

2019 NCSO Coaches Clinic

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Recruiting Kids

- Mostly talk to them and personally invite them to a practice. (Pick them!)
- Accept verbal recommendations from other staff.
- Persistent kids who are determined to be on the team a chance.
- Run a “mock” competition with three (3) simple Sci-Oly events. New students are partners with their parent.
- Students who decide that Sci-Oly isn't for them (at any point) can simply talk to me and leave the team.

Other Extra-Curricular Activities

- Be very clear about the time commitment and the importance of meeting practice goals.
- For sports kids, I counsel them that one sport can work, two sports is usually too many and they should probably not join the team (unless their sports coaches are willing to share them).
- In my experience, fall sports work best, winter sports are more difficult, spring sports are very, very difficult because it is Sci-Oly competition season (regionals & state)
- Simply encourage kids to choose to do what they are passionate about whether it is dance, soccer, or Sci-Oly.

Team Goal Setting

- What do we want from this season?
- Google Forms to collect feedback.
- Follow-up with a student meeting to look at the data and candidly discuss potential goals.
- Vote on team goals.
- Open conversation about how often we need to practice and what the practices need to look like to achieve the goals.

Team Practice Expectations

- Follow all safety procedures.
- Do not waste materials.
- Be where you are supposed to be.
- Be productive. (No cell phones – at all – ever.) (Not even for “study” music)
- Clean up after yourself.
- Students vote on expectations like: mandatory minimum practice hours, cell phone usage

Share Potential Consequences

- Share (in advance) your consequences for not meeting team expectations
- Call home and be picked up early from a practice?
- Temporary suspension from practice?
- Removal from team?

Have Some Fun

- Building community and relationships can be a game changer.
- Game Night
- Induction Ceremony
- Movie Night
- Lock-In
- Invitational Competitions

Team Funding

- Collect activity fee from students to cover team registration (\$20 each)
- Amazon wish lists to parents
- Ask for specific items for a particular event – not “general” funding
- Draft a line item team budget and share it with your admin. Make sure to show what families are expected to pay for: t-shirt?, travel?, activity fee?

Communicating With Everyone

- Remind App
- LMS System or Team Website
- Post season calendar that includes practices and competitions
- The students have traditionally created an Instagram account to share information and ask questions (I am aware of it – but do not manage it.)

Getting the Event Rules

- <https://store.soinc.org/us/page/Welcome> (National Official Manuals)
- <https://www.sciencenc.com/resources/> (NC only Rules)
- Download and post on your team website / LMS so they are easy to get to.
- Make several hard copies (bound in a three prong folder) for your team library.

Reading the Rules

- Spend some time early on reading the rules yourself – and with kids.
- Carry a copy around with you at practice.
- Ask kids to work together to summarize the rules (Elevator speech?)
- Ask kids to write improved short event descriptions for their events. (Save them and share them.)

Tournament Schedules

- <https://www.sciencenc.com/tournaments/middle-high/>
- Four “periods” on competition day for “academic” events – including walk-in building events.

Getting Kids Into Events

- Give kids a bit of time to explore the events and find what they are passionate about.
- Ask experienced kids to use the rules to write “better” event short descriptions
- Ask kids to fill out an event preference form
- Coach writes a schedule.
- Kids usually get some of what they want and some of what the team needs.
- The schedule is somewhat fluid. Kids may move around some based on their performance.

Basic Event Help

- <https://www.sciencenc.com/resources/> (North Carolina)
- <https://www.soinc.org/bc-events> (National)
- https://scioly.org/wiki/index.php/Main_Page (Wiki)
- <https://scioly.org/tests/> (Test Exchange)

Team Library

- Purchase some used books every year
- Textbooks from multiple levels can work (i.e. middle school, high school, & college)
- Helps allow students to be independent
- Free e-books can be used (Ex: CK12 & Annenberg)
- Google “pdf textbook chapter heredity” (or any other topic) (Lots of teachers post their e-textbook access on-line)

Getting Help From Adults

- Ask parents to help with small specific things – think about not asking for a big time commitment (initially)
- Devices are student-built. Suggest “over-helpful” parents build their own device simultaneously
- Ask your principal to offer staff comp time for working with students after school

In-House Competitions

- Kids on your team show up on a Saturday to compete against each other
- Helps you see who knows what – even with partners
- It is a good time to check kid's binders for evidence of their learning
- Really helps kids with short-term goal setting
- I use whatever test I can find on-line that is appropriate (Not always a Sci-Oly" test

Competition Safety

- Set the stage and largely turn team operations over to parents.
- Students are never alone. (Buddy System)
- Adults are never alone with children who are not their own.
- Chaperones escort middle school students to and from events.
- Every student gets a schedule, chaperones also get a cell phone list of all other chaperones (Collect using Google Forms)

Invitational Competitions

- Practice competition ran by another school – not NCSO. (Field Trip!)
- Traveling and competing brings the kids together. (Imagine a basketball team that practiced for months and played one time.)
- B Division – O’Neal School Invitational –December 8th –
<https://www.onealschool.org/page/science-olympiad>
- Other Invitationals - <https://scioly.org/forums/viewforum.php?f=294>