



WESO Head Coach Guidebook



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Introduction

Thank you for volunteering to serve as a WESO Head Coach for your school. WESO is a 100% volunteer-driven experience for students in grades 2-5, and would not exist without the support and leadership of school head coaches. Serving as a Head Coach can be a very rewarding experience. As with all such experiences, it does require work.

This guidebook is intended to assist you with effectively forming and organizing a Science Olympiad team at your school. It includes information on entry requirements, the role of the Head Coach and the logistical steps that must be performed by a Head Coach and/or a school representative. We hope you will utilize this as a guide for your experience. If you have any questions, please reach out to the WESO Board at weso@wesoscience.org.

What is Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad (WESO)?

The Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad (WESO) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit 100% volunteer organization. Since 2002, WESO has brought hands-on science education to thousands of elementary school children (grades 2 – 5) throughout Washtenaw County. The success of our program is emblematic of the strong volunteer, corporate, and community support that resides in Washtenaw county.

WESO is dedicated to increasing student's interest in science by supporting science education through a team based, hands-on, interactive approach. WESO strives to enhance the math and science curriculum taught in local schools, to complement the Michigan Department of Education Science Content Expectations, and to instill a curiosity and love of science in young students.

WESO culminates in an annual competition that allows students to compete utilizing their newly learned skills in a fun, challenging Science Olympiad Tournament. This tournament provides the opportunity to recognize the outstanding achievements of the student scientists and engineers.

WESO is recognized by both the National and Michigan Science Olympiad Programs. For many years, we have been the largest Elementary Program in the country!

The WESO Board

The WESO Board acts as the leadership/governing board of the Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad. This group represents individuals who have served WESO in a diversity of roles including school head coach, event supervisor, key volunteer, and event

coach. Its primary responsibility is to oversee Olympiad logistics, communications, events, and fundraising. If you would like more information about the WESO Board, please email weso@wesoscience.org.



Who benefits from WESO?

Elementary-Age Students participating in WESO benefit by:

1. Having the opportunity to explore new scientific concepts
2. Learning through a fun, hands-on approach
3. Developing new friendships
4. Learning team building skills of cooperation, collaboration and negotiation

The benefit to our participants can extend well beyond elementary school. Each year we welcome back local middle school and high school students as event-day volunteers. This post-elementary school participation promotes a sense of community as our young student volunteers serve as role models to the current Science Olympians. We understand that society as a whole benefits when we help foster a generation of learners, team players, and strong community service.

The Tournament

The WESO tournament takes place on a Saturday in the spring at one of the Ann Arbor high schools. It is an exciting yet busy day with grade level competitions and award ceremonies taking place as follows:

Grade Level	Competitive Events*	Award Ceremony**
2	8:00 am - 11:00 am	11:30 am
3	11:00 am - 2:00 pm	2:30 pm
4	2:00 pm - 5:00 pm	5:30 pm
5	5:00 pm - 8:00 pm	8:30 pm

* Some events are scheduled to start outside of these time frames.

** Approximate start times for the Award Ceremonies.

Competitive Academic Events

The tournament generally provides 10-15 academic events for each of the grades 2 through 5. These events may have anywhere from one to five participants depending on the individual event. Events may cover physical science, life science, technology, scientific processes, math, engineering, technical writing, and earth science. Some events are offered to all four grades whereas others are only offered to specific grades. At the tournament, schools may choose to field a team in some or all of the events.

Sometime in the fall, the official event slate for the year will be released. Each event has a Detailed Event Description which provides information pertaining to the curriculum, event format and the official rules for that event. It is important that event coaches are familiar with the Detailed Event Description for the event they are coaching. Event coaches will have opportunities to ask questions pertaining to the event at the Event Coaches' Meeting and by submitting questions directly to WESO (see event coaches).

In general, competitive academic events are closed to spectators. Students will be escorted to the event room by volunteers after they are checked in at the academic check-in desk. That means that head coaches, event coaches and parents will not be permitted to accompany their students to the event. Students are only allowed to bring items to the event that are specified in the Detailed Event Description for that event. **No phones or Smart watches are allowed!**

Student Participation and School Teams: Each school may only send one team per event per grade. The number of students per grade per school will depend on the events offered that year and the number of participants each of those events allows. This typically results in grade level teams of approximately 25 if a school fields a team for every event and all those students only compete in one event. Student participants are allowed to compete in multiple events as long as they have enough time between events to complete the academic check-in process (see event scheduling).

Students may compete up one grade level but may not compete in an event for multiple grades (e.g. a 2nd grader can only compete in On Target at the 3rd grade level if they also did not compete in On Target at the 2nd grade level during the same WESO year). First graders are not allowed to participate in the WESO competitive events. Students may only compete at their own grade level or one grade level above. They may not compete at a lower grade level (e.g. a 5th grade student may not compete on a 4th grade On Target team). Moreover a student may compete at their grade level for one event and a grade above for a separate event (i.e., a 2nd grader may compete on a 2nd grade On Target team and a 3rd grade Pentathlon team).

Open Events

In addition to the official Academic Events at the tournament, there is an Open Events area. Open Events are hands-on science activities that anyone (not just WESO participants) can participate in throughout the day. The Open Events area allows kids to drop in and participate in as many stations as their schedule allows. Open event activities change each year and we welcome participation from local partners. Please reach out to the WESO Board if you have suggestions for local Open Events partners.



Award Ceremony

Upon completion of the competition for each grade level's events, there will be an awards ceremony to celebrate the tournament results.

Banner Parade - Awards ceremonies begin with a banner parade. Each school should assign two Olympians (only 2) to carry your school banner. Banners should be 3 feet in length or less (larger banners do not fit in the designated aisles and create a safety hazard). Banners can be professionally made or homemade student creations.



Event Awards – Medals will be presented to 1st – 5th place finishers for each event in each grade, plus 2 to 3 honorable mentions. Each competing student will receive a medal if their team places. Teams to receive medals for an event will be called to the stage, and medal placements will be announced starting with honorable mentions, then places 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1. The number of medals provided to a school for an event is equal to the maximum team size for that event. We cannot provide additional medals for students who are alternates for an event, or participated in practices, etc.

Medal Colors:

1st place - Blue

2nd place - Red

3rd place - White

4th place - Yellow

5th place - Green

Honorable Mention - orange



School Head Coach

Each school must designate a School Head Coach (HC) who will serve as the main point-of-contact with the WESO Board. The WESO Board will manage communications to all HC's via an email distribution group. Additionally, if HC's have questions or require individual support, the WESO Board will be available via email, phone, or zoom. All official correspondence and updates will be emailed to the HC distribution group and made available on the WESO website. HC's will be responsible for distributing information from the WESO Board to their school's respective event coaches, parents, and students. Schools may designate additional Co-Head Coaches and request that they also be added to the HC email distribution list.

HC set the tone and attitude for their school team. This includes the students, parents, and event coaches. Winning is a tangible thing to measure and a worthy goal to be pursued, but is not to be traded for a positive experience.

The HC role carries both logistical and organizational responsibilities as outlined next in this resource.

Major Roles and Responsibilities of the Head Coach

Every team needs a leader, and the head coach serves in this capacity for their individual school. Along with support from other school team volunteers, head coaches will complete a number of logistical tasks which include but are not limited to:

Recruitment and Team Organization

HC are responsible for recruiting student participants who will make up the school WESO event teams. Additionally, there must be at least one adult event coach recruited for each event the school team recruits. Event coaches may be parents, teachers, community members, past middle or high school Science Olympians. It will be the HC's responsibility to maintain contact records and ensure that all required WESO forms have been completed for participating students. It is also the HC's responsibility to track and meet established deadlines and actively keep track of team materials and equipment.

Communicating Information

The HC is the primary contact point between the school team and the WESO Board. Information from the WESO Board will come directly to the HC and will need to be passed on to parents and coaches. Regular communication students, parents, and the WESO Event Coaches will create a sense of teamwork. Email is a great tool for staying in regular contact with your team. Establish early on what method of communication Event Coaches and parents prefer.

Setting Appropriate Goals

Sending a team to the annual WESO Tournament is a great opportunity. If a school isn't able to recruit enough student team members to cover all events, success should be measured based upon the events that are covered. For the team and Event Coaches that are new to Science Olympiad, patience and positivity should be expressed for the students willing to explore science. If a school team has participated in the past, a possible goal may include increased participation.

Commitment and Accountability

Families get distracted with a variety of activities during the school year, after school, and on weekends. To keep the WESO team focused, the HC should set expectations. Regular and respectful communications to the coaches and parents with an update on how things are going for the teams will help to keep the team on track. Parents should be engaged to ensure that conflicts with practices and/or the Olympiad can be avoided.

Team Finances

The School's PTO and administration should be looped in early to determine what financial assistance to support WESO may be available. Every school functions differently and some are provided funding through their PTO for registration and/or practice supplies, whereas other school's PTO may not be able to help. The HC should work closely with Event Coaches to determine how practice supplies should be purchased and what may or may not be reimbursed. There are also WESO costs involved for team t-shirts, name tags, and potentially snacks/beverages served at practices. HC should consider resources that have been provided to support the WESO team in the past and how the team's resources may be built upon for the future. The HC should establish responsible spending choices with regards to the resources that are available. If funding becomes an issue, the HC should reach out ASAP to the WESO Board. Many schools can qualify for outreach funding.

Making Choices for the Good of the Team

Ath times the HC may need to make difficult choices. For example when a student is not working as a good team member or one student seems to benefit over another. In these moments, talk with the affected people, consider alternatives, be flexible, and decide what will work best for the team. The HC has the final voice to diffuse difficult situations for the benefit of the team.

Setting the Example

The school's WESO team will follow the lead of the HC. If they are organized, disciplined, and hardworking, then this will become a character trait of the students and coaches.

BASIC TIMELINE FOR SCIENCE OLYMPIAD HEAD COACH/COMMITTEE

(This timeline is set for a Tournament in late April/early May
and should be adjusted accordingly, if the Tournament date changes)

Mid-Late Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify Head Coach(s) for the school ● Meet with School Principal regarding program ● Begin recruiting return event coaches
October	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Attend Head Coach WESO Meeting ● Register your school's team ● Once registered, set up your manager account at Waiverfile
November	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Start spreading the word about WESO at your school ● Hold recruitment presentations for classrooms ● Hold Parent Information Meeting ● Continue recruiting event coaches ● Track down your school's WESO equipment and materials. ● Start signing up participants and have them register for WESO using Waiverfile
December	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Place participants in events ● Secure Coaches for all events ● Make sure all coaches undergo background checks as needed per your school's requirements ● Distribute Detailed Event Description to Event Coaches when available ● Secure Practice Schedule/Room Reservations
January	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Complete school registration requirements (payment and Key volunteer(s)) ● Inform Event Coaches about Event Coach Zoom Meeting Schedule ● Attend event material pick-up when scheduled ● Schedule your events in Avogadro ● Start practices
February	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Order T-shirts for your team ● Start recruiting parents to volunteer for tournament day and share the sign up link with them
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Recruit volunteer to organize raffle basket donations ● Monitor participant registrations in Waiverfile and remind all parents to complete

April - May	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make sure all participants are registered in Waiverfile (participant registration will close 2 weeks before the event) ● Pick up wristbands for all registered participants when distributed ● Create name tags for your participants ● Attend Head Coach walkthrough of the venue ● Distribute tournament details to parents ● Attend tournament
Post Tournament	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Communicate results to parents, principal and staff ● Send thank you letters/emails to school community ● Print and distribute WESO participation certificates for all school participants

School/Team Registration

Each school must register as a team. Every school who registers for the WESO tournament will be required to do the following:

- Reside in Washtenaw County (public, private and charter schools are all welcome)
- Submit a registration form
- Pay a registration fee
- Provide a Key Volunteer(s) to assist with the planning and execution of the tournament
- Provide adult volunteers on that day to help us safely and efficiently run the tournament
- Support the Basket Raffle fundraiser by donating a basket to be raffled off at the tournament

** New process for 2024!*

Registration Levels

The WESO tournament is open to all schools in Washtenaw county. These participating school teams vary greatly in their size and resources. For the 2024 Science Olympiad, the WESO Board is piloting a tiered registration system in order to make the participation requirements fair and equitable for all schools.

Registration Level	# of participating students**	Required # of Key Volunteers	Required # of Tournament Day volunteers	Registration Fee
1	>60	2	1 per 3 or 4 participants	\$300
2	20 to 60	1	1 per 3 or 4 participants	\$300
3	<20	1	1 per 3 or 4 participants	\$200
4 *Outreach Schools	NA	1	TBD	Covered by grant

* Outreach schools are those that meet the requirements to receive support from our Corporate Outreach grant. More information can be found on page 11.

** Participating students are all students that are training for the WESO tournament, using WESO supplies and event curriculum and attending WESO workshops regardless of whether they compete in an event at the annual tournament.

The WESO Board is asking schools to register at the level corresponding to the number of student participants they had the previous year (e.g. for WESO 2024, use the number of students they fielded in 2023). Schools can petition WESO to register at a lower level if they feel they will have decreased participation this year. School participation levels will be verified approximately one month before the tournament date and needed adjustments will be made at that time (i.e. additional registration fees, another Key Volunteer).

School Registration Process

Fully registering your school's team is a multistep process which begins in the fall. The first steps are:

- 1. Submit a completed registration form**

In October, we will provide schools with the link to the registration form. New schools can email us at weso@wesoscience.org to obtain the registration form link.

- 2. Provide a WESO approved Key Volunteer**

See below for more information on what a Key Volunteer is and the approval process.

- 3. Pay your required registration fee.**

The fee will depend on your school's registration level. See below for details.

Registration Deadlines

All three of the above steps must be completed by January 1st. Registrations that are received after the deadline or that are not complete may not be guaranteed a spot. Preference will be given to returning schools. Remaining spots will be assigned on a first come, first serve basis. In addition, only fully registered schools will be granted access to their school's event scheduling (see below) and provided with any event materials distributed by WESO that year.

Paying the Team Registration Fee

Your team registration fee can be paid using PayPal. Go to paypal.me/weso2022 or use the QR code below.



Please make sure you include your name and your school name when you submit your payment. Checks can be mailed to WESO, P.O. Box 3407, 2075 West Stadium Blvd, Ann Arbor, MI 24106. Please contact us at weso@wesoscience.org if you need to arrange for other payment methods.

Outreach Schools and School Registration Fee Waivers

The Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad (WESO) is open to all elementary schools (students grades 2-5) located within Washtenaw County, Michigan. It is the policy of the WESO Board that all schools should have equal access to participate in the Olympiad free from financial barriers. If the WESO registration fee is a hardship for an interested school, they *may* be eligible for financial support. Schools which are Schoolwide Title 1 eligible and where at least 49% of students qualify for free- or reduced- lunch will be given priority for any outreach funds which WESO receives. If you are a school WESO representative and would like to request financial support for your school, we invite you to reach out to us at: weso@wesoscience.org.

Key Volunteers

Planning and executing the WESO Tournament is a community effort. The WESO Board of Directors spends hundreds of hours planning and organizing but depends on all participating schools to be involved in the process. In order to plan and execute a successful event, we require that each school provide us with at least one Key Volunteer who will have a significant role in the execution of the tournament. In most cases, the Key Volunteer role involves more than just a tournament day commitment. Key Volunteers should be expected to spend 20 to 30 hours in planning and running a key aspect of the tournament. If a school's Key Volunteer is unable to fulfill their commitment, the school must supply a replacement for that Key Volunteer.

Make sure your Key Volunteer understands the commitment they are making and is able to honor that commitment. Schools that have Key Volunteers that do not honor their commitment will be asked to provide a last minute replacement. Schools that are unable to fulfill this requirement risk disqualification from the tournament.

The Key Volunteer can assume one of the following roles:

- **Lead Event Supervisor** - Develops, organizes, and executes a competitive event at the tournament. A Lead Supervisor for an event should have an appropriate background in the event area, no conflict of interests (i.e., a child participating in that event, a coach for that event, etc.) and must be approved by the WESO Board
- **Support Event Supervisor** - Supports a Lead Event Supervisor in the execution of a competitive event at the tournament. A Support Supervisor is not necessarily involved in the organizing of the event and/or test writing but is expected to familiarize themselves with the event, assist with the set-up for the event and assist in the running of the event at the tournament. Support Event Supervisors must be approved by the WESO Board and not present any conflicts of interest.
- **Key Volunteers - Key Volunteers will serve on one of several Tournament Committees as described below.**

Key Volunteer Tournament Committees

- **Open Events** – Open Events are hands-on science experiments in various fields of Math and Science that all kids (not just WESO participants) can participate in throughout the day. Key Volunteers in this committee will be required to stand, walk, and may be required to move heavy objects. They will have frequent interactions with students and parents. An Open Event key volunteer will be part of a committee of 3-4 members.
 - Planning: Several WESO resources (ideas, established protocols, materials) are available. The Key Volunteer will work with other members of the Open Events team to invite guest organizations to host stations, to plan the various stations, optimize the demos/hands-on experiments, list

supplies and create protocols/instructions for each station, work with the board liaison to purchase supplies, plan the layout of the stations, assign recruited high school students to various stations.

- Setup the night before the tournament: Duties include setting up the tables/chairs as per the planned layout (with the help of volunteers), setting up the various stations as needed, training high school students to run the stations.
- Execution on WESO Day: Check-in high school students (with the help of volunteers), oversight of all stations, replenishing supplies, managing crowd, help as needed at various stations, supervise clean-up with the help of volunteers.
- **Award Ceremony** - Key Volunteers in this committee will be required to stand, walk and may be required to move heavy objects.
 - Help set-up the award ceremony stage and area the night before.
 - Help with the school banner parade
 - Assist WESO board members and honored guests distribute metals to school teams
 - Help with breakdown of the award ceremony area after the event.
- **Academic Check-In** - Key Volunteers on this committee may be required to stand, walk, or climb stairs frequently. They will have frequent interactions with students and volunteers.
 - Prior to the tournament, review documents describing the academic hallways and check-in area. This includes understanding the layout of the event site, knowing where stairways, classrooms, and other landmarks are, and understanding different situations that arise during a normal tournament day.
 - Setup the night before the tournament. Duties include putting up schedule and event signs on classrooms, putting “Caution” tape in areas where students are not to go, familiarizing yourself with the building, and setting up chairs and tables.
 - Ensuring traffic at check-in table is moving smoothly
 - Managing larger crowds at certain check-in times
 - Answering questions, helping late students, solving problems
 - Training or guiding parent volunteers in your area
 - Making sure volunteers are doing what they need to do
- **Breakroom**
 - Plan and pre-order food for Supervisor, Board and Key Volunteer breakroom.
 - Set up the breakroom the night before.
 - Staff break room and receive food deliveries throughout the day.
 - Clean up the breakroom at the end of the tournament.

- **Concessions**
 - Plan the concession for the tournament (TBD - either run by WESO or external vendors (Food Trucks))
 - Pre Purchase and/or order food to be sold at concessions.
 - Train volunteers for ticket sales and food distribution.
 - Oversee food sales at the tournament.
- **Facility Support** - Key Volunteers on this committee may be required to stand, walk, or climb stairs frequently. Lifting of tables and other heavy objects may be required.
 - Help with tournament set-up the night before
 - Help WESO comply with building use rules as set forth by the host school administration
 - Ensure that materials are distributed to appropriate rooms
 - Help set up classrooms, hallways, and public spaces
 - Help direct other volunteers to appropriate locations
 - Help ensure that only designated tournament day entrances and exits are being used and that unauthorized people are not entering the building
 - Help clean up/tear down all WESO materials, signs, trash, etc. at the end of the tournament
 - Ensure the building is left in expected condition
 - Help set up outdoor spaces and display signage.
 - Monitor traffic and ensure that traffic cones remain in place.
 - Work with security guards on tournament day.
 - Ensure that only the designated entrance and exit to the building are being used.
 - Ensure that the outdoor areas are left in expected condition.
- **Basket Raffle** - Key Volunteers on this committee may be required to stand and walk.
 - Communicate details regarding the basket raffle to Head Coaches.
 - Organize raffle sign-up, order tickets, answer questions from schools.
 - Check in basket donations the night before the tournament, organize and arrange baskets, set-up ticket holders
 - Train volunteers ticket sellers and oversee raffle.
 - Conduct the raffle near the end of the day.
 - Make arrangements for pick-ups of unclaimed baskets.

Many schools have Event Supervisors that return year after year and fulfill the Key Volunteer requirements for that school. Other schools have experienced Key Volunteers (Basket Raffle, Academic Check-in, etc.) that return to that role every year. Most schools will need to identify a parent, teacher or community volunteer who will serve as their Key Volunteer for that year. The Key Volunteer must be an adult and can not be a high

school student. Key Volunteers will be required to undergo a background check processed by WESO.

Key Volunteer placement process

WESO directly invites Event Supervisors to return in that position if that event is expected to be on the event slate for that year. We also directly reach out to certain Key Volunteers if they have experience in a role. WESO will notify Head Coaches in the fall if we have secured an Event Supervisor or Key Volunteer from their school and this requirement has been satisfied. All other schools will be asked to submit a name of their Key Volunteer and their choice of available committee positions at the time of registration. We recommend that you identify your Key Volunteer as early as possible. The earlier you provide a name, the more likely they are to be seated in the position of their choice. If your school is identified as falling into one of the higher tiers, you will be informed of your additional Key Volunteer requirement and asked to provide the contact information for that additional individual(s).

All Event Supervisors and Key Volunteers will be asked to provide information and undergo a background check through the MI State Police iChat system.

Student Participation Requirements, Waivers, Media Release and Emergency Contact Information

All participating students must register with WESO **before** they are added to a school's WESO team. This includes those students who might be participating in WESO training but not competing at the tournament. This is required in order to provide us an accurate number of all kids participating in any aspect of the WESO program for our grant and sponsorship efforts. This information is also necessary to confirm the registration level of your school.

** New process for 2024!*

This year, we will be using **Waiverfile** to individually register and collect information for all our participating students. This registration will include basic student and parent contact information, the participation waiver, emergency contact information and emergency medical information. Once completed, WESO will not need head coaches to collect any additional information from their students. All students must complete a WESO registration in order to participate in the tournament. Head coaches will be given wristbands for those students on their team who have completed the registration and only students wearing a wristband will be allowed into an event.

Process for using Waiverfile

Shortly after a school submits the School/Team registration form, the Head Coach(es) will be sent an email from Waiverfile. This email will contain 2 links:

Hi there,

You have been granted access to view waiver entries!

You have been granted access to view waiver entries for:

WESO 2024 schools > Demo School

View Signed Waivers

Waiver Link

Your Login Info:

Email Address: debmeyer@umich.edu

Password: *****

If you do not remember your password, use the forgot password link on the sign-in page.

Share the link to this waiver:

<https://www.waiverfile.com/b/WashtenawElementaryScienceOlymp/Workflow.aspx?stepid=966eb82c-5c6c-4fae-a17f-93c4cc6dd3a3&eventid=961fe4af-db93-4c24-a017-f50b63b840da>

- The first link “View Signed Waivers” will be a link for you to set-up an account in order to access and view those students/parents who have completed the registration process for your school. Follow the instructions to create an account.

Waiver Manager Access

Account Settings

Log Out

Name	Waiver Link	View Names
WESO 2024 schools	<div>Demo School</div> <div>Waiver Link</div>	<div>View Names</div>

- To see who from your school has completed their registration, click on the view names tab. You will not see all the information collected in the registration but only several predetermined fields. You will be able to export this information as a csv file in order to manipulate it as needed on your end.

WESO 2024 schools - Demo School

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Participant Last Name	Participant First Name	School	Grade	Signed First Name	Signed Last Name	Email	Phone	Contact 1 Name	Contact 1 Phone Number	Contact 1 Relationship	Contact 2 Name	Contact 2 Phone Number	Contact 2 Relationship
Doe	Susie	Demo School	2	Jane	Doe	debmeyer@umich.edu	XXX-XXX-XXXX						
Smith	Amy	Demo School	2	Mary	Smith	debmeyer@umich.edu	XXX-XXX-XXXX	John Smith	XXX-XXX-XXXX	father	Jane	XXX-XXX-XXXX	grandmother
Brown	Sally	Demo School	3	John	Brown	test@gmail.com	123-456-7890	Mary Brown	123-456-7890	grandmother	Sue Miller	123-456-7890	mother

- The second link “Waiver Link” is the link you will provide to your families. This is a specific link for your school. It should only be shared with those in your school community. It will ensure that your students are correctly associated with your school. When your participants successfully fill it out, they will be sent a confirmation email.



Thank you for completing the waiver!

**2024 Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad (WESO)
Participant Registration and Media Release**

WESO 2024 | 05/11/2024

Signed By

Signed On

Mary Smith

08/11/2023 4:09 PM

Participants

Amy Smith

Sent by WaiverFile on behalf of Washtenaw Elementary Science Olympiad.
WaiverFile, P.O. Box 35, Bayville, NY 11709.

Powered by
WAIVER file

- You should view your school's participant registrations regularly and remind parents to complete this step prior to starting practices for that event.
- Head Coaches cannot remove participants from their school roster once they have completed their registration process. That can only be done by the WESO administrator. Please keep this in mind as you recruit students and form your teams. We will not have the capacity to go back and forth removing students on a daily basis. Head Coaches will be given one opportunity to submit a list of students who have decided not to participate.

Deadline for school participant registrations

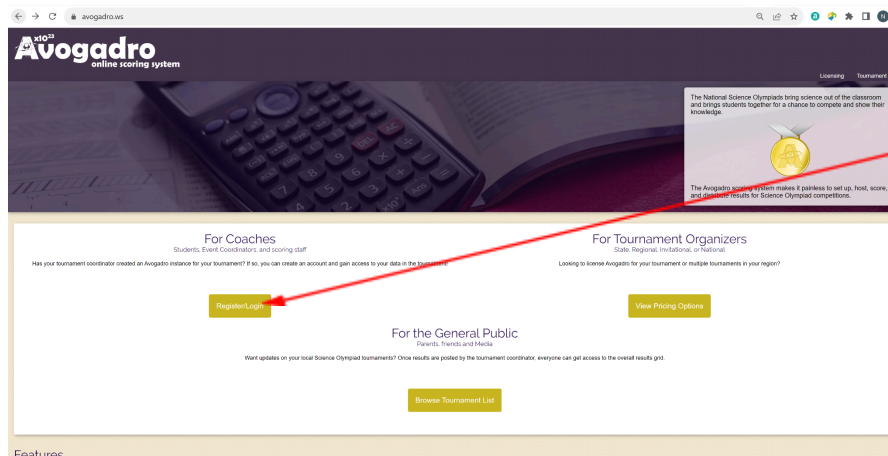
WESO will announce a deadline for schools to submit all their participants' registrations. This will be approximately two weeks before the tournament date. At this time we will confirm your school's registration level. If the number of your school's participants requires that you must move up to a higher registration level, you may be asked to provide an additional registration payment and Key Volunteer. Your final number of participants will also be used to determine the number of tournament day volunteers your school is required to send and the number of "registered student" wristbands you are given for your team.

Scheduling Your Team's Events in Avogadro

WESO will again be using Avogadro for Event scheduling and Score reporting. There will be one Avogadro contact per school (we are not able to assign more than one account to any given school - we suggest you create a shared school login, like MySchoolWESO if there is more than one head coach). If your school already has an Avogadro account, please provide your username during the school registration process. If you need to create a new account, you can do that before or after school registration - just be sure to let us know your school/username combo.

Creating an Avogadro account.

Go to the avogadro website at www.avogadro.ws. Please note the extension is ".ws". Avogadro did this to get an avogadro domain name. The ".ws" stands for western samoa and sometimes this causes problems with your email system sending notices to spam.



Use this link to register
for an account

You will see a registration screen like that given below. After you register for an account, you **must** verify your email by clicking on a link Avogadro will send you. If you do not see an email from them, check your spam folder.

WESO Head Coach Guidebook

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the URL `app.avogadro.ws/register`. The page is titled "User Registration" and contains the following text:

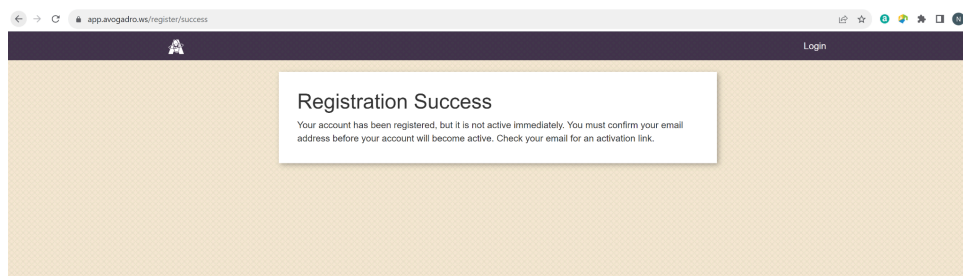
Welcome! We're glad you're joining us here on the Avogadro platform! If you've never participated in an Avogadro tournament before, fill out the form below and we'll create an account for you.

If you've ever used Avogadro in the past, there's no need to create a new account: a single Avogadro account can have different permissions assigned in different tournaments, so one account to represent "you" is all you need. If you've forgotten your password, you can request it be reset to regain access.

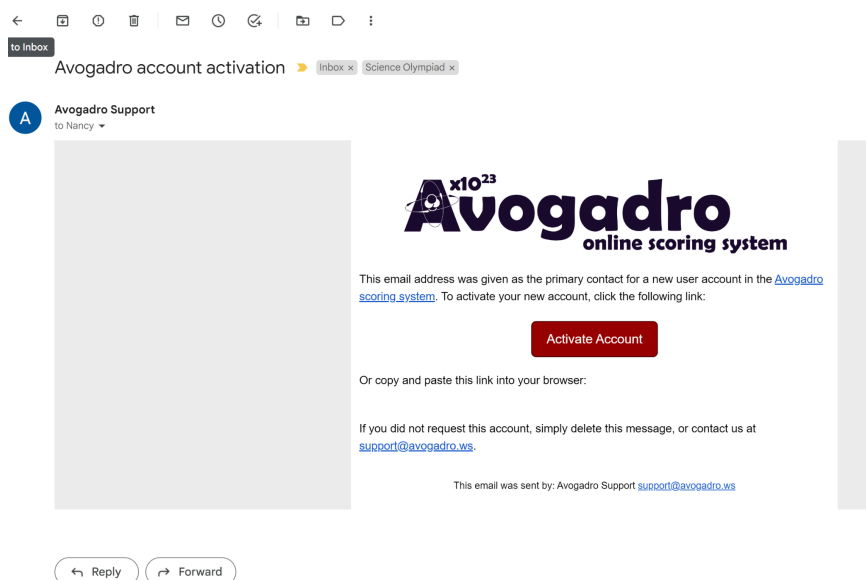
The registration form includes the following fields:

- Username:** A text input field with the value `WCSOChem2023`.
- Password:** A text input field.
- Password confirm:** A text input field.
- eMail address:** A text input field.
- Full Name:** A text input field.

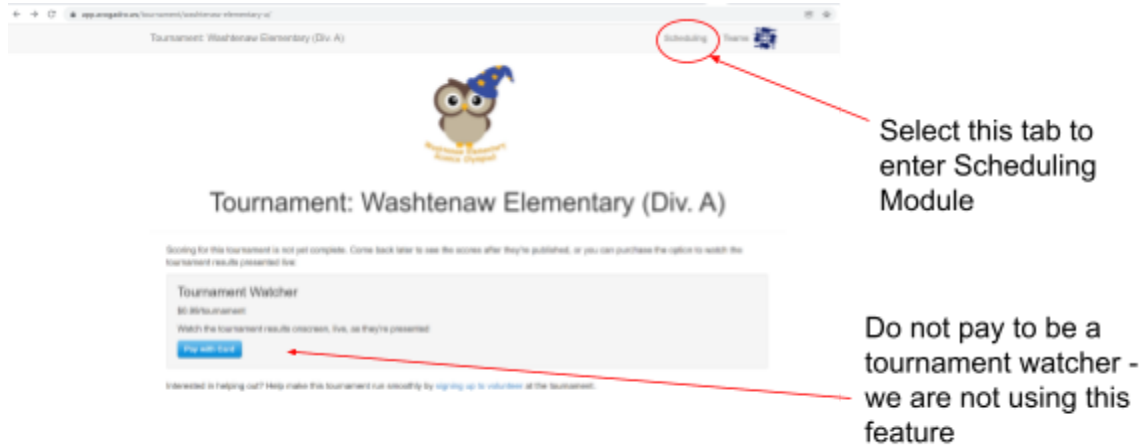
Below the fields is a yellow "Register" button. At the bottom, there is a link: "Already have an account? Log in here."



Click the link in the email you will receive (like the one below) to activate your account. Send your user name to weso@wesoscience.org, if you have not provided it yet. We will then assign your school to that account and you will be able to use Avogadro.



Using Avogadro for Scheduling. After you have been assigned as a head coach, when you log in, you will see an option to select a tournament (Washtenaw Elementary). Select the WESO tournament and you should see a page that is similar to that below.



Until Scheduling is active, you will see a countdown timer on the “Scheduling” tab. WESO will let you know the date and time that the scheduling module becomes active. We will give you the schedule in pdf or excel form at least a week prior to the date at which scheduling starts. We suggest using this schedule to develop a plan to sign up for time slots. We will also tell you when scheduling will be closed (generally 2 weeks before the tournament). There will be a competition slot available for every team in each event, and you may change your competition time as often as you would like. Because you are guaranteed a slot, do not feel you must sign up for a time slot unless you are sure you will field a team. A slot will always be available.

When the Scheduling module is active, you will see a screen with a series of boxes after each event/grade combination. Each box represents one competition time slot. Each time slot will accommodate multiple teams (the exact number depends on the event). Select the star in any available time slot to reserve it for your team. If you wish to change times, just click on the star for a different time slot. Note there is no confirmation that you wish to change times - when you click a new box, the change has been recorded. Be careful that you do not accidentally change times. You may change as often as you would until scheduling closes. If you are scheduling at a very busy time (i.e., right when the schedule opens), it may be helpful to click the refresh button in the upper right - this will let you know if any time slots have been filled. Note also, you can display a list version of your schedule from the link under your school name. You can copy/paste this list into another document for distributing it to your teams.

Team Schedule in list form

When you first access schedule, all events will have the "none" box checked. You can leave "None" checked until you know you will have a team.

A grey background means that time slot is full

Click the star to select an available time slot (one per event/grade).

Event	None	8:20 - 9:00 am Jun 5, 2022 8:20 am	9:00 - 9:40 am Jun 5, 2022 9:00 am	9:40 - 10:20 am Jun 5, 2022 9:40 am
2nd Zip	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2nd Aerodynamics	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2nd Feathered Friends	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2nd Rocket	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2nd Mystery Architecture	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

If you need a certain, full, competition slot in order to be able to field a team, please ask your fellow head coaches (via email mailing list) if anyone can switch. Most of the time, one of them can accommodate. If that does not work, send WESO a request and we will see if we can help.

Accessing Tournament Results in Avogadro

After the conclusion of the tournament, WESO will send out some summary statistics for events, including winning score, average score, etc. We will not, however, send your individual school scores or placements. As head coaches you will be able to find this information in Avogadro.

After scores have been published, when you access the WESO tournament section of Avogadro, you will see a grid of school placements like that shown below (schools that did not compete in an event will have the maximum placement - 32 in this example). Schools are currently rank ordered by an overall score - usually best average placement. WESO does not recognize an overall award as this strongly favors teams that can compete in every event, but there currently is not a way to turn this feature off in Avogadro.

Tournament: Washtenaw Elementary (Div. A)

Scheduling T

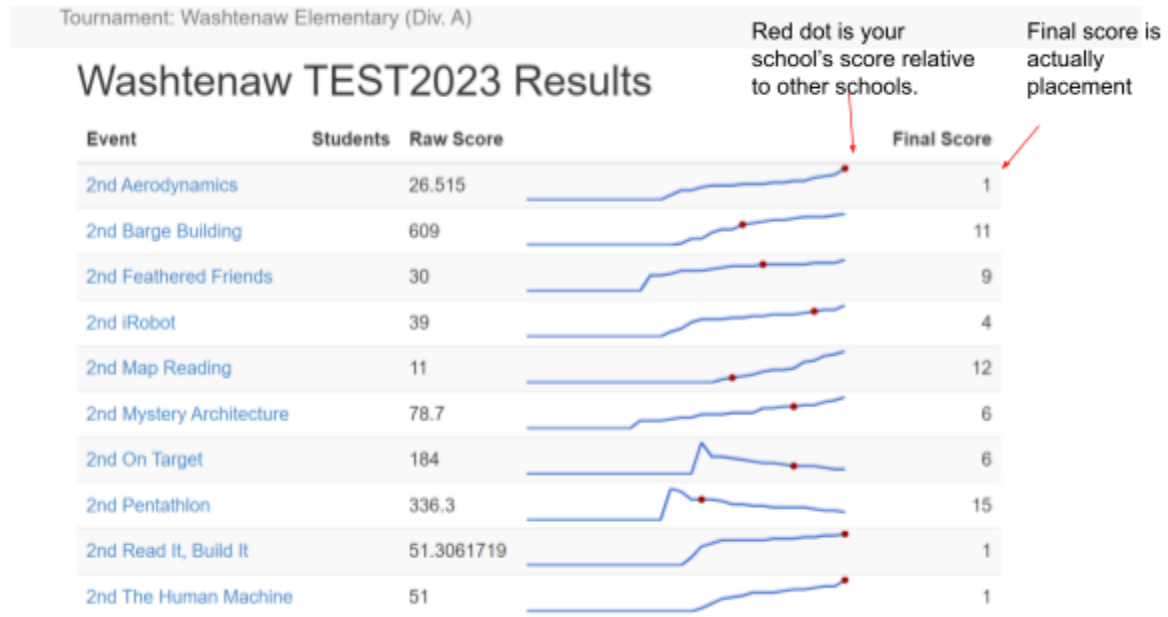


Tournament: Washtenaw Elementary (Div. A)

School	2nd Aerodynamics	2nd Barge Building	2nd Feathered Friends	2nd IRobot	2nd Map Reading	2nd Mystery Architecture	2nd On Target	2nd Pentathlon	2nd Read It, Build It	2nd The Human Machine	2nd Zip	3rd Aerodynamics	3rd Barge Building	3rd Feathered Friends	3rd IRobot	3rd Map Reading	3rd Mystery Architecture	3rd On Target	3rd Pentathlon	3rd Read It, Build It	3rd The Human Machine	3rd Zip
School1	7	8	5	12	3	23	2	10	13	9	13	1	3	10	10	1	11	16	14	3	7	5
School2	9	12	10	3	4	2	15	8	8	4	8	3	17	1	8	6	4	20	16	13	3	2
	14	3	4	13	14	11	8	5	12	15	6	11	1	6	4	4	2	4	7	6	5	7
	4	1	18	7	32	8	4	18	11	32	15	9	9	13	5	10	5	22	17	11	15	12
	32	15	14	1	32	5	10	14	10	3	4	32	5	8	1	32	7	2	1	1	8	16
	8	32	13	2	2	16	3	16	7	14	5	8	32	12	18	5	17	11	8	16	11	4
	32	32	32	14	11	4	12	1	2	6	19	13	10	32	9	9	1	13	10	12	13	8
	11	32	1	8	6	17	1	32	5	12	32	32	14	32	3	2	6	8	4	32	32	9
	13	4	3	11	32	13	11	12	32	32	1	7	8	2	14	8	12	6	9	32	6	14
	32	32	7	15	32	1	14	13	4	10	11	12	2	7	32	11	8	24	11	5	2	10
	2	2	15	5	7	10	32	32	3	5	7	4	13	16	15	7	10	1	32	15	17	20
	45	32	2	32	8	4	8	5	32	43	5	5	32	25	32	45	48	8	45	32	45	47

If you click the blue link for any event, you will see the school placements for that event. If you click the link for any school but your own, you will see a list of their placements in each event. We ask that you do not distribute the non medal winning placements of other schools to your teams, even though they are viewable by all head coaches.

If you click the blue link for your own school, you will see information on your teams' placement, actual score and a small graph which shows the location of their score with respect to all other schools. This might be helpful information for your teams, where they can see that for some events, like Feathered Friends in the example below, the scores were very close together. One or two questions likely made the difference between medalling and not.



Day-of Volunteer Requirement and Sign-up Process

(The volunteer sign-up process is being updated for 2024. Check back later when this section is updated.)

Each school is required to provide approximately 1 adult volunteer for every 3 to 4 students participating. Volunteers are needed either the Friday before the tournament for set-up or Saturday during the tournament. High school and middle school students are recruited to help directly by WESO and do not qualify for individual teams day of volunteer requirement.

WESO Event Supplies and Equipment

WESO is committed to supporting all participating schools. Part of this support comes in the form of equipment, supplies and/or study materials needed to prepare for some of the events. These items are gifted to the schools when a new event is introduced that requires such materials. Some materials are consumables and are given to the schools each year. Other items are replaced periodically in order to provide schools with new equipment. Event materials for the given year will be distributed sometime in January. Only schools who have completed the registration process as described earlier will be able to receive event supplies for the year.

WESO keeps a record of the materials given to each school. Once these items have been gifted to the school, it is the responsibility of the school (Head Coach, PTO or school administration) to ensure that these items remain in the schools possession and are maintained appropriately. If a school misplaces WESO equipment or materials and needs those items replaced, they may purchase these items from WESO (if supplies are available) or WESO will direct the school to the appropriate vendor for which they can directly purchase a replacement if available. School Head Coaches should contact WESO for further assistance if replacements are needed.

We encourage schools to maintain an inventory of WESO supplies and develop a system for tracking these items each year. WESO operates with a limited budget and we are unable to replace equipment and supplies beyond what we have budgeted to distribute in a given year.

Please use these links for a list of equipment and supplies WESO has supplied to schools in the past few years.

[Equipment supplied prior to 2023](#)

[Equipment supplied for 2023 events](#)

Equipment supplied in 2024 (to be added)

Team T-shirts

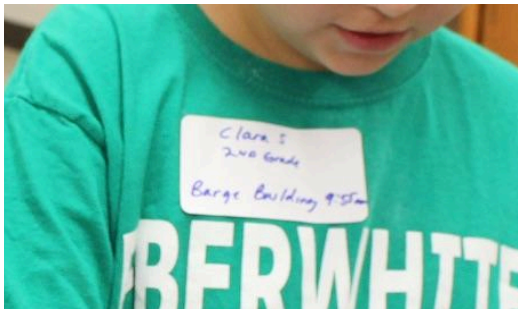
All participants are required to wear a T-shirt specific to their school's WESO team. These T-shirts must have the school's name on the front and "Science Olympiad Team" on the back. In order for everyone (Head Coaches, parents, event supervisors and volunteers) to easily identify the school teams, we request that every school has a unique tshirt and print color combination.



WESO has established a partnership with Sunrise Screen Printing in Ann Arbor. They help to ensure that each school team has a unique Tshirt and provide a group discount. Schools should reach out to Sunrise Printing (Greg at sunrise@sunrisetees.com or 734-769-3888) prior to the ordering deadline to verify your Tshirt selection and provide a preliminary number needed. Returning teams are asked to use the same color as previous years. New teams will be given options based on the remaining color options available. Final orders for WESO 2024 will be due March 15th. Schools are not required to order their Tshirts from Sunrise Printing and can choose to use another vendor.

Nametags

In addition to Tshirts, all participating students must have a nametag that identifies them by first name, grade level, and the names and start/end times for each event they are participating in. They can be affixed to their Tshirts or in a lanyard. Handwritten nametags are fine.



Basket Raffle Fundraiser

Each year the WESO organization conducts a raffle fundraiser on the day of the Science Olympiad Tournament. Raffle proceeds are used to fund workshops, open events, learning tools allocated to schools, and to fund general WESO expenses.

Each participating school is required to participate in the raffle by contributing a themed basket with a fair market value of approximately \$100. Themes can be anything you wish such as: family game night; movie night, Go Blue! gourmet, dining, etc.

We recommend you recruit a Raffle Coordinator for your school. Your Raffle Coordinator will:

- Register your school's basket theme (Sign-up Genius link will be shared in the spring) to avoid duplication of themes.

- Collect donations from your participating families and/or solicit donations from local businesses.
- Assemble and wrap your basket.
- Deliver the basket to the tournament site the night before during set-up.



General Guidance for Organizing The School Team

Selecting the Team & Matching Them to Events

Each school has the flexibility to implement the day-to-day operations of their team in a way that fits the priorities and personalities of the school leadership. The Principal's opinion is an important one in this regard. If you hadn't noticed, you are now part of the school leadership! You should also be considering your own strengths and attitudes as you make these choices.

Here are a couple basic types of team structures. These samples are not inclusive of structures that can be used, nor recommended, but merely used for example,

Front Set Team: This is a team structure, which attempts to identify upfront the students who will compete in certain events for the Science Olympiad Tournament.

Pros & Cons of Front Set Team

Pros:

- It gets the selection pain over earlier
- You can narrow the focus of your attention on the kids who will definitely compete in selected events
- The kids find out whether they will represent the school and in which events before they (and their parents) invest substantial time and effort

Cons:

- It is not inclusive of all students who may want to just learn, but not compete. More students than the allotted number for the team are likely to be interested in science.

Club Team: This is a team structure, which tries to include all the students who have an interest in being actively involved in a science "club". The reality is that only 100 students will be able to participate in the annual tournament, however, activities can be structured so that all interested students may continue to participate. Some teams create a feeder system of "alternates" who can step in when the unforeseen happens. Alternates also may be given preferred standing for making the team in a future season.

At the beginning of the season, interested students participate in practices for selected events (2-4 events) for which materials and activities have been prepared. If you can recruit more adults to be involved at this point you'll be able to expose the kids to more events. During this period you should be making notes about the students' dedication, and ability to work well with others. After a specified period (maybe a month or two), you may need to administer a series of "tryout" tests as part of the criterion for tournament team selection. The science tests generally should be specific to the events

for which the students studied. If your team includes alternates you'll want to be clear about their role on the team.

Pros & Cons of a "Club" Team

Pros:

- More students participate
- Alternates may be good future team members

Cons:

- Additional work is required to support the larger group and to prepare for the event reviews
- You may have to "cut" kids before the tournament, but they might be your alternates and can still come to the tournament for the awesome open events and awards ceremony

Qualities to Look For in Students You are Recruiting

Students who make strong Science Olympiad team members have these characteristics:

Inquisitive -- These students enjoy learning new things, and are not intimidated by challenging subjects.

Team Player -- Every event team has at least two kids. If the kids on an event team can't cooperate, they won't do well. As a Head Coach, you will need to be aware of how individual teams are working together. It is important to get feedback from your event coaches and work with them and the students to develop good sportsmanship behaviors.

Responsible -- Their preparation for the tournament will be in addition to normal school work and, likely, many other activities. It is important for you to set the tone and provide encouragement for students to prepare.

These are not listed in order of importance. In fact, the qualities of *Responsible* and *Team Player* can be more important than raw brainpower. Whatever process you choose for selecting a team, it should not be based solely on the knowledge with which they walk in the door. WESO's philosophy is to accept all interested students and to work with them as a Head Coach to develop skills of a successful team. You can develop a set of rubrics for participants and ask the event coaches to keep track of it: for example, attendance, sportsmanship, positive behavior, preparation, etc. This rubric will be helpful when choosing the final team to compete in an event at the tournament.

Constraints to Consider in Assigning Events

There are many considerations, and a few constraints to consider when choosing a team and assigning them to events. A critical constraint is that only about 25 students per

grade (totaling 100 per school) can represent your team at the tournament.

The other important constraint is the tournament schedule. We have moved to a 100% self scheduling system so that Head Coaches can choose the event times that work best for their team. Even with this system, some events will overlap or certain time slots may fill up, not allowing you to place students participating in all the events they would like.

We do not allow late arrivals to events! Therefore, we require that Head Coaches schedule at least 15 minutes between consecutive events to ensure that a student has time to exit an event and check back into their next event. See the section “Scheduling your team’s events” for more information.

A “club” style team may consider both choosing and matching events simultaneously.

- Performance on practice tests/quizzes
- Attitude, ability to work on a team, and ability to follow through responsibly
- Whether their parent is available to coach an event (some teams may give preference)
- Their consistency in preparing for and attending practices
- Their past experience on the team
- The number of students from each grade (evenly distributed is usually better)
- The gender distribution of the team

There may also be other factors. Regardless of the approach, experienced coaches will tell you that the first dozen or so team members are the easy choices. Choosing the last few students is more difficult. This is because they are on the margin, where the relative strengths between students may not be as obvious, or where the variety of criteria may be in conflict.

Matching

Matching students to events should be based in large part on which events the students have an interest in. One approach for assigning kids to events is akin to the lottery system of the sports draft. It is done with all students and parents in attendance. Kids pull numbers from a hat to determine the order of selection. The student who picked #1 gets first choice to pick one event, and so on down the line. If a student wants to be in the event coached by their parents, then that naturally becomes their first choice. The process is repeated for each student's second event. The strong points of this approach is that the kids have direct involvement in picking their events, and all have an equal chance of being able to pick first. Parents can be involved in discussing possible choices and giving input on which events they would be willing to coach.

Tip! Occasionally, you find that you need to ask a student to step out of their comfort zone and take an event that they don't want, to get coverage for the team. These kids often become passionate about "owning" the event once they've done it.

Another approach is having the Head Coach (or an SO Committee if you are a larger

school) to make the assignments in private, and then announcing the results to the team (students and parents). You need to ask the kids for their top choices (in order) and you might also want to know which events they really don't want to be on, so that you avoid those matchups. This approach takes longer than the lottery, but allows you the opportunity to optimize selections based on your judgment regarding what is best for the team.

Factors to consider:

- Student preferences
- Past experience on the events
- Results on tryout tests that are relevant to specific events
- Continuity of building team experience from year to year
- The tournament schedule
- Strengths of students for different types of events (memorization vs. build/skill)
- Which events parents are willing to coach

Tip! When your event assignments are complete, double check to ensure that you have not assigned anyone for conflicting events on tournament day.

This is a time-consuming process, which may take eight hours or more to complete, depending on how driven you are to find what you believe is the best set of assignments.

Special Accommodations (IEPs)

It is the mission of WESO to support all participating students. If a team has a student participant who requires special physical accommodations (wheelchair access, elevator, etc.), please reach out to WESO well in advance of the tournament date to make support arrangements. If a team has a student with an IEP and is requesting a special accommodation, the HC must submit that student's IEP and accommodation request to WESO **at least one month prior to the tournament**. The IEP will be reviewed by an AAPS teacher and we will work with you to make the appropriate accommodations. If that student is provided with a ParaPro at school, we will ask that the parent make arrangements with their school to have that support person accompany them into their event to provide the requested support. Alternatively, WESO will attempt to make arrangements with the Event Supervisors to provide the appropriate accommodations.

Recruiting and Managing Event Coaches

Responsibilities of Event Coaches

The event coach is the person who has volunteered to lead the students through the information or activity of the event(s) that they will be competing in at the tournament. It is vital for the event coach to have read the rules for their event and make sure that they understand them completely. If they have questions about the event, they will have the opportunity to ask the event supervisor directly at the Event Coaches' Meeting in January (via Zoom). Otherwise, they can submit a question on the WESO website. As they work with the students, it is important to re-read the rules periodically to make sure that they haven't forgotten something or misinterpreted something.

The event coach does NOT need to be an expert in that area of study. Many times event coaches are learning the topic right along with the students. The event coach may need to get information and materials for their topic, prepare for each meeting with the students, meet regularly with the kids, and network with past coaches for additional advice.

It is important to keep the kids' meeting fun -providing them with challenges and mini rewards for accomplishing a task in a certain amount of time or getting a certain number of questions correct. Food always works with kids!

Recruiting Event Coaches

There are a few places that you might find someone to coach an event for you:

Parents - Many parents welcome the chance to work with their son or daughter on a school event. Working parents that can't volunteer at school during the day appreciate the chance to take part as an event coach. Some schools require parents to coach an event if they want their child to be on the team. Parents of younger students (e.g., kindergarten, first grade) are a good resource.

Teachers -There may be some teachers at your school that have the time and energy to coach an event for you. Check with your school's principal to see if there is an incentive for teachers who work on Science Olympiad -such as additional pay. This may help to persuade a teacher to donate those valuable after school hours.

Student Teachers -Student teachers are usually enthusiastic about teaching, and may have fewer outside obligations that would prevent their participation. But they might not be around when it's tournament time. As Head Coach, you'll want to make doubly sure that they keep good notes to pass on to the next person in that role.

Volunteers -There may be other people in the community that would be willing to volunteer a couple of hours a week to coach an event. Senior citizens, special interest clubs, local college/university organizations, some college departmental courses (i.e. Sociology) requiring community service, and people with related hobbies may be willing (and even anxious) to share their expertise with the kids.

Older students -Middle and high school students who have been on a Science Olympiad team in past years, National Honor Society students, students hoping to satisfy community service requirements, and older brothers and sisters of team members all can make great event coaches. You may need to watch out for behavior issues because elementary students will often behave differently for other students than they would for adults. z

Supporting and Managing Your Event Coaches

As head coach, you may need to occasionally assist your event coaches. The easy questions are about where to find information or what resources are available. The more challenging issues may be about behavior.

When a problem does arise, you need to listen to their concerns, and discuss possible actions. You can offer to be part of the solution, but often the best resolution does not directly involve you.

Event coaches are responsible for scheduling practice times with the students for their event. Sometimes this is not an easy task because Science Olympiad kids also tend to be involved with many other activities (such as sports, dance, music lessons) or may have issues with transportation. If the event coach cannot work out scheduling practice times on their own, this is a sign that you likely have a family (either the event coach or another family) who is not committed to the team. That may be one reason to have a drop/add period for adjusting schedules when there is not practice time flexibility. You may need to discuss the issue of commitment with the parents of a team member. As a last resort, replacing a student on your team may be the necessary but unfortunate action.

Tip! When a problem does arise, be clear about your expectations for change and actively monitor the situation.

Event coaches may also have difficulties with their students' behavior. For instance, students not showing up for practices, not coming prepared with assigned materials, not having studied their information, bringing a friend to practice, or allowing other things to be distractions. As Head Coach, you can begin by setting expectations at the team level by discussing proper behavior during full team meetings. In the group setting, critical statements should not be directed at individuals, but praise for good behavior may be. These issues can be revisited periodically as the season progresses to reinforce the expectations. If a behavior issue arises with a specific team or student, you may agree with the event coach to intervene by speaking with the offending student. If the behavior issue continues, you may need to speak with the student's parent, and possibly ask the parent to attend practice sessions in order to monitor their child's behavior.

Event coaches should let you know earlier than later if a behavior issue is recurring. Remember to be judicious in what you say.

Sometimes life itself may interfere -such as family situations (like divorce, sickness, or death) for either the students or the event coach. As the head coach, you need to be aware of these things and step in if necessary. Reassigning the event coach responsibility may be necessary in rare circumstances. Although the parent may not wish to be replaced, they may actually be relieved if they can still help the event team but not have the leadership responsibility. If you monitor the progress of your event teams early in the season, and know that they are off to a good start, you will be less likely to find yourself late in the practice season with an event team that is not functioning well.

Volunteer Certification/Clearance: All volunteer coaches working alone with school children must be cleared/approved in accordance with their district/school policies. AAPS volunteers must fill out and turn in to their school office a copy of the AAPS Volunteer Certification form. This form is available to download from the WESO website. Non-AAPS schools should follow the process defined by their school/district. **Do not** send forms to the WESO board.

Event Coaches' Meetings

The Supervisors'/Event Coaches' Meeting is the primary opportunity for event coaches to obtain information about the event they will be coaching. It is traditionally scheduled sometime during the second half of January, and in recent years has been held via Zoom. This is a very important event for all event coaches. The WESO event supervisors are typically the people running the sessions (although not always), so it is a good opportunity to get questions answered and learn about resources for your team. Make sure your event coaches have read the Detailed Event Description for their event before they attend so they know what questions to ask.

Practice, Practice, Practice

The time period between the Event Coaches' Meetings in January and the Tournament in April/May is your primary practice time. Ask your event coaches to connect with the students on their events and to pick a weekly time when they can meet. If that time slot can be the same every week, it will improve the reliability of student attendance. Teams that do not meet weekly also run the risk of the calendar slipping away before they know it. Ask your event coaches to pick something that works for them (and the kids).

The amount of time that each event team should allocate to meet every week will depend on a number of factors; the size of the event, how much work can be done as "homework", and the experience level of the team members (and event coach). For 7-11 year-olds the simple

Tip! Publish a weekly practice schedule so that event teams can see that others are working. It is also valuable for providing scheduling information to the school office, aftercare program, and parents.

answer is somewhere between 60-90 minutes. That is because once you figure in the time spent in travel and logistics of starting and stopping and snacks, one hour may be too short to get much done, and 1 ½ hours is usually beyond the attention span of kids. Please encourage your event coaches to watch this video on effective coaching:

<https://youtu.be/A55smFF3nNw?si=8gBmmaHezicpPclC>

Some event teams may choose to meet at a coach's home, and others may choose to meet either before, during, or after school, in the school facilities, or local libraries. If a team is meeting in a private home, the coach should encourage at least one other adult to be present during the practice sessions.

Event Workshops

For several events, WESO will offer workshops to allow the teams to experience a particular piece of equipment they may use at the tournament or to receive additional guidance and training about the event. You should receive information on these in a number of ways: at the Event Supervisors'/Coaches' Meeting, in an email from WESO, and listed on the WESO website. Most workshops occur in February and March. You and your event coaches should watch the WESO website and Blog for workshop postings.

Other organizations sponsor great workshops, which will often align closely with the event scope and rules, but you need to be careful to discern when they don't. These can be valuable training opportunities, and some will fill up quickly so don't procrastinate registering if you want to participate.

Prepare to Compete

How event coaches organize event practices and what they have the students study and practice should change as the tournament day gets closer. Early on, the focus should have been on learning the material, learning basic skills, and getting a better sense of the relative strengths of the students on each event team. At some point, probably by mid-April, the focus should shift to thinking about the specifics of how the event *team* will cooperate to maximize their performance at the competition.

For some events the kids will need to be assigned very specific roles. The event coach may feel pressure to not favor one student over another (especially because one is probably their child). At this point the event coach will need to make the hard choice to do what is best for the event team's performance in competition, and to not feel guilty about doing so.

Timed practice tests are a good experience for the events teams at this point because it gives the kids a sense of what will be like to be under the time pressure of the competition, and it will give them a chance to practice the agreed roles for cooperation. An explicit conversation about how to handle various types of disagreements among team members during the event and how they will efficiently be resolved is valuable. A team that argues or fights during the competition will not do well.

Securing practice rooms (AAPS Schools)

If you are interested in using one of the elementary or middle school facilities outside of normal school hours check our website for more information: [Reserving a Facility](#) and please do the following:

- 1) Read through the [rental regulations](#) for facility use.
- 2) Complete the [23-24 AAPS Elementary and Middle School Facility Use Request Form](#) and submit at least 5 business days prior to your preferred start date. We cannot complete same day requests.
- 3) If groups are needing multiple rooms/spaces, please send a spreadsheet of everything you are requesting to facilityuse@aaps.k12.mi.us. This way you do not have to submit several entries on this form.

Requests will be reviewed and you will be given an update within 10 business days. Final determinations may take longer, depending on the school schedule.

There is a \$30/hr weekend custodial fee for weekend rentals. For more information or assistance contact facilityuse@a2schools.org.

Sources of Support

As the head coach, your job is to oversee and facilitate the whole team, making sure that everything runs smoothly and troubleshooting any areas that need attention. You will need to rely on many others to do their part to make this happen. This list of potential supporters is a good place to start. As you become more experienced, more avenues of support may become apparent. Your support circle may consist of the following people:

School Principal and PTO: The principal of your school and/or the PTO may have money budgeted for your team to use for supplies, t-shirts, food for team meetings, *etc.* The principal can also make sure that your team gets the recognition that it deserves -through whole school announcements, assemblies, newsletter articles, marquee, *etc.* Some principals volunteer to coach an event. Some principals come to the tournament to show support for the school's team.

Teachers: They can be one of your most valuable resources. Teachers can help you promote WESO and identify kids to participate. They can also provide materials to study/practice for the events. Many teachers have posters, books, and other materials that will help to make studying for the event more fun. Some teachers (or student teachers!) may volunteer to coach an event. You may also need the teacher's cooperation when scheduling meetings in their classroom or when a practice may be held in their classroom during lunchtime, which may affect a student or two in their class.

Parents: Having parents' support of the team's members is crucial. They can serve as event coaches, help find sponsors and raise money for the team, help provide transportation of team members to workshops, or bring healthy snacks to team practices. They can support your event coaches by getting their students to the practices on time, making sure their child is prepared for practice and helping their child review material at home. In addition parents are needed to volunteer on tournament day. Parents may make the connection that the Science Olympiad is an introduction to their student's middle school science and math curriculum. If the parents see it as a valuable part of their child's academic experience, the students will take their role more seriously.

WESO Website: The WESO website provides up to date information to keep everyone informed including coaches and parents. The website clarifies rules, and provides up to date information about workshops, blogs from the Olympiad community, and much more. Please visit the website often: <https://wesoscience.org> You can also reach out to us directly at weso@wesoscience.org.

Other Coaches: Talking to other head coaches (former head coaches from your school or head coaches from other schools) can provide essential information based on their past experiences. Likewise, your event coaches can gain precious knowledge from the person who coached their event in past years. Keeping a list of these contacts can be very valuable. Remember to pass along these contacts when your time as Head Coach is over!

Final Preparations for the Tournament

A week or so before the tournament you will need to organize and communicate a large amount of information to your team. Some of it will be general information from the tournament director, and some of it will be information specifically about your team. Some of the issues to cover with your team should be:

- What time to arrive, when it will be over
- Where to meet
- Where coaches should meet students
- What to wear – Team T-shirt required
- What to bring
- How to behave (students and adults!)
- A map of Pioneer High School Campus
- Open events
- Team celebration

You may also want to collect and distribute a listing of cell phone numbers so that your team can stay in touch during the tournament. You should prepare the students with a set place to meet “if you get lost” – for example, in the cafeteria near your team table. And tell the students that if they do get lost, they need to contact a Board Member with the multi-colored tie-dye T-shirts or the security personnel they see walking around.

In addition, you will need to prepare the parents. They need to be aware that they may only escort their child as far as the Academic Check-in table and are not allowed to escort their child to the testing rooms.

Tournament Day

On the day of the tournament, have your team arrive at Pioneer High School as WESO had instructed. The cafeteria is where your team table will be located. Your team should assemble there and receive their name tags and wristbands. WESO will only provide head coaches with wristbands for their school participants who have completed their registration. Only registered students with wristbands and name tags are allowed to compete in events. . Do not just hand them out -either you or another adult should supervise the process of them being put on the students.

Tip! Remind your team that at the tournament, tests are designed to separate the scores between teams, not for everyone to finish.

Other important topics that you may want to cover:

- Schedule for the day
- Managing transitions for back-to-back events
- How to spend free time -Open Events
- Confirm needed supplies (On Target launchers, Potions goggles, etc..)
- Thank team volunteers
- Show some team spirit
- Expected behavior on campus
- Team celebration
- Have fun!

The tournament schedule is the guide for when your team needs to be in specific locations. For all events, show up at least 10 minutes before the scheduled time.

The day of the tournament should be fun and a celebration of a long season of dedication. Parents and coaches need to understand that their primary role is to support the kids and to help them manage the stress of the day. It is a day for the coaching to stop, encouraging words given and demonstrating you have confidence in your kids to show what they have learned. It should be a day of congratulations, **not criticisms**.

Good tournament-day coaching behaviors include:

- Reminders of how event team members should cooperate

- Reminding the team of all the work they've done to get to this point
- Telling them how proud you are of their efforts

Poor tournament-day coaching behaviors include:

- Trying to teach content
- Criticizing students for not getting correct answers

The Head Coach should model proper behavior in all circumstances and to provide support to the event coaches and students. The event coaches will feel that their efforts are being judged on this day also and some of them will have more difficulty managing the stress than the kids! Be generous with compliments and encouragement.

You should expect that things will not always turn out perfectly, especially for the events where the kids demonstrate a skill, like water rockets, on target, and the like. Something you haven't considered is likely to appear on the day of competition. The weather can be a wild card. These events by nature are higher risk events.

Should you or anyone on your team (students and parents) have a question or concern we ask they share it with you as the Head Coach and have you act as spokesperson to the Board. Non-urgent concerns should be shared with us via email after the Tournament. For issues requiring our immediate attention please locate the nearest Board Member. If you cannot easily locate one of us please go to Volunteer check-in table and they will assist you in finding us! We will make every attempt to resolve the issue in as fair and equitable fashion as soon as possible. Unless the issue involves specific teams, the options for resolution may be very limited. Only in extenuating circumstances would the Board disallow all or part of the results for an event.

The awards ceremony is another opportunity for you to demonstrate your leadership of the team. You may find great success and satisfaction, and you should also expect some disappointment. How you react to the final results affects how your parents, coaches, and kids will behave. No doubt, this can be a heavy load to carry. Unmet expectations can be frustrating. Hopefully, you helped your team set appropriate expectations for the day. You will need to look for the opportunities to give congratulations, encouragement, and thanks. It is also an opportunity to show your students how to demonstrate good sportsmanship by giving praise and congratulations to other teams. Shake their hand, and share the moment with them also. Be gracious!

Tip! Remind the students that their teammates have all worked hard. Please be mindful and remain for the entire award ceremony to show your support.

Team Recognition

Recognition for your team can start long before the tournament day. Promote and publicize WESO in your school community. Work with your school principal to recognize participating students. Here are some things that you can do:

- Wear your team shirts on a particular day
- Organize some type of sendoff at school before the tournament
- Put an announcement on the school marquee with well wishes before the tournament, and with team-level results after the tournament
- Organize a visit to the school board for their recognition
- List the tournament results in the school newsletter, and on the school website
- Have a post-competition celebration on the evening of the tournament, or at school during lunch, or both
- Give certificates during the school awards assembly. Here is one you can use:
https://drive.google.com/file/d/1sQHJhEHjNBOs1Y3TsqB6T8HeEJuK-pDj/view?usp=share_link
- Give team members a keepsake or a copy of the team photo

For the most part, you'll be thinking about how to recognize the students, but don't forget to also thank the people who helped make the team's success possible.

Closing the Season

Your team may be feeling the relief of "it's over!", but it isn't quite yet. How you close the season has much to do with how well your team learns from year to year. Ask your event coaches to organize their materials and write down what they learned to help out next year's coach, even if they expect to coach again. It may be appropriate to establish and update a notebook that supports each event. If one doesn't exist for a particular event, now may be the time to start. Hopefully, this isn't the first time that your event coaches have heard you mention that this will be required. For all events, you should be managing the team's resources by collecting equipment and updated notes & notebooks to make sure that things are properly stored for the summer and not lost. If you borrowed equipment from someone else, make sure that it is returned.

Tip! To improve your team performance next year ask your event coaches to organize their materials, and write down what they learned to help out the next coach (even if they expect to coach again).

Another good discipline for the end of the season is for you and your event coaches to provide feedback regarding the tournament. The feedback that you provide helps WESO decide what changes should be made for the coming year. Your opinion counts!

Building a Strong Team

Building a strong team requires systematic thought and effort on your part. How can you

attract more committed students (and parents)? What can you do to build the capabilities of your team? What can you do to make it the best experience possible for your team?

Continuity

Continuity is in part a byproduct of writing things down and being organized. This requires effort because the students and parents involved from year-to-year keep changing.

Continuity begins with the Head Coach, but is important at all levels. A team that has a head coach who will serve for at least several years has made a good first step.

Some students like to "surf" the events, never returning to the same one twice. Some turnover is expected, and to some degree you want the kids to have an opportunity to explore subjects in which they might be interested. However, asking them to stick with a subject to develop a higher level of mastery may also be an important experience.

Event coaches will often be happier to stay on the same event multiple years because it gets easier as you go. At the end of the season, ask your event coaches to record what they learned in case they're not the coach next year. It may be appropriate to create a notebook that goes with each event that becomes the team's asset base. Every new event coach should be given contact information for the previous event coach, and encouraged strongly to make that contact.

Frequent Communication

Communicating with your team seems like a no-brainer, but doing it well does take work. Remember that you are trying to penetrate the craziness of family schedules just like your own. You might choose to send important information both in a written, take-home form, as well as electronically. Email is a great convenience, but you might have to train some families to actively check for email notes.

The investment that you make in writing clear, organized emails or letters, and being clear about what you need from your team will help everyone. Pay attention to formatting and how a reader will find the most important information in what you send.

By nature, the Science Olympiad has a decentralized structure with many event teams. Regular communication will help members feel more like they are part of the team. Ask your event coaches how things are going and occasionally make an effort to visit their practices as that is a good time to catch them in person.

Organization

There are opportunities to let good organizing skills help you build a strong team at every turn. Build rosters with contact information and make sure everyone has a copy. Keep track of who attends every meeting, and follow up with those who miss. Write

things down! If you call a meeting, write an agenda beforehand. Better yet, send the agenda to the meeting participants in advance.

Choose methods that will help keep you organized, like a filing system or notebooks. Clean things out occasionally so that the truly valuable materials don't get lost in a large pile of irrelevant material.

If all of this seems obvious, then you're probably all set. For others, this may be difficult and will require a dose of discipline.

Accountability

Creating a culture of accountability is a key responsibility of the head coach. This doesn't imply that you need to be an overbearing, demanding person. The "happiness" of your team will in part depend on all members feeling like their contribution is valued and that the other members are doing their part. Occasionally it may feel like nagging, probably because it is. It's part of the job, but be sure that you are not micromanaging events.

Tell your event coaches, parents, and students what you expect of them, and be willing to occasionally follow up. Use the touch points that you have with your team to politely inquire how things are going. You don't need a detailed report to know if they are engaged, or are procrastinating. If you have lunchtime or after school full-team meetings with the kids, go down the roster of events and ask each event team to say a few words about their activities.

When you hear a particularly good report about one event team, share it with the rest of the team. It's a great pat on the back for the source, and a reminder to others that you care. It could be simple things about meeting regularly or how quickly they are learning the material. Showcasing good behavior will breed it with the rest of your team.

Team Identity and Recognition

There are a number of easy ways to build your team identity. Virtually anything you do as a group qualifies. The most traditional is ordering team shirts. Team identity is important to invest in because it is possible for your team to have almost no group identity with the decentralized nature of event teams. Consider other convenient opportunities for the team to do something together, like lunchtime meetings. After the competition, have a post competition celebration that same evening or weekend, or maybe a pizza party at school during lunchtime soon after. Or do both. If you can manage it financially, giving each student some type of remembrance (like a certificate, team ribbon, or participation medal) is a nice touch.

Tip! Kids like to have their pictures and accomplishments showcased on a bulletin board or display cabinet at school where their classmates will see, even if for just a month.

Let the school know what's going on. Before the tournament, announce that you're competing and representing them. On the Monday after the tournament, announce the

competition results, and make a big deal of it. When the school has an awards assembly, make sure the team gets recognition. It's OK to mention the results of individuals, but make sure that it is obvious that the team results are the most important. Teams that do well in their total score are the result of consistency of the whole team, regardless of who received a medal.

Know the Event Rules

Of course you'll know the event rules. Doesn't everyone? This is one of those things that can sneak up on you when you least expect it. No event supervisor wants to tell a student (and coach) that they've been disqualified because they didn't follow a published rule. But it happens.

The rules on any given event may change from year to year, and effort is made to highlight the changes. Rule changes generally occur to fix a problem that was observed in the past tournament, or to maintain the competitiveness of the event.

Think of this as another way that you can ask your students to take responsibility for their event. Event coaches should know the rules also. They both should read through the event rules several times during the course of the season. Something that had little meaning to them early in the season may become important after having more experience on the event.

Also follow the online rule updates & clarifications on the website. Ideally, event coaches should check on these updates every few weeks. As Head Coach, you can help them by scanning for important updates and forwarding your relevant event coaches a link to important information.

Team Character

How a team behaves is as important as what it learns. How the kids treat each other, other teams, and the adults who deliver the tournament will speak volumes about the character of your team.

The first thing you can do is to model the best behavior yourself. Speak respectfully to the kids. Ask their opinion and really listen to them. The kids will rise to the standards that you set and model before them. Adding a little formality occasionally in how you speak to them, even just for fun, can elicit a positive response. Students should listen to other team members' thoughts and raise their hand to speak. This will encourage a culture where the kids want to share their ideas with each other.

Set the expectation that event practices are to be faithfully attended, and that assigned preparation should always be completed. If a student is routinely behaving poorly during event practices or missing them altogether you may be asked to intervene. Treat the student with respect and calmly describe appropriate behavior. If the first intervention does not solve the problem, escalate the issue in tone and whom you involve. Try to get

a read on the type of support your event coach will appreciate. Don't avoid action because it is unpleasant. Allowing poor behavior by one student will fester and cause bigger problems downstream.

Before you compete, talk with your kids about appropriate behavior at the tournament. They will face additional pressures in a public tournament setting. Respect and appreciation should be the common expectation. Some coaches will make the mistake of letting students leave the awards ceremony early because they don't expect to win the remaining awards. Some will leave with their team. This is disrespectful of all the other teams, and does not show good sportsmanship. Allowing this behavior is destructive to your team's character.

Student enrichment activities

Enrichment activities are those whose purpose are to build camaraderie and to broaden the team's exposure to science topics, and may not be directly related to a Science Olympiad event. This type of activity is clearly optional and will require some preparation on your part to organize something that fits the available time. One type of fun activity might be to have a Science Olympiad Night at your school so the Olympians can demonstrate their event and the knowledge they've learned to the whole team, and other students who might be interested in exploring the possibility of participating in following years.

Contact Us

Thank you! Your time and dedication to the role of Head Coach is a very important commitment, and is an investment in developing the next generation of scientists and engineers... men and women of high character.

We hope you find the material in this handbook helpful and we welcome your feedback and suggestions for how to make future editions better. We also wouldn't mind hearing how this handbook helped you improve your team.

Remember we are here to help you!

You may contact us at: <https://wesoscience.org> or weso@wesoscience.org