

Tips and Hints for Science Olympiad Event Supervisors

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One of our primary goals in addition to the safety of the competitors is to encourage their interest in the STEM events and showcase the facilities and colleges at BSU. The Science Olympiad program is a great opportunity to introduce potential scholars to BSU programs. Below are some tips and hints on how to make their experience a favorable one.

0) Insist on Safety: Many events require students to bring and wear the proper safety equipment. Be sure that they follow the rules and remind them if needed. It is always worthwhile if the BSU people running the event set an example by wearing their protective gear.

1) Start and End on time: Many of the events start on the hour at 9:00, 10:00, 11:00, 12:00 1:00 or 2:00 and end precisely at 45 minutes after the hour. This gives students 15 minutes until the next event begins at the top of the next hour. It is imperative that all students are dismissed at 45 minutes after the hour. Build-It events run all day and have individual time slots. Be flexible here as needed.

2) Adhere strictly to the rules: As you prepare for your events, read the rules thoroughly. When preparing the event, be it an experiment or a quiz, include some of every subject listed in the rules and avoid introducing subjects not listed in the rules. The students use the rules as their study guidelines and are disappointed if they encounter material not listed in the rules or find that half of the listed subjects are omitted. Also, we have had instances in the past where we relaxed the rules for one team only to be called on it by another team that rigorously adhered to the rules. The best approach is to very well versed with the rules so you can refer any questions to the "Black Letter Law" of the printed rules. Be aware that the rules change a little from year to year so always refer to the current year's rules.

3) Make it interesting and new: While the requirements of some events can be all met by a simple written test, samples bring it to life. Within the rules of the event itself, try to include real life samples, videos, recordings or models. This allows the various departments of BSU to show off their skills and materials. One way to do this is to have "Stations" where students rotate through the stations every few minutes and answer questions for each station. A past example was "Rocks and Minerals" where there were 20 stations each with a rock / mineral sample. Up to twenty teams each had two minutes at each station to examine a sample and answer questions. The rotations themselves lasted $2 \times 20 = 40$ minutes and allowed an extra five minutes for set-up and dismissal resulting in 45 minutes total.

4) Have a Mix of Easy and Hard: We have 6th - 9th graders in Division B and 9th - 12th graders in Division C. A mix of difficult and easy questions will encourage the newbies and challenge the experts. We don't want to discourage newcomers, but at the same time we want the experienced competitors to feel that they did not prepare unnecessarily.

5) Make a grading Key that is easy to score: The final time slot is 2:00 - 2:45 PM. We want to have all the scores in by NO LATER than 4:00 PM. This allows the BSU Accountancy Honor Society to have the final scores ready by 4:30 PM. As you write a quiz, prepare keys that can be used to score the quiz by someone NOT familiar with the subject matter. If needed, include acceptable ranges of values or key words or phrases in written responses. We will have graders available if you notify us in advance. Grade consistently. Your ultimate work product will be a list of the team numbers ranked in order from best score to least. A color score sheet will be provided to you the day of the competition.

6) Change the location but not the times: Each event (other than the build-it) events runs in two back-to-back time slots. We have space reserved for each event. If you prefer to run events in your department labs or classrooms, you are welcome to do so, but please let us know prior to March 29th so we can notify teams and adjust the schedule. In NO case however can we change times. Teams build their schedules months in advance around the times for each event.

7) No Outside Coaching: While anyone may impound a device ahead of the competition, parents and coaches are NOT allowed in classrooms / labs nor allowed to coach from the sidelines in a build-it event. You may remind them of this if needed. This is an event for the students.

8) Call us if you experience problems: Sometimes problems arise. If so call or email one of us right away so we have time to fix them. We can also print quizzes / keys for you in B&W or Color in letter size, single sided or duplexed. Submit printing requests in .PDF / .DOCX by March 29th.