*SCIENCE OLYMPIAD

What is SO?
Coaching 101

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Overview

What is SO?

- Science Olympiad in a Nutshell
- Competitions
- State Science Olympiad

Coaching 101

- YOUR TEAM…
  - Kids, Coaches, Parents
  - Tournament & Finance Strategies
  - Putting it All Together

What is SCIENCE OLYMPIAD? (in a Nutshell)

- 23 different events in each Division
- Developed at the National Level
- 6 Content Areas
  - Biology & Life Sciences
  - Earth & Space
  - Chemistry
  - Physics
  - Technology/Engineering
  - Inquiry & Nature of Science

What is SCIENCE OLYMPIAD? (in a bigger Nutshell)

- Events approximately divided:
  - Cerebral/Study/Lab – 15 events
  - Technical/Building – 8 events
- Team of 15 students (at a competition)
  - Your school can have more on the team during the year
- Divisions
  - "A" – Elementary School – up to 5th grade
  - "B" – Middle school – 6th – 9th grades (max five 9th graders per competition team)
  - "C" – High school – 9th – 12th grades (max seven 12th graders per competition team)

*Tournaments Format

* Tournament Format
  * 5, 6, or 7 event time blocks 50 - 60 minute
  * Schedule is similar to a school day schedule
  * Teams assigned to compete in specific events in specific time blocks
    * Expect your team to be assigned to 3-5 events per time period
    * Teams send in 2 students to compete together in each event
  * No trading time blocks allowed
  * Generally Building events are “walk-in” or “self-scheduled” (gives you a little flexibility)

Tournament Scoring

- Scoring
  - Individual Event winners recognized
  - Top 3-6 teams recognized
    - Team points awarded for the place the team got in each event. Example:
      - First Place in Dynamic Planet – Team receives 1 point
      - Eighth Place in Anatomy – Team receives 8 points
      - No Shows – Team receives # of points as # of teams at Tournament
    - Team with the overall lowest score wins the Tournament

Competitions

- Invitationals [good practice]
  - Hosted by local schools
  - Events run by participating teams
  - Pay a minimal registration fee
- Regional Tournaments
  - Qualifier for State Tournament

Competitions

- State Tournament
  - Number of teams varies, 20 - 50 teams
  - Can be, but doesn't have to be "Logistics Nightmare"
  - 1st place team qualifies for National Tournament (some states 2nd place also qualifies)
- National Tournament
  - 60 teams from across the country
  - The fun begins with logistics!

*State Science Olympiad

- State Director
  - Oversees all SO teams in State
  - Conducts State Tournament
  - Registration fee generally paid to State Director
    - Additional Regional fee varies from State to State
    - Usually includes Official Event Rules manual
- Regional Tournament
  - Teams assigned to region by State Director
  - Regional Director responsible for tournament
  - Ratio of teams registered progress on to State

SO Coaching 101 - Overview

Lots to Think About!

- YOUR TEAM…
  - Kids, Coaches, Parents
  - Tournament & Finance Strategies
  - Putting it All Together

Team Composition

- When to begin
- Generating student interest
  - Use of a “Try It Out” challenge
  - Word of Mouth by Students
  - Teacher recommendations
  - Parent & Student info meeting
  - Food!!!
- Look for a broad range of students
  - Varied areas of interest & skills
  - All grade levels

Team Composition (cont'd)

- Selection process possibilities – If you have a large number of students wanting to participate
  - Use of a "Try-out"
  - Grade levels (not recommended, doesn't help with growth of the team)
  - Covering all the events
- Student time commitment
- Understanding the "individuality" that equates into a "team", "one size doesn't fit all!"

*Event Assignments

Things to Consider

*23 Events/15 Team members at a tournament

*Number of students to prepare for an event

*Student preferences

*Cerebral vs. building

*Grade level

*Academic knowledge

*Training for the future

Eligibility/Participation Policies

More Things to Consider

- National Science Olympiad Pledge
  - **SO is for the Students – not the coaches or parents!**
- School's Extra-curricular eligibility policy
- School participation fee
- Other "activities" restrictions
- Team participation policy/consent
- Medical forms
- Travel permission forms

Expectations of Students

* Science Olympiad is a **Priority** in your extracurricular activities (students can be involved in other activities as long as they prepare for their events on their own time and communicate with coaches)
* Be **Available on Regional & State Competition Days**
* Be **Self-motivated!** (Don't expect to be spoon fed information, you must be motivated to research and discover on your own, the coach is there to guide you and answer questions)
* Have **Self-discipline!** (Get organized & stay on task)
* Be **Flexible** (Be willing and understanding that you may not compete on competition day in an event you have studied for the whole year due to event scheduling conflicts)
* Be **Prepared** (create deadlines & meet them)
* Be **Responsible** (Coaches should not have to find team members to relay information)
* Be a **Team Player** - Able to Work with others
* Be **Supportive of others** (Be a cheerleader for everyone)

*Coaches

- *23 Coaches or 23 Coaches all in 1 Coach
- *Finding Coaches
- *Expectations of Coaches
- *Responsibilities
- *Liability

Expectations of Coaches

- **Know** the current year's event rules
- Have a "**Plan**" for the season, what needs to be covered over the given time.
- **Expect More** of the students, i.e. don't spend all of practice time "teaching/lecturing"
- **Demand Responsibility** and **Respect** from all students
- **Make Students Accountable** and **Engaged** by having regular practices and expectations
- Have **Consequences** for unpreparedness and behavior issues
- **Rank Students** within the events, if students know that they are automatically on the team they are less likely to work harder

Event Training

- Resources/Study materials
  - Event manual
  - Science Olympiad web site
  - Binder system
- Know Permitted event reference materials
- Know Rule changes
- Know Rule Clarifications & FAQs

Practices

A Few More Things to Consider

- Frequency of practices
- Types of practices necessary for event "All events are not created equally"
  - Study Events
    - Group, Lab, e-mail, online
  - Building Events
    - Construction night?
    - Construction Location(s)
    - Liability
- Availability of Coaches and Students

*SO is for the STUDENTS!

* SO is not a Coach competition!
* SO is not a Parent Competition!
* **Students MUST be the builders & testers!**
* Devices MUST be built by the students, not the coaches, not the parents, not the friend who is an engineer, not the neighbors or relatives….
  * Components that are machined may be questioned and the team may be DQ'd from that event.

Parental Involvement

- Coaching
- Organizational Efforts
- Tournament Help
- Help hosting an Invitational
- Expectations of Parent

Expectations of Parents

* **Realize SO is a Commitment** the students have made of their time
* **Support** the coaches decisions
* **If you coach**, do not expect that your child will automatically be on the team, **coach for the love of the program**
* SO is **NOT after school babysitting**
* Help students find resources but **don't do the research** for them
* **Don't build** the devices for the students
* **Lead by example** – in commitment, teamwork, & sportsmanship

Tournament Strategies

- Philosophy –
  - Best Effort vs. Participation/Having Fun
- Tournament schedule
- Helping the student
  - Individual schedule
  - Locating event sites
- Event bags

Financial Matters - Expenses

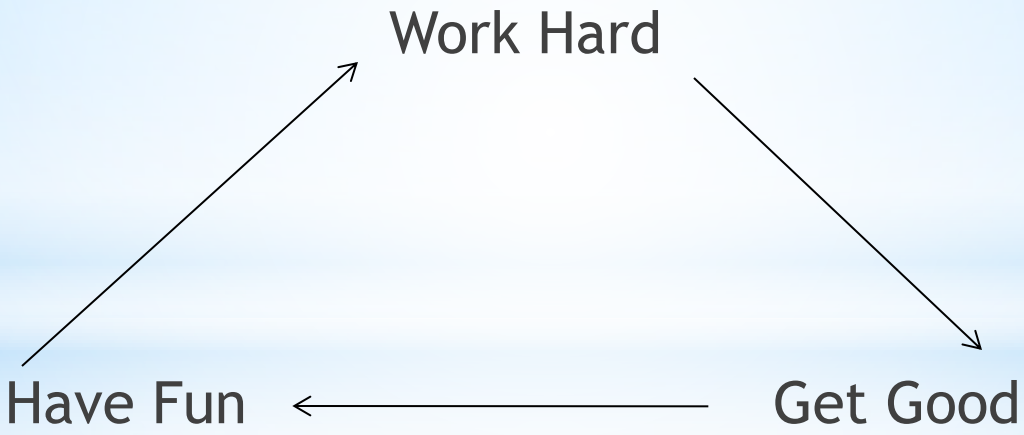
- Supplemental Contract
  - For coaches from school district (if you're lucky!)
- Expenses
  - Coaches' training
  - Registration fees / Invitationals
  - Training materials & supplies
  - Travel
  - T-shirts

Financial Matters - Fundraising

- Fundraising
  - Boxtops for Education
  - Ink cartridge recycling
  - Restaurant takeovers
  - Supermarket community rewards programs – Kroger
  - Sponsoring an Invitational tournament

- Corporate & Service Organization Contributions
  - Direct donations
  - Matching funds
  - Combined Federal Campaign

*Putting It All Together

- *Have a Basic Knowledge of all the Events
  - *Know the Rules
- *Map out the Year
- *Find & Use Resources – Human or not
- *Realize –
  - *Free is good
  - *Kids will probably know more than you
  - *Micromanagers Burn Out
- *SO is a Way of Life to Enjoy!

*Final Thought!
A Rewarding Cycle
For the Students!