

Brain Bowl Coaches Guide

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Starting a Brain Bowl Program

Check to see which region your tournament will be held. Make sure that your teams will be able to compete on the date on which your regional tournament will be held. Your teams must compete in your home region.

Brain Bowl tournaments are scheduled for the best fit for both students with their activity calendars and Optimist volunteers with their other club commitments. Optimist Brain Bowl tournaments are not held on three day weekends, however depending on the calendar year, may need to schedule at the tail end of schools' winter break.

Download a copy of the Competition Rules and Protest Procedures. Read them thoroughly before scheduling your practice session so you will be ready to jump into practice.

Setting Up Practice Sessions

The Optimist Brain Bowl competition is for middle school students only. Younger students may certainly practice with the middle school students but when the teams are formed only 6th, 7th and 8th grade students may be on the roster and participate at the tournament. Remember each team is only allowed 6 team members total.

The main "Coach" from your school is the person who sets up the program, communicates with Optimist Brain Bowl on your teams' behalf and checks in the students at the competition. Anyone may be the Reader at your practice sessions but they should be well versed on the rules of the competition.

Practice sessions may be held during an activity period, before or after school, or even as a brown bag lunch activity. Many programs meet weekly and maybe a few times per week as the competition day gets closer.

There are several ways to acquire questions for practice. If you don't already have practice questions, download the Knowledge Master Library flyer to see if there is a library option that fits your budget. It is not mandatory that you use those particular questions for practice. Knowledge Master has weekly practice questions online that you can use for free or you can use questions from trivia games or other internet searches. The main objective is to have a variety of questions with which your teams can practice and develop competition strategies.

Your school may purchase buzzers for practice from several sources online. Since the buzzers used for Optimist Brain Bowl are built by Optimists, we don't have any recommendation on which might be best. If you do not have buzzer, you can practice using a pair of desk bells or even just slapping the table.

Registering Your Teams

Deadline for team registration is December 1 or when the tournament fills whichever occurs first. Optimist Brain Bowl tournaments fill to capacity each year. Registrations are accepted in the order in which they are received with payment. Online registration is preferred since the registration and receipt of payment is immediate. If your school does not permit credit card registration, please contact Connie Ackerman connieackerman@comcast.net for instructions on where to send payment. If a purchase order is used, a copy of the PO should be emailed to the email address above. Optimist Brain Bowl will not be responsible for delays or loss due to US Mail service.

When registering please indicate the number of teams you will be bringing. Each school is allowed to bring up to nine teams. There is no need to decide which level the teams each team will be competing yet. We know that parents'/students' focus can change over the winter break so we have schools confirm the levels one week before tournament when the rosters are due.

T-shirts are available for pre-order online. Deadline for T-shirt orders is December 15. Very few T-shirts are available for sale at tournament. We have run out of shirts sold at tournaments.

Team Rosters

We know that team composition changes often before tournament so please do not email rosters any sooner than 10 days before your tournament. We will email you with the form when it is time to submit. **Team Rosters are due the Wednesday before your regional tournament by 3pm.** This is a hard deadline and it is not flexible. Teams registered for which we do not have rosters will not be scheduled. And remember, no refunds after December 1 so it is important that you don't forget these deadlines.

You do not need to use the actual team roster form to submit your roster. Each team name should be submitted using your school name plus the grade level (6, 7, or 8) plus a letter designation (A, B, C, D). For example: Washington MS 6A . You do need to include the student names for each roster along with the grade. If you leave the grades off the rosters, we will not be able to tell if your teams are registered for the correct level. Teams that have sent incorrect rosters will play at the wrong level and won't be eligible for awards or advancement to the next level.

Planning Schedule

The planning schedule is posted on the website. Every Brain Bowl tournament has the same basic schedule. You are encouraged to forward the document to parents and bus drivers. You will receive the head to head schedule when you check in on tournament day.

Behavior Expectations

Each Brain Bowl competition is held in a host school much like the home schools of our teams. The CO/WY Optimists are committed to taking care of the teachers' rooms and their students' ongoing projects while borrowing their space. Optimist Brain Bowl participants and supporters should not go into any space or touch any equipment, supplies, projects or personal items that are not being used for Optimist Brain Bowl. The participating school will be held accountable if any damage occurs as a result of their students exploring unauthorized space or handling things unrelated to our competition. The coach of each school should go over these expectations with the students and parents prior to the competition. If the main coach is unable to attend the competition, that person should appoint a parent who can represent the whole school's teams at the

competition and supervise the students' and parents' behavior. Please report any damage that takes place during the tournament—whether intentional or unintentional—to the tournament directors so that we can address the issue and make sure that we make it right with the school.

Brain Bowl competition is like every other competition in that we expect good sportsmanship from everyone. The protest procedures are in place to give teams a chance to balance mistakes and/or decisions that have taken place during the oral rounds. Reader procedural errors should be addressed politely after the question has been played through. An answer that you feel was correct but was judged incorrect should be taken to the protest room. Officials will not entertain protests from coaches that only want to take points away from an opposing team.

Every team has worked hard to get to the competition so it is fitting that teams congratulate each other at the end of the rounds. A thank you to the Readers is always appreciated. If you are planning to lodge a protest, please alert both the Reader and the opposing coach that you are going to do so. This will help teams justify discrepancies in score after the morning rounds.

Please remind team parents not to mouth/whisper answers or to signal team members during the competition. Readers are trained to give one warning and then ask the offending supporters to leave the room if they cannot keep from interfering during play. Well meaning tips or instructions from coaches or parents should take place in between rounds and not in the competition rooms during the rounds.

Team Check-In

Coaches should check in by 7:55am on tournament day. If you and your teams are arriving separately make sure that you have enough teammates onsite for each team to begin play. Teams can compete with a minimum of two players. Others may join the team if they arrive late. Please do not consolidate teams on tournament morning if you have at least 2 team members for each team to play. The Optimist Brain Bowl tries very hard to ensure that every team can play 4 oral rounds and 1 written round on tournament day. No shows or team rearrangements on tournament day wreak havoc on the tournament schedule and have a potential of bringing the whole tournament to a standstill while we reschedule. Coaches should check-in all of their teams at once and pickup their schedules and supplies. Individual students do not need to check in.

Advancing to the Elimination Rounds and Beyond

The results from the morning rounds are announced at approximately 12:30pm. The top 8 teams in each level advance to the afternoon Elimination Rounds. Teams that win in the 1st Elimination Round play another two rounds to determine 1st through 4th Place.

The top 6 places in each level will be invited to the Championship Tournament. Teams that lose in the 1st Elimination Round should report to the designated room and wait to see if they qualify for the Championship Tournament. This is determined by total points earned for the day. Teams that qualify but do not wish to participate in the Championship Tournament should let the tournament directors know so that the 7th Place team can be invited to play. If a team in the 7th place position cannot play we will invite the 8th place team. To keep the Championship tournament competitive, we will not invite teams that place below 8th place.

Please let us know if you have questions! We want you and your teams to have a fun and successful experience at the Optimist Brain Bowl!