SECTION 6: Science Olympiad Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

1. Why do I have to fill out forms electronically? We have more than 20 schools, 50 judges, and 360 students that we need to enter into our system so that we can create spreadsheets, programs, and name badges. Receiving your information electronically not only saves us work, but reduces the chance of errors in data entry.

2. Why do you need the information so long before the event? We need names so that we can prepare spreadsheets, contact information, and name badges for the students. We also make a program that lists all participants, and it takes time to get the program printed.

3. Why are there minimum and maximum numbers of students allowed on teams? We want to give as many students as possible the opportunity to participate in the Science Olympiad. We sometimes have to turn away schools/teams, so we don’t want to have a team with only 8 or 10 students participate while turning away another school team that would have had 15 students. (There is an exception for very small schools.) The maximum is established based on space allowance and to reduce the amount of “down time” that students have on the day of the event. Even with our limit, students have periods of time when they are not competing. Minimizing down time minimizes potential problems.

4. Do you have suggestions for recruiting and selecting students? Every school is different. Some schools ask teachers to recommend/invite students to come to a meeting. Others open up an orientation meeting to any interested student. Experience has shown that there is a fair amount of attrition in interested students between October/November and January and the time of the actual event in April, so selection may take care of itself. Some schools establish criteria such as attendance and behavior at practices and award points that are used in selecting teams.

5. Why must we provide a volunteer/judge? There are 14 events in the Science Olympiad, and some are held in several different rooms. We prefer to have two adults in a room at a time so one can take a break as needed. In order to provide enough volunteers in each room, we need about 45 or 50 judges/volunteers. While we are able to recruit some judges from the community, we need your help in finding others.

6. What if it rains? The Science Olympiad is a rain or shine event! It did rain in 2009, and teams brought tents and canopies.

7. Where do we get the materials? Most materials are already at the school site. We will provide some practice arms for the catapult event. We buy our straws at Costco. The wax paper cups should be available at stores such as Lucky, Safeway, CVS, etc. Acorn Naturalists is an excellent source for books on natural history (including tracks).

8. Why do we need to have a media opt-out form? We take photos of students and projects to share and promote the Science Olympiad on the SCOE website and/or with a slide show. Additionally, some years the press attends the Olympiad event. Please note that a signature on the media opt-out form is only required if a student’s parent/guardian does NOT give the Sonoma County Office of Education media use permission for his/her child. A parent/guardian does not need to sign or return the media opt-out form if he/she DOES give the Sonoma County Office of Education media use permission.

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