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Coaches' Bulletin

Survey of the Month

Does your league organize Nationals preparation practices or is preparation left to individual schools?

Please reply to bngolden1@cox.net and indicate the league you represent.

Responses to Last Month's Question

Has the number of schools in your league grown the last few years, diminished, or remained the same?

- Sue Mellon, WPAGL: "Remained the same."
- Swami Jataja, India: "Two years, the number of schools in our league grew infinitely from 0 to 1. Since then it has remained steady."
- Karen Kruse, Colorado: "Grown"
- Nancy Kinard: "The number of schools playing in the Palm Beach County Academic Games League has held steady in the last few years. We have seen a drop in the number of students playing Language Arts in the last few years; but, not the number of schools. We generally have 66 to 72 schools play each Tuesday with the number of Elementary students around 200-250 and Middle/High School around 200-225."
- Brother Neal, NOAGL: "We have not regained the numbers we had pre-Katrina. It seems like for every school we gain, we lose one. In recent years, our Junior/Senior divisions have dwindled. We're fighting the increasing number of new sports and activities at the high school level as well as the idea that Academic Games are for elementary and middle school."
- Lorrie Scott, Indian River (FL): "This year I have the smallest group of schools participating since I started in 1998."
- Betty Smith, Hancock County (WV): "Fewer students competing this year."
- Sallie Johnson, Detroit: "Diminished."

SPECIAL REQUEST

Wouldn't it be cool to learn that the high scorer in Middle Division *Presidents* at your league's tournament earned one of the top three scores among all leagues in their local *Presidents* tournaments?

Please send in the top individual scores in each division of each reading game at your local tournaments.

We'll compile the results and publish them in this month's AGazine.



Submit questions to:
bngolden1@cox.net

Question

If Two-digit Numerals is called, is it OK to just put "09" as a Solution? Libby Michalik (PA)

Answer

Yes. 00, 01, ..., 09 are acceptable Solutions since each contains two cubes. Such numerals may also be used in the Goal as well as in longer Solutions. Of course, such numerals are particularly interesting with 0 wild.

Question

The Goal is: $\underline{5+4} \times 2$, and the Equation is $5+4 \times 2 = 6 \times 3$. Can the checker put parentheses in the Goal portion such that the Equation-writer's Goal is now $5+(4 \times 2)$? In essence, there was only one way for the Equation-writer to interpret the Goal. But since he didn't write it exactly like the Goal (because the Equation-writer did not put in the parentheses), then the checker can make the Equation wrong by interpreting the Equation-writer's Goal in a way that is illegal. Steve Wright (MI)

Answer

From the *Equations Tournament Rules*: "If the Goal is grouped, as in $\underline{3x \ 5+2}$, an Equation-writer must write $3x(5+2)$ and not $3x \ 5+2$ (with space between x and 5 but no parentheses). In the latter case, the Equation-writer has written an ambiguous Goal. A checker may group it in such a way as to make the Equation wrong."

Coaching Tips: Nationals Preparation

One way to prepare Nationals qualifiers after local play ends is to go through the games played locally in chronological order. Start with the one played first during the year since that's the one that has faded from memory the longest. Divide the amount of preparation time into four or five parts depending on the number of games to be played at Nationals. The times allotted to the various games don't need to be equal since some games require more review than others.

For cube games, you can go over the toughest areas of the subject matter but let students spend most of the practice time playing the game to get the cobwebs out. It's helpful if your league participates in an area or "state" tournament where qualifiers can play against opponents they didn't face during the school year, especially in cube games.

Reading games present a different challenge. You can approach *Propaganda*, for example, the same way you did for the local tournament but at a brisker pace. For example, instead of covering half of Section A in one practice, you can cover all of it since players went through the techniques just a few months earlier.

Players can review *Presidents* on their own and devote practice time to rounds of sample questions on the various ranges for the given year.

That same approach is appropriate for *Theme* and *Current Events* as well.

And all preparation should take into account that players will participate in practice sessions at Nationals for each game they play.

Please share any Nationals preparation tips that have worked well for you.