

TENNESSEE SCIENCE OLYMPIAD

POLICIES

Approved 9/13/2014

MEMBERSHIP

Membership in Tennessee Science Olympiad (TSO) is open to any public school, private school, home school group, or cyber/virtual school group.

Schools wishing to participate in TSO must submit registration forms, and pay registration fees to the TSO State Director.

Registration Forms and Fees must be submitted no later than December 15 of each year.

The TSO State director may, at his/her discretion, accept registration forms and fees after the December 15 deadline, however, an additional late registration fee of \$100 will be charged.

A separate registration form and fee is required for each TEAM (Not School) registered

Only registered teams may participate in TSO Tournaments.

GOVERNING BOARD

The Tennessee State Science Olympiad Governing Board is responsible for the operation of Science Olympiad in Tennessee. The Governing Board sets policies, establishes tournament sites, sets fees, and oversees the general operation of Science Olympiad in Tennessee.

The TSO Governing Board is made up of the TSO State Director, the Regional Tournament Directors, the State Tournament Director, a coach representative from each region, and corporate, industry, education and/or government representatives. The TSO Governing Board has two officers: a chair, and a secretary

The TSO Governing Board is divided into a Working Board and an Advisory Board.

The Working Board consists of the TSO State Director, the Regional Tournament Directors, the State Tournament Director, and a Coach Representative from each Region.

The Advisory Board consists of the TSO Governing Board Chair and Secretary, the TSO State Director, the State Tournament Director, and corporate, industry, education and/or

government representatives. Other members of the Working Board are welcome and encouraged to attend any meetings of the Advisory Board.

WORKING BOARD

The Working Board will have two standing committees: The Public Relations Committee, and the Competitions and Workshop Committee. Each member of the Working Board is expected to serve on at least one of these committees.

The Public Relations Committee serves as the advisory committee for the TSO Governing Board on issues associated with the promotion of Science Olympiad in Tennessee

The Competitions and Workshop Committee serves as the advisory committee for the TSO Governing Board on issues relating to tournaments, workshops, and activities that foster or promote the development and improvement of coaches and teams in Tennessee Science Olympiad

ADVISORY BOARD

The Advisory Board is responsible for helping promote and develop Science Olympiad in Tennessee, and seeking financial support and/or grants from business, industry, government, and professional organizations.

DIVISIONS

TSO consists of 3 Divisions:

- Division A - Grades 3 - 6
- Division B - Grades 6 - 9
- Division C - Grades 9 - 12

A student may participate in only ONE Division during any school year

Example: A 9th grade student may NOT be a member of a Division B team AND a Division C team during a school year.

A 9th grade student may participate in Division B OR Division C.

Division B K-8 schools may, with the approval of the TSO Board, carry 5th grade students to fill out a roster

TEAM MAKE-UP

A Science Olympiad Team may consist of up to 15 students

A team may compete with less than 15 students, but must have a minimum of 5 students.

Schools may send multiple teams to a Regional Tournament. If a school sends multiple teams to the Regional Tournament, each TEAM must have a separate coach and meet membership requirements (See MEMBERSHIP)

All students on a team roster must be enrolled in that school. Recruiting students from other schools is NOT permitted

EXCEPTION: Division B schools whose enrollment is only through 8th grade may invite up to 5 ninth grade students to compete. However, these students MUST have been enrolled in that school and been listed on their roster during the previous year, and **MAY NOT** competed in Division C during the current year.

A Division B team may consist of maximum of 5 ninth grade students. These students must be enrolled in that school, or meet the "EXCEPTION" above.

A Division C team may consist of a maximum of 7 twelfth grade students

COMBINING SMALL SCHOOLS

With the approval of the TSO Board, small schools may combine students to form one team. However, the total enrollment of the combined schools must not exceed 400 students

HOME-SCHOOL GROUPS

Home-schooled groups are encouraged to participate in Science Olympiad. Home-schooled team members MUST be from ONE Home School Group. Home School Groups may NOT combine to form teams.

The home-school team roster must consist of students who reside in the county in which the homeschool is registered, plus students who reside in only one contiguous county. The counties must be within the state of Tennessee.

EXAMPLE: If a homeschool group has students from 4 counties, the team may consist of students who reside in the county in which the homeschool is registered, plus students from only **1** of the additional counties

The Home School Group must be recognized and registered as a Home School Group by the Tennessee Department of Education.

TOURNAMENTS

At the beginning of each school year, the TSO Board will determine the number and location of Regional Tournaments throughout the state. Each Regional Tournament will have a Tournament Director who is responsible for organizing and conducting the Tournament.

The Tournament director will determine a maximum number of teams the tournament site can accommodate, as well as the date of the tournament. An official tournament requires a minimum of three schools competing. Sites with only two schools registered may choose to host a tournament, however, only the top school will advance to state. Alternatively, schools may be transferred to the nearest tournament site with available space.

This information will be posted on the TSO website when registration materials are available for the current year

REGIONAL TOURNAMENTS

Teams are expected to register to compete at the Regional Tournament which is closest to their school. Exceptions can be made if for legitimate reasons the team cannot compete on the Regional Tournaments competition date.

Registration at a Regional Tournament is on a first come, first served basis. If a school registers for a tournament site that has reached its maximum capacity, they must register at the next closest site that has not reached its capacity.

If a school is located approximately midway between two tournament sites, they may choose to register at either site.

Regional tournaments are strongly encouraged to offer all events and to whatever extent possible follow the national tournament schedule.

STATE TOURNAMENT

The site of the State Science Olympiad Tournament will be determined by the TSO Board at the beginning of each school year. The State Tournament Director will determine the date of the State Tournament and the maximum number of teams that the site can accommodate.

The 1st and 2nd place teams from each region will be invited to participate in the State Science Olympiad Tournament.

Additional teams from Regional Tournaments (3rd, 4th, etc place teams) will be invited to participate at the State Science Olympiad Tournament until the maximum number of teams is reached. The additional invitations will be based upon a combination of the number of schools registered and the number of teams registered in the various Regional Tournaments.

Schools advancing to the State Tournament may enter only **ONE** team in the tournament, regardless of the number of teams they entered at their Regional Tournament.

Team rosters may change between the Regional and State Tournaments. The students who competed at the Regional Tournament do not necessarily have to be the ones who compete at the State Tournament, as long as all of the previously stated participation requirements are met.

The first place team in each division at the State Tournament will advance to the National Science Olympiad Tournament. The second place team in one or both divisions may also be invited to compete at the National Tournament if given an additional bid by the National Tournament Director.

In the event that the 1st place team in either division cannot attend the National Tournament, the bid to attend the National Tournament will be given to the 2nd place team in that division.

Schools that participate at the National Science Olympiad Tournament are expected to attend the entire tournament. This includes the Opening Ceremony and the Awards Ceremony.

TOURNAMENT SCORING AND GENERAL TOURNAMENT INFORMATION

SCORING

Points are awarded in each event based upon how a team places. Team placement in Regional and State Tournaments is based on the total score that the team achieves. The team with the lowest total score is the winner of the Tournament.

Example: The 1st place team in each event receives 1 point.

The 2nd place team receives 2 points, etc

At the end of the tournament, the total score for each team is determined. The team with the lowest total score is the winner.

Points in each event range from 1 to **N**, where **N** is equal to the total number of teams participating in that event. Therefore, the top ranked team in each event receives 1 point, and the lowest ranking team receives **N** points.

No Shows: If a team fails to participate in an event, the team will receive **N + 1** points in that event.

Disqualification: If a team is disqualified from an event, the team will receive **N + 2** points in that event.

Tie Scores: If, at the end of the Tournament, two or more teams have the same total score, the tie will be broken as follows: The team with the highest number of gold medals will rank higher. If there is still a tie, the team with the highest number of silver medals is ranked higher, etc. until the tie is broken.

TOURNAMENT ROSTERS

A roster of students participating on a team must be submitted to the Tournament Director by a date specified by the Tournament Director. This roster must be signed by the school principal verifying that all students listed are enrolled in that school.

The roster may be revised up until the morning of the tournament. If the Tournament Director requires that a roster be submitted prior to tournament day, any revisions must be submitted to the Tournament Director prior to competition.

APPEALS

Each Tournament Director will appoint an Appeals Panel and give each team coach an Appeals Form.

The Science Olympiad Coaches Manual gives a complete description of each event, including event rules, event parameters, areas to be covered, equipment and supplies that can be used, dimensions, etc.

Students, coaches, and event supervisors should be thoroughly familiar with the information in the coaches' manual for any event for which they are responsible. In general, this means not only reading through the event but understanding the underlying purpose of the event, understanding the standards or objectives the event is trying to test, as well as knowing what items/materials they are responsible for providing, etc. In addition, these individuals should check the National Science Olympiad web site for any clarifications to the rules that have been posted.

If a student has questions or concerns about how an event is being run, he/she should very calmly and courteously show the supervisor, using the Coaches' Manual, the rules(s) for the event which are the source of their concern. If the student is not satisfied with the event supervisor's response and still feels that the rules for an event were not followed, the student should notify their team head coach immediately following the event. The team head coach, or the assistant team head coach, has the option of talking to the event supervisor and/or submitting an Appeals Form to the Appeals Panel. The Appeals Form should quote the rule(s) that was not followed, and how it failed to be followed.

Only the head coach or the assistant head coach may file an appeal on behalf of their team. All appeals must be submitted within one hour of the completion of the event. **Parents and spectators may NOT talk to event supervisors nor file an appeal.**

If an appeal is filed, the Appeals Panel will review the appeal. The appeal can either be dismissed, or the Panel can rule on how the problem can be resolved.

TEAM MEMBER ID

Tournament Directors may, at their discretion, provide ID bracelets or ID tags to students listed on the final team roster submitted by the coach.

If ID bracelets, or ID tags, are used, students must show the ID tag or bracelet before being admitted into an event.

AWARDS

At the conclusion of tournament competition, each tournament will have an Awards Ceremony.

At Regional Tournaments, athletic style medals will typically be awarded to competitors finishing in the top three places in each event. Additional medals and trophies may be awarded to reflect the number of teams advancing to the State Tournament.

At the State Tournament, medals will be awarded to competitors finishing in the top six places in each event. These numbers may be modified at the discretion of the TSO Governing Board.

Trophies will be awarded to the schools (not teams) which finish in 1st and 2nd place. Additional trophies may be awarded as outlined above for medals at the Regional and State Tournaments.

DISQUALIFICATIONS

Disqualification of one or more students or a team is a serious action. Failure to meet requirements for a device or to bring required equipment, for example goggles, should not lead to disqualification. Event supervisors should try to give every team that comes to compete an opportunity to do so if at all possible. In some cases, this may mean providing teams with the equipment they forgot, such as goggles. However, these student(s) should be ranked below other teams that have satisfied all the event requirements.

A TEAM may be disqualified for misbehavior. Misbehavior may include, but is not limited to, vulgar language, cheating, vandalism, rudeness, improper communications, disregard for safety, etc.

A STUDENT may be disqualified from an event for failure to adhere to the Science Olympiad Code of Ethics, rudeness, vulgar language, cheating, improper communications, or disregard for safety. If a student is disqualified from an event, the team will receive a score of **N +2** for that event.

If a team, or a student, is disqualified, the event supervisor or the Tournament Director should notify the team head coach as soon as possible. Any disqualification will be reported to the TSO State Director, who shall then report it at the next Board meeting. Any subsequent action will be determined by the Board based on the severity of the infraction.

ENTRY INTO EVENTS

Academic events, that is events which require students to take a test, or require a quiet environment, are closed to everyone except competitors.

Building events, that is events which require students to pre-construct a device which is then tested at the tournament, are often considered "spectator events," and may, at the discretion of the event supervisor, be viewed by the public. If viewing is allowed, the event supervisor will define an area which is "off limits" to all but competitors. Spectators have no right to

question how an event is run. Any concern they have about the event should be taken to the coach who may, if he/she deems appropriate, raise these issues or concerns with the event coordinator. Vulgar language, rudeness, or other inappropriate behavior on the part of one or more spectators may result in closing the event to public viewing.

COMMUNICATION DURING EVENTS

Once a student has entered an event area to compete, they may not leave until they have finished the competition, nor return if they have left.

Once a student has entered an event area to compete, they may not communicate with any outside resource by any means. This includes the use of any computer, PDA, wireless device, phones, or any device that has access to external communication or data retrieval, unless specifically permitted by the event rules or parameters.

PRE-CONSTRUCTED DEVICES

The following applies to any device which must be constructed prior to a tournament:

ALL construction must be done by students. No physical construction assistance may be received from any coach, parent, or adult. Coach, parent or adult assistance may ONLY consist of verbal technical advice.

The Tournament Director may, at his discretion, require a statement signed by the team Head Coach verifying that all devices are student-built.

SAFETY

Safety of students is the #1 priority. Event supervisors are responsible for preventing unsafe acts and/or devices.

Participants may not bring or use any flammable liquids nor flame sources.

Participants may not bring or use acids or bases of any concentration (except lemon juice, vinegar, or other mildly acidic/alkaline naturally occurring substances)

Participants must not engage in any act which could be deemed unsafe.

Penalty: Disqualification from that event.

Safety disqualifications are NOT subject to appeal.

VANDALISM

Vandalism is defined as a deliberate act that results in damage to property.

If a team member(s), or persons associated with a team, commits an act of vandalism, that team will be disqualified from the tournament competition. The person committing the act may be barred from future participation in Science Olympiad activities.

The school involved in the vandalism will be responsible for the cost of repairing the damage. This cost must be paid before the school will be allowed to participate in future Science Olympiad activities.

IF A TEAM CANNOT ADVANCE . . .

If a team which has won the right to advance from a Regional Tournament to the State Tournament cannot, for any reason, participate in the State Tournament, the team head coach must notify the Regional Tournament Director AND the State Tournament Director as soon as possible.

The next highest ranking team from that Regional Tournament will be extended an invitation to participate in the State Tournament.

If the team which has won the State Tournament cannot, for any reason, participate in the National Science Olympiad Tournament, the team head coach must notify the State Tournament Director AND the TSO State Director as soon as possible.

The second place team at the State Tournament will then be extended an invitation to participate in the National Science Olympiad Tournament.

RETURNING TEST AND TEST MATERIAL

Students and/or coaches will not be permitted to retain any event tests, test material, or test booklets at the conclusion a tournament. Tests will normally not be returned to the students or the coaches, however, event coordinators may choose to do so at their own discretion.

SUGGESTIONS AND HINTS FOR EVENT SUPERVISORS

Event supervisors should prepare their events in accordance with the CURRENT National Science Olympiad Rules. The rules for each event are available in the Science Olympiad Coaches Manual.

Make sure you are using CURRENT rules for your event - the rules for each event may change from year to year. In general, if you are supervising the same event as last year, because the rules have probably changed and because the same students frequently compete in the same event from year to year, you should plan to make changes to any test you prepared for the same event the previous year.

Before preparing your event you should thoroughly read and understand the rules for that event. Consult with your Tournament Director if you have any questions. As you prepare your event, consider the purpose of the event and which standards or learning objectives the event is trying to assess. Check the National Science Olympiad web site (www.soinc.org) to see if there are any rule clarifications for your event. You should plan to check this again a day or two before the tournament to make sure there have been no additions or changes. Also check the national web site to see if there are any resources or event supervisor guidelines for the event that might be helpful.

Do not deviate from, or try to "improve" upon, the rules - students have been preparing for their events according the current rules since the beginning of the school year.

Do not make your event too long. It is not a problem if students complete the event before the time period is over.

When preparing the test for your event, realize that the competitors have varied abilities and backgrounds - you should prepare a test that has easy questions as well as hard questions. Be sure there are sufficient questions that you can easily break ties.

Design your test so that it can be easily and quickly scored. Tests that are difficult to score can delay the Awards Ceremony.

There can be no TIE scores in your event. In most events, the Science Olympiad Coaches Manual outlines methods for breaking ties. If the Manual does not give tie-breaking procedures, you should provide a means of breaking ties.

Several of the same events are run in both Division B and Division C. If you are running the same event in both divisions, you may want to consider using the same test, with some revisions to reflect the difference in abilities between the two groups.

If it is necessary to disqualify a student for any reason, notify the Tournament Director and the team head coach as soon as possible.

Make sure that your event ENDS ON TIME. Students must get to events in the next time slot.

In general it is TSO policy that students and/or coaches are not permitted to retain any tests, test materials, or test booklets. However, individual event supervisors may choose to share their tests/test materials at their own discretion.

Make sure that you have assistants to help set up for the competition, help proctor the test, help score the tests, and return the room to its previous condition.

Please plan to remain on site for at least 1-hour after your event ends, in the case that problems with your event arise, or an appeal is made.

The wording of the rules and parameters of the events is often open to interpretation, especially for the "building" events. It is devastating to a student to work for months building a device or studying for an event and discover at the tournament that the event supervisor has interpreted the rules differently. This often results in the team being penalized because they interpreted the rules differently. If there are numerous FAQs for your event on the National Science Olympiad web site, consider notifying the teams about how you will interpret the rules and judge the event.

SUGGESTIONS AND HINTS FOR TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS

Regional Tournaments should have a minimum of 5 time slots.

The State Tournament should have a minimum of 6 time slots.

Make sure that the event venues are adequate for the event in terms of space, dimensions, seating, tables, etc.

Make sure that the event venues are close enough together that a student can comfortably get from one venue to the next.

Make sure that the event venues are clearly marked.

Make sure that the tournament event schedule is given to teams at least one month prior to the tournament date. It would be helpful to coaches if schedules are made available no later than the first week in January of each year.

Make sure that event supervisors have not only read, and are using, the current event rules and parameters when preparing for their event, but also understand the event. Check to see whether they have accessed the National Science Olympiad web site to look for any resources or rule clarifications for their event.

Consider assigning a "home base" room for each team that is conveniently located with respect to the event venues.

Tournament Directors are encouraged to develop a website "Message Board" for their tournament. This "Message Board" would be a forum for coaches to ask questions and receive answers relating to events and the tournament in general. It would also allow Tournament Directors to get updated information concerning the tournament to coaches.

The questions asked by coaches, as well as the answers, will be posted on the "Message Board" for all teams to see.

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TOURNAMENT CANCELLATION PLAN

For a team to advance to the State Science Olympiad Tournament, that team must have participated in a Regional Tournament.

If it becomes necessary to cancel one, or more, Regional Tournaments, the directors will confer on an ad hoc basis to resolve the situation as best as possible.