



WHAT EVERY EVENT SUPERVISOR NEEDS TO KNOW...

Hopefully the person who is directing the tournament with which you are working will automatically supply this information, but if not, be sure to ask the following:

Logistics for Preparing for an Event

Have a copy of the current year's rules and follow them carefully. If you have any questions about an event, please check here.

What to Ask?

- How many teams of students you should prepare for
- What time does your event start
- How much time you have for your event and what is the basic format of the event (see below)
- What type of room is your event held in
- Do you place all teams from first place down as far as possible
- Where is a copy of the most recent rules for the event

Categories of Events

Basically preparing for events falls roughly into one of three categories:

- **Construction events** where devices are made before the competition and require special testing equipment
- **Content based and/or hands on lab type events** that can be run as stations or individual test type events
- **On site events** where students build, test, or do something that is not prepared beforehand but is tested on site and may require special test equipment, usually less complex than the devices built ahead of time .

Basic Format of an Event

Events are usually formatted in one of three ways.

- **Set time period**
- **Walk in** which means the participants have a period of time during which to come do their event, ex. testing bridges, towers, running cars, etc.
- **Sign up** are sometimes run by appointments where teams can sign up for a specific time

Running the Event at the Competition

ALWAYS be sure to have everything you need before you arrive at the competition, which includes the following.

- Enough copies of any testing materials for all the teams
- All equipment needed such as stop watches, balances, etc. **DO NOT** assume the tournament director is supplying this type of equipment unless you ask ahead of time and then arrange to get these materials before the day of the tournament.
- **DO NOT** discuss the performance or expected placing of ANY TEAM or student while the event is taking place. This creates a lot of confusion at times when results are not what a team expects.

Tips for Preparing Events

- Make them easy and fast to grade. If you are running an event the last part of the day, be aware that scoring needs to be especially quick since the awards program usually takes place as soon as possible after the events end.
- DON'T MAKE THE event TOO long...it's okay if they finish before the time period ends. This is a common problem with first time event leaders...MAKE IT SHORTER than you think you should. Also, be sure to design your event so that it lends itself to being "place-able". By this we mean the event must have something that is grade-able and that will produce a score for each team. Make sure to have a test with more points than there are number of teams.
- Be sure to have some place on the answer sheet or event materials for the students to write their team/school name and their names.
- Prepare answer sheets that can be scored quickly. Do not hesitate to use multiple choice type questions or questions with simple answers that are one word or a few words as well as short answer questions. Some events lend themselves to identifying unknowns, etc.
- Be sure to read to see if the rules provide recommendations for breaking ties. **TIES MUST BE BROKEN**. The best way to break ties is to select parts of your event or certain questions to use. Score all parts of the event and then if ties exist, use the team's score on the part of the event you selected. It would be good to have more than one area selected in case a tie exists after the first tiebreaker is used. **TIME IS NOT A TIE BREAKER** in content-based events.
- WHATEVER you do, it is critical to be sure that all teams receive the same testing conditions.

NOTE: If you are doing both the middle school and high school levels for the same event at a tournament, consider using the same event for both levels with minor changes in a few questions to make the event more appropriate. DO NOT be surprised if you used the exact same event and middle school students do better in some cases.

Tips for Event Supervisors

OBJECTIVE: The objective of a Science Olympiad Tournament is to provide fair and representative challenges based on the **current rules** for the events. The result of the tournament is that a certain number of the teams based on their total placing in all events are invited to the State Tournament. Every event counts equally in the overall team score.

- Be sure you have the rules for the current year. The rules do change from year to year. If you have run the same event before, DO NOT assume you can do the same things again.
- You may be running the same event for both Division B (Middle School) and Division C (High School) if the event is in both divisions. Several events are in both divisions but they usually vary slightly with Division C covering more content.
- You will receive an "Event Roster" from the tournament directors that serves as a roll to check to see who is present and a score sheet that you will turn in with the placing and raw scores on it.
- After running your event, be sure to score it as quickly as possible and bring the tests or data used in scoring and your Event Roster to the Scoring Room.

NOTE: We keep the tests and raw data in case someone challenges a placing.

Four Possible Event Formats

Method One – Station/ Rotational Format

- This method is much easier in some ways since the teams involved would simply rotate through the event answering 1 to maybe 4 questions per station. This type of set up works really well with an answer sheet per team being all that is required for grading.
- Care should be taken to try to design each station to require about the same amount of time. Usually 14 to 16 stations are quite sufficient which means about 2 to 3 minutes per station.
- If more teams are present than stations, simply have either rest stations periodically in the room or have some teams wait to enter the rotation.
- Number your locations and arrange them so that the students can quickly and easily move from one location to the next one. Make sure that everyone has writing utensils, extra paper, and any other required materials before they enter the room.
- You should call your roll outside the room since it is already set up with questions on the tables or desks. An alternative method is to have all of the questions faced down until you are ready to begin. It is important that no one has seen the questions before you begin.
- They must take their answer sheet and writing materials with them as they move. Remind them to look only at their own answer sheet and to keep any conversations at a whisper so that they do not let others hear their answers.
- It is advisable to tape down the question sheets at each location.
- The event leader must choose the length of time between locations and make sure that it remains exactly the same throughout the entire contest. The number of teams present determines the length of time. Some regionals have as many as 30 teams. This may limit the time to 2 minutes per location. This will allow barely enough time for check-in and instructions in a 50-minute block. Some events have allowed only one minute per location when only an hour is available in the event period. Try to choose a time that will give students the maximum time without causing you problems.
- The event can not run overtime. That would be a serious problem.
- Tell them that anyone tampering with the materials in an effort to confuse or delay other teams will be disqualified from the event. It is very important that each team find the questions and materials in the same order as all other teams.

Method Two – Stationary Format

- This method is very similar to the more typical test that students are accustomed to BUT should include applications and hands on as much as possible. The Science Olympiad discourages paper and pencil testing that resembles tests given in a classroom setting.
- This type of event preparation should also include graphs, diagrams to interpret, observations to make about a set up of some type, interpret information presented in a video, questions about a demonstration that might be performed for the entire group, etc. This requires more preparation as far as copies of the event, etc.

- A student or team of students will sit in one location for the duration of the contest. All of the questions and materials that they will use are at that location. They may be provided with an answer sheet so that they do not mark on the questions or other materials.
- The event leader should design enough questions for the event period, an answer sheet and key. Make sure that you know the number of teams in advance, so that there will be enough copies and locations for the teams to sit.
- The event leaders usually make the copies that they will need. If your Regional Director has agreed to make copies for you, make sure that he/she has received all materials that are to be copied well in advance of the tournament date.
- Each team must have all of the questions, pictures, specimens, etc at their disposal. If the event period is 50 minutes, prepare questions that should take about 40 minutes to complete.
- There is a tendency for some event leaders to lean toward a written test with recall answers. Some events have one part that consists of test questions but it is the philosophy of the Science Olympiad to emphasize process skills and mental challenges. Events run this way may contain some recall-type questions, but most questions should emphasize critical thinking and reasoning. Questions that ask students to observe, describe, evaluate, analyze, apply, predict, interpret, classify, measure, infer, hypothesize, explain, and make judgments should be used.
- When these events are completed it is important to get a team of assistants to help you score the answer sheets as quickly as possible.

CAUTION: This type of event is usually slower to grade and this must be considered when preparing the event.

Method Three – Lab Practical Set Up

- This method is something of a combination of the first two methods where the team has its own set of materials or equipment with which to perform an experiment or whatever is required. While the team does NOT rotate through stations, this is like that method in that each team has a set of materials. Obviously this requires more set up on the part of the event leader and should be a factor that is strongly considered in terms of the room in which the event is held, number of teams competing, etc. The event leader could have 3 sets of 6 or 8 identical stations, and the teams know they must complete one station in each set. If more than one lab station will be completed by students during the contest, it is important to have multiples of each station so that every team has the same amount of time at each station and no one has to wait on another team. Therefore it is important to know the maximum number of teams that will participate well in advance of the tournament date.
- Materials, tools, and supplies (such as water, pH paper, reagents, etc.) are placed at marked locations for their use during the labs.
- Safety is a critical issue and student must wear the designated safety equipment at all times in the lab.
- It is important that the event leader have everything ready-to-go.
- After the initial instructions, the leader should circulate throughout the lab to observe students, answer questions, and provide for their safety. It is a good idea to have an extra set for each station in the event of an accident.

- Be sure to warn students about safety and tell them that anyone tampering with the supplies to hinder the work of other teams will be disqualified immediately.
- Most lab events are usually scheduled earlier in the day to give you sufficient time to score the results, but it is still important to get the results to the scorers as soon as possible.

Method Four- Construction/Performance Format

- Some of these events require students to construct a device prior to the tournament and others have students build a device during the competition.
- It is very important for the event leader to be very familiar with the specifications for the device. Think about exceptions and challenges to these rules and contact your Tournament Director prior to the contest if you have questions. There will also be answers to frequently asked questions and clarification on the Science Olympiad Homepage. www.soinc.org Be sure to check that link for your event. Make special note of the events that require impounding.
- Typically devices can fall apart or get slightly damaged while traveling on activity busses. If a team shows up with a device that does not meet all specs, we generally let them make minor corrections on the spot (if this does not give them an unfair advantage). Usually this is as simple as something sticking out of the device that can be tucked in or removed. If we can allow students to make simple corrections (quickly), we would rather do this and let them compete rather than send them away in a "cold-hearted" fashion.
- If a device is unsafe but could be made safe by the removal of some part or object, we usually allow the student to do this and continue. This must be done prior to operation. If a device becomes unsafe during the event, we must stop it at that point. We do not compromise safety.
- If the team can not get their device to meet all specifications, then most events have a provision for them to continue to compete if the device will work. However, none of the devices that fail to meet specs are allowed to rank higher than any device that did meet the specs. Make sure that you are clear on this point for your event. If a device will not operate at all it is still important to record that the team did show up with a device and participated. Be sure to record any team that was absent from your event.
- The North Carolina Science Olympiad Homepage has a score sheet for all of the construction events. Please use the appropriate score sheet for your event. You will need to make copies unless your Regional Director has agreed to do this for you. You will also need to bring any measuring devices, stopwatches, and calculators that will be needed.
- Since each event is so different, read the instructions for your event. Keep in mind that the event may vary greatly between the B (middle school) and C (high school) divisions.