOW TO GET STARTED & HOW TO KEEP GOING

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## GENERAL INFORMATION

### WHY THE SCIENCE OLYMPIAD?

- heightens interest in science
- enhances self-esteem, giving a feeling of belonging and accomplishment
- enriches classroom science programs
- strengthens school spirit
- involves the community
- is fun!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

### THE COACHES' MANUAL

**Look at the events in the coaches' manual.** The rules for each event provide all the information for the preparation, the *scoring process*, and the number of students that may participate. **Highlighted areas indicate changes from the preceding year's version of the event.**

### GETTING SUPPORT FOR THE SCIENCE OLYMPIAD

School administrators *are* usually supportive of sound educational programs. You must educate your administrator. Provide a *coaches'* manual summary of the events.

#### **Your administrator should know the costs:**

1. Annual membership fee (National & State fees for Michigan, \$175)
2. Regional fees (Michigan's Region 8 fees, \$100)
3. Training Workshops for novice and veteran coaches: The Coaches' Clinic of America (1<sup>st</sup> weekend of October, University of Michigan Dearborn); MSU Coaches' Workshop, Dec. 5<sup>th</sup>; Region 8 Construction Workshop, Jan.; New Coaches' Workshops (Region 8 Oct. & Nov.)
4. Invitational tournaments that provide teams with "practice" for the real event (Michigan fees, \$50-\$ 100 for a team)
5. Shirts for teams members
6. Transportation costs to & from invitationals and the regional tournament
7. Meals at the competition
8. Expenses for event materials
9. Additional costs if a team goes to the state tournament (MSU, May, 2010)



## **GETTING SUPPORT FOR THE SCIENCE OLYMPIAD (continued)**

**Fund raising should not be your responsibility. The reality** is that you may have to raise some funds even though you are the COACH and have plenty to do.

1. There may be grants to help with the financing of a team. (Title 1 and At Risk Funds).
2. Local businesses might provide financial support for all expenses or for a specific expense.
3. Pizza or snack sales after school have proven to be very popular.

**Seek school staff and parent support.** There are 23 Science Olympiad events. Coaching all the events yourself can be impossible. Seek help from teachers in other disciplines, friends, and parents. **In the end, train only for the events in which kids are interested. Let the kids set the pace.**

**Make a list of materials** needed for the events. Post that list in your classroom and give it to the school staff. You'll be surprised how much you can collect. **Collect copy paper boxes to store materials, one for each event.**

## **SELECTING A TEAM**

Remember: **gather team members who are eager**, glad to be involved. Team members should not be selected merely from the ranks of the talented and gifted. Interest should be primary in selecting a team member.

1. **Ask all the science teachers in your building to** show a CD of a regional tournament. In most regions, someone has made a tournament CD.
2. **Call a general meeting** for all those interested in Science Olympiad. Pass out copies of event rules and the application form found at the end of this booklet. Students may sign up for events that interest them.
3. Do not beg students to participate.
4. **A team number has a maximum of 15 students. Let the kids set the pace.** If your team is small, it is still a team. A team of five can easily do at least 10 events. If your team ends up being very small, compete only in as many events as the interest of your team members. **LET THE STUDENTS SET THE PACE.** Your team may not win a championship, but your individual team members can win medals and have lots of fun.
5. **If your team number is more than fifteen, be creative.**
  - a. **Some may choose to be helpers.** They can quiz team members, help organize materials, create a shirt design, deliver messages to the

## **SELECTING A TEAM (continued)**

staff and the administration, write news articles about the team, or help at the regional tournament.

- b. **Some members may prefer to train as alternates** along with a regular team member. You never can tell when illness will strike. Or they may "shadow" a senior team member (8th grader or 12th grader) so that they can take over that event the next year.
  - c. **Some members may also compete in the trial events.** (Michigan limits the number of alternates to 5)
  - d. **Alternates may form a team and compete at an invitational tournament (email me for details)**
6. **Students should know that their place on the team is assured only if** they are actively cooperating.
- a. **Some events involve the construction of a device.** Hold a mini competition to determine which device/students will represent the team for that event.
  - b. **Set deadlines for constructions.** By having more than one group construct a device, you insure that there will be a device for the competition. Students should follow a plan so they know exactly how they made the device and can make modifications. Ideally, all constructions should be completed by the end of January.
  - c. **Never assign a student too many events.** It can be a disaster if that student is unable to compete at the last minute, not to mention how this might affect team morale.

## **PRACTICING THE EVENTS**

**Let the students set the pace.** Perhaps ten events is all you and the team can handle that year. Make sure that practice times fit everyone's schedules.

- 1. **Make sure that each team member for an event** understands the rules and procedures of that event. **Read the rules every year.**
- 2. **Start practicing immediately** after team selection. Make a schedule for lab and study events. Set deadlines for constructions.
- 3. **Practice the events in your classroom.** All students benefit.
- 4. **Keep in touch** with other adults who **are helping** and know their plan and practice schedules

**Morning practice** can be arranged and is often more effective. Evening practice can include parents. Lunchtime practice may be a problem.

## **GETTING READY FOR THE TOURNAMENT**

1. **Team members should have shirts** provided for them. The cost to the school can be as little as \$10 per student. The school district usually has a less costly company to provide uniform items. Perhaps, you know someone artistic who could create a silk screen design or use puffy paint to personalize each team shirt. Shirt costs could then be cut in half.
2. **You should receive a regional tournament schedule by January. Make sure your team members know the team number and have a copy of the schedule.** "B" event times are for the middle schools. "C" event times are for the high schools. A coach and team must be flexible, especially if a team member's events are changed at the last minute.
3. **Some events require students to bring materials with them.** Make sure materials are provided, (goggles, aprons, thermometers, etc.)
4. **If your school has never competed in an Olympiad, contact the regional director** to learn about the layout of the competition site and where students can camp for the day.

## **ACKNOWLEDGING TEAM EFFORT**

1. **Publicize immediately before the tournament.**
  - a. A "PR" student can write up a news release for the local papers and take photos and videos during practices and during the tournament.
  - b. Make a showcase for the team.
  - c. **The period immediately following the tournament** is as important as the preparation period. No matter what happens at the tournament, you should have some way to recognize your team members. Call the **local newspaper**. Provide photos. Mention each student by name and indicate any awards earned. Have something nice to say about each student.
  - d. Make sure the team is recognized in some way at your school. It may be a poster display, a photo display, or an assembly.
  - e. **Some schools** have a tradition of going out to eat after the competition. Costs are covered by the school, of course. Otherwise, you can arrange with the parents and other coaches to hold a potluck banquet.

## APPLICATION

**SCIENCE OLYMPIAD TEAM**

**JUNIOR DIVISION (B)**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT SCIENCE UNITS HAVE YOU STUDIED THAT YOU LIKE BEST?

PLEASE FILL IN THE SPACES BELOW, INDICATE YOUR INTEREST  
AND/OR KNOWLEDGE OF SUBJECT *AREAS* BY PLACING A CHECK:

	Knowledge	Interest
Ecology	_____	_____
Designing/constructing	_____	_____
Physical Science	_____	_____
Fossils	_____	_____
Birds	_____	_____
Using maps	_____	_____
Problem Solving	_____	_____
Epidemiology	_____	_____
Science lab techniques	_____	_____
Chemistry	_____	_____
The Solar System	_____	_____
The scientific method	_____	_____
Solving Puzzles	_____	_____
Weather	_____	_____
Earth <i>Science</i>	_____	_____

DO YOU HAVE ANY SCIENCE-RELATED HOBBIES OR LEISURE TIME  
ACTIVITIES? DESCRIBE. \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES TAKE UP YOUR TIME?

**LIST IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE FIVE SCIENCE OLYMPIAD EVENTS  
IN WHICH YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



## APPLICATION

### SCIENCE OLYMPIAD TEAM

### SENIOR DIVISION (C)

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ GRADE: \_\_\_\_\_

WHAT SCIENCE COURSES ARE YOU TAKING THIS SCHOOL YEAR?

WHAT SCIENCE COURSES HAVE YOU COMPLETED IN HIGH SCHOOL PRIOR TO THIS YEAR?

PLEASE FILL IN THE SPACES BELOW, INDICATE YOUR INTEREST AND/OR KNOWLEDGE OF SUBJECT AREAS BY PLACING A CHECK:

	Knowledge	Interest
Anatomy/Physiology	_____	_____
Designing/constructing	_____	_____
Chemistry	_____	_____
Birds	_____	_____
Cell Biology	_____	_____
Using aerial maps	_____	_____
Physics	_____	_____
Science lab techniques	_____	_____
Astronomy	_____	_____
Ecology	_____	_____
Solving Problems	_____	_____
Earth <i>Science</i>	_____	_____
Fossils	_____	_____
Epidemiology	_____	_____

DO YOU HAVE ANY SCIENCE-RELATED HOBBIES OR LEISURE TIME ACTIVITIES? DESCRIBE.

WHAT AFTER SCHOOL ACTIVITIES TAKE UP YOUR TIME?

**LIST IN ORDER OF PREFERENCE FIVE SCIENCE OLYMPIAD EVENTS IN WHICH YOU WOULD LIKE TO PARTICIPATE.**

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_