

# 2021 OPTIMIST BRAIN BOWL COMPETITION RULES

## RECENT REVISIONS

**Numerous revisions to switch to a virtual tournament. Additional revisions may occur as we refine the virtual version of Brain Bowl. Be sure to check back for the latest version prior to the contest.**

1. Teams or members may be disqualified for a round or the entire contest for violating normal rules of conduct or these Rules, at the discretion of the Tournament Director(s).

## TEAM MAKE-UP

2. Teams consist of two to five members. No team member changes may be made once a round is under way. All team members must be entered on a Roster sheet to be turned in no later than the day before the tournament. This final Roster establishes the team for the entire day. Any members who are not currently present but that will arrive later in the day, must be included on this Roster.
3. The grade level of the oldest team member determines the competition level of the team. Sixth grade teams must consist of only sixth graders. Seventh grade teams must have at least one seventh grader. Eighth grade teams must have at least one eighth grader. Both seventh and eighth grade teams may also include younger students.
4. Each team selects a team member to act as the spokesperson, the only member who can give the answer to the officials. This helps prevent team members from shouting out answers, encourages the teams to take the time to discuss their answers, and helps the judges to listen properly for team answers. A team may change its spokesperson during the tournament, but may not do so during a round. **The spokesperson MUST preface the final team answer with: “Answer, . . . “**
5. We suggest the team keep track of the team’s scores for all oral rounds played during the morning. Note that corrections MAY occur during the day due to protests and identification of poor questions/answers.

## THE RULES

6. Questions are asked from all academic areas.
7. Team members may not bring phones, ipods or other electronic devices to the competition tables, other than the computer connecting them to the competition. All other electronic devices in the competition room must be turned off and stored, as directed by the Reader.
8. This year’s virtual Brain Bowl Competition will consist of four preliminary oral rounds, then three oral elimination rounds that determine the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade champions as well as the consolation round of third/fourth place teams. One oral round may be a “bye,” depending on team numbers and circumstances. The top eight teams at each grade level advance to the oral elimination rounds in the afternoon. The second elimination round involves the winners from the first elimination round (four teams at each grade level). The final oral round involves the winners from the second elimination round (two teams at each grade level) to determine first and second place, and the losers from the second elimination round to determine third/fourth place.
9. If there is an odd number of teams at any grade level, some teams will have a bye. Those teams’ scores for a bye will be determined by averaging that team’s scores for their other oral rounds. This will also be applied in the event of a disqualification, such as a one-round disqualification for “intentional interruptions of the opposing team or Reader.”
10. The preliminary oral rounds, elimination rounds, and final rounds each involve two teams competing against each other and consist of 30 questions each. Multiple sessions of the preliminary oral rounds and elimination rounds are held simultaneously in various rooms. Verbal answers are accepted only from a team's designated spokesperson, who must start with : “Answer . . . “. Answers blurted out by other team members will be ignored.
11. We expect each student will connect via their own computer at home via a virtual platform (Google Meet) as directed by the tournament Director. **Satellite internet connections are not permitted due to unacceptable time delays and signal quality issues that interrupt the overall flow of communications.** The Reader will read the questions one at a time, alternating between the teams. There will be no “buzzers.” Even numbered questions will first be asked to one team, and odd numbered questions will first be asked to the other team. **Before giving the team’s answer, the team’s spokesperson must say the word “Answer,” so the officials can distinguish an offered answer from intra-team discussion.**
12. The team to which a question was asked has 20 seconds from the time the question was completed to present an answer. To answer a question correctly, the spokesperson must give an answer promptly when or before being called upon to do so at the end of the 20

- seconds and must say the word “Answer” before giving the team’s answer to the question. Silence, or any attempt to stall when called upon to give an answer, will be treated as a wrong answer. Incomplete answers are wrong answers if not completed within the time given.
13. The second team should always be thinking about an answer while the first team is using its 20-second answer time. The second team may communicate quietly with each other during this time, but may not interfere with the first team’s communications. This may not be possible if in separate, digital contact. Repeated interruptions of the other team may result in disqualification. Frequent “muting” is likely required to maintain communications quality.
  14. If the first team gives the wrong answer or fails to answer within the allotted time, the second team has a chance to answer. Its allotted time to give an answer starts as soon as the Reader announces that the first team's answer is wrong or that it has not answered in a timely manner.
  15. The second team has 10 seconds to give an answer after the first team gives the wrong answer or fails to answer within the allotted time. The spokesperson must give an answer before or when called upon to do so at the end of the 10 seconds. **Again, the spokesperson MUST say the word “Answer” before giving the team’s answer to the question**, and silence or any attempt to stall when called upon to give an answer will be treated as a wrong answer.
  16. Questions will be repeated by the Reader only if technological problems prevent a team from hearing the question. The team must notify the officials that they were unable to hear the question immediately after it was read.
  17. Officials will ask a spokesperson to repeat an answer only if technological issues prevent the officials from hearing the team’s answer. The spokespersons should be careful to stay close to their microphones and speak directly and clearly into them. Scoring:
    - a. Whenever the first team answers correctly, it receives one point.
    - b. Whenever the first team fails to answer or answers incorrectly, and the *second* team answers correctly, it receives *two* points.
  18. Tie scores are allowed in the preliminary oral rounds.
  19. No ties are allowed in the elimination rounds or final/consolation rounds. If the score is tied at the end of 30 questions, additional questions are read until one team answers correctly and is declared the winner. Each team will get a question, as above, and the tie will be reassessed after the two questions, so that each team gets to start a question. When a team is ahead on points after a pair of extra questions, that team will be declared the winner. Overall 3<sup>rd</sup> place versus 4<sup>th</sup> place is resolved by the consolation round competitions. Awards will be given to the top FOUR teams in each level at the end of the competition.
  20. Scores from the preliminary rounds are totaled to determine the top eight scoring teams at each grade level. Ties are resolved with round scores starting with round 1, skipping any rounds where either team did not actually compete. The number of points is the key element for tie breakers, not head-to-head competition. The top eight scoring teams in each grade advance to the elimination rounds in the afternoon. Point scores from the preliminary oral rounds will be posted.
  21. Points accumulated during the morning rounds do not carry over to the elimination rounds, except for tie-breaking purposes. The elimination rounds are head-to-head competitions. Teams are seeded in the elimination rounds according to their rank after the scores from the morning rounds are totaled.
  22. Team members are expected to be courteous to all Officials, their own team members, and the members of other teams at all times. Teams may request confirmation or clarification of an answer, but they are not to argue with Officials. Apparent errors and any technical glitches are to be brought to the attention of the Officials immediately after a question and answers to it have been completed so they can try to resolve the issue promptly.
  23. Members of the audience should in no way interact with team members, Readers, Scorekeepers, or Timekeepers during a round, unless so requested by Officials.
  24. Only team members and coaches may object to any process, decision or conduct in a competition room, and must follow these rules in doing so. Protest procedures are still being evaluated for a virtual contest. Protests concerning an answer to a question, (such as, for example, you think an accepted answer is incorrect, or you think an alternate answer given by a team should have been accepted as correct also) or concerning the decision of, conduct of, or procedure followed by officials in a competition room, may be filed only by a coach or by a coach's designated representative, and must follow the protest procedure determined by the competition director. Protest

Procedures will be posted separately as we strive to achieve a workable format for the virtual event. Protests must be made promptly - no later than the end of the next round. Each protest made shall be made on a separate protest form, and must include adequate information for the protest judges to consider/resolve the protest, including: team name, grade level of team, round number, question number, and, preferably the name of the Reader in such round. Elimination round protests MUST be announced to the Reader and the other team or they will not be considered. Generally, procedural questions are settled per the Reader's decision. Informational questions may infrequently require adjustments, but the third-party-provided questions and answers will not be researched beyond use of a dictionary. If doubt exists, the provided answer will be considered the correct one.

25. When a question calls for the name of a person, a last name alone shall be considered a sufficient answer unless the question specifically called for more. If a team's spokesperson volunteers an incorrect first name, then that team's answer will be counted as a wrong answer.
26. Tie-Breaker details "restated":
  - a. Elimination Rounds: "Sudden Win" (aka Sudden Death by non-Optimists)
  - b. For 8<sup>th</sup> Place, Total Score yields a tie, decided by:
    - i. Round 1 versus Round 1 - highest score (excluding bye)
    - ii. Round 2 versus Round 2 - highest score (excluding bye)
    - iii. etc.
    - iv. If necessary - coin toss.