



Official Program Manual

Nov. 2019

Cross-Training for Young Minds

Table of Contents

Cross-Training for Young Minds	1
The Real Product: Personal Growth	1
Mission, Vision, & Values	2
General Rules	2
Team Composition & Rules for Alternates	3
Student Responsibilities	4-5
What a Team Brings to a Meet	6
Role of the Head Coach	7
Rules for All Coaches	8-9
The Events:	
Mind Sprints	10-11
<i>Face-Off!</i>	12-15
P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box	16-19
Backdrop Holder Construction	20
Hosting a Meet	21
The Host/Facilitator Kit	22
Host/Facilitator Checklist	23
Meet Format	24
Starting a Meet	25
Meet Schedule & Modifications	26
Scoring a Meet	27-29
Tournament Eligibility & Tie Breaker Rules	30
Discipline as a Teaching Tool	31
How Are Penalties Assessed?	32-33
Awards	34
Important Information	35
Interested in Hosting an Invitational Meet?	36
Notes	37-39

Cross-Training for Young Minds

US Academic Triathlon (USAT) is a creative thinking skills program and competition that teaches and rewards ingenuity. Through our challenges, we encourage divergent thought processes, cooperative brainstorming, leadership, intelligence in all forms, and a flare for the dramatic in an entertaining, user-friendly format for students and adults. Teams of five students in grades 5-8 must display good sportsmanship, teamwork, and positive risk-taking, and exhibit the outcomes of their creativity.

Each USAT Meet consists of three events worth 100 points each:

1. P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box – An open-ended question leads to a team performance challenge and solution.
2. Mind Sprints – Three short-term (10-minute) problems challenge teams verbally, logically, and spatially.
3. *Face-Off!* – Oral and written questions comprise this academic and concrete factual recall and deductive reasoning round.

Complete details about each event can be found starting on page 10.

The Real Product: Personal Growth

USAT is an activity for students. It is not a chance for one coach to outdistance another, for an adult facilitator to baffle youth, for teams to tout triumph over others. The final, lasting experience of USAT is to overcome not the people, but the problems.

Teams grow to realize that:

1. Each idea is only one of many that occurs to the human mind
2. Each student brings to the team individual strengths that can be built upon
3. Flexibility opens doors to new possibilities
4. Positive risk-taking in an atmosphere of acceptance yields experiential learning and great memories
5. Students are able to handle the curves that life throws them – especially if they approach each problem with a sense of humor and a sense of their own self worth

As students learn and grow during the season, Triathletes will come to realize that AT really stands for “Able Thinkers.”

Mission, Vision, & Values

Mission:

To nurture creativity, positive risk-taking, and divergent thinking applicable to real-world problem-solving skills in an educational, enriching, and hands-on learning environment.

Vision/Values:

Build essential skills that lead to well-rounded and successful students, including:

1. Productive social skills in a team situation
2. Attention to detail and following instructions
3. Application of creativity while gaining practical experience

General Rules

Teams must register in advance to compete in USAT. Schools or programs must pay a per-team fee that covers three Round Robin (scrimmage) Meets and a Regional Meet, for a guaranteed four Meets per season. Winning teams at Regionals advance to the State Meet. The season fee also covers record-keeping, electronic updates, scheduling of the Meets, master copies of Meet challenges, and practice materials. Additional teams in the same building or district receive materials from their designated head coach. The teams' information all goes to the Head Coach, who must disseminate the information among buildings and coaches.

Teams must register properly in one of two divisions: Challengers, whose most senior members are enrolled in sixth grade; and Cross-Trainers, whose oldest members are currently in eighth grade.

Head Coaches that work for several schools are strongly advised to register under their district name. Teams may also consist of students from different districts - they are registered as community teams, often with parents as coaches rather than teachers. However, each registered team must be willing and able to host at least one Meet, and this may prove difficult for community teams without a home district. Contact the national office to discuss this registration option.

Team Composition & Rules for Alternates

1. Teams are made up of no more than seven students (up to five competing at a time and up to two alternates).
2. A maximum of five students are allowed to compete at each Meet. These need not be the same five students each Meet. Teams can compete with fewer than five students.
3. Teams in either division may be homogenous or mixed grades. Teams may be comprised of only boys or only girls, but a better blend of talents and interests may exist in mixed teams.
4. Alternates are allowed to attend Meets even if they don't compete. They should sign in with their teams and wear a name tag with the team's letter designation. Alternates may shadow a team from another district in order to watch events, but they may not shadow their own team or offer any assistance to the team they are observing. Alternates are not allowed to talk to their own team or discuss the contents of the Meet until after the P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box performances are complete. Alternates must attend and observe the entire Meet.
5. Each team must provide at least one coach or volunteer familiar with the Program Manual to assist as a Facilitator during every Meet. See rule 7 in "Rules For All Coaches" on page 8. Two trained coaches/volunteers are needed from teams advancing to State. State volunteers must be familiar with the Program Manual and have helped at a regular Meet or Regionals.
6. In order to be eligible to compete in the Regional Meet, all participating team members must have competed in (not just observed) at least one Round Robin Meet.
7. The winning Regional Meet team must advance intact to the State Meet. Alternates can only be substituted if they attended and observed the Regional Meet by shadowing another team. Substitutions must be verified in advance by the national office and may be made only if the regular team member is unable to attend.
8. If an advancing team does not have alternates, they may participate with available team members, even if that means it is a smaller team.
9. Alternates may shadow their own team at State. They are not allowed to talk to their team at any point during State until after P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box presentations. If they do, the team is subject to penalty.
10. If a team is unable to attend the State Meet, the second-place team advances.

Student Responsibilities

All team members must exhibit good sportsmanship and respect for all facilities and people before, during, and after each Meet. Teams who exhibit unsportsmanlike conduct of any kind are subject to loss of points and possible disqualification for serious infractions.

1. All team members, including alternates, must wear a name tag and a competition letter (provided at Meet registration) above the waist and easily be seen and read by Facilitators and participants. This is to identify student participants of the Meet and differentiate them from visitors/other students not participating in the Meet.
2. All team members must keep problems and questions secret until the end of the Meet. If any student is found to be sharing questions or other information with members of other teams, their coaches, or volunteers before the end of a Meet, the student's entire team will be disqualified and may be subject to further censure.
3. Theater etiquette during P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box presentations is expected, and that means full, silent attention during performances. No derogatory comments or other inappropriate behavior will be tolerated, as watching other teams' P.A.R.T.Y. presentations is a privilege. It is appropriate - and appreciated - for students to laugh, clap, and enjoy other teams' presentations. Additionally, students and coaches may not talk to or approach P.A.R.T.Y. judges regarding scoring questions. Student feedback should be limited to general and impersonal helpful hints and compliments.
4. Teams must adhere to the schedule. If a team arrives after a Meet starts, it will be allotted only the remaining time allowed. If a late team prevents another team from having the full time allotted, the late team will be subject to an unsportsmanlike conduct penalty (see page 31 for details).
5. Students may not bring anything into an event room, except the team's Competition Kit as it is specifically described in the Program Manual. If a student requires any special equipment for health or mobility reasons, it must be checked in at the registration desk prior to a Meet. Students will not be allowed to have a smart device of any kind (i.e. phone, watch, tablet, etc.) on their person during a Meet. Any smart devices must be left in the student's backpack or with their coach during a Meet. Failure to abide by this rule may be subject to penalties or disqualification (especially if a smart device is used during an event). If a Facilitator sees a student using a smart device, even during passing time, it will be confiscated for the duration of the Meet and may cause the team's disqualification.

6. Teams must use appropriate language, humor, music, and gestures during Meets (no racism, sexism, profanity, etc.). If a team member offers an inappropriate response, a Facilitator will: a) ask for a more appropriate response; b) assess a penalty; or c) disqualify a team/member from a round or an entire Meet. If a student wonders whether something is an appropriate response, it is better to find a substitute answer just to be safe.

7. Students whose temporary or permanent physical impairment may prevent or hamper them from following physical instructions during a Meet must inform their coach at least one week prior to the upcoming Meet (when possible) so the coach can determine necessary accommodations and inform/coordinate with the upcoming Meet's Host/Facilitator.

8. Students must be aware of the meaning of these Caution Comments:

a. **Louder** - A student should repeat the answer, enunciating for the sake of the Facilitator.

b. **Clarify** - A student must explain why an answer is pertinent to the question. (If the student says "Make a boat" as a use for the flyswatter, it may be necessary for the student to say, "Use the handle as a raft," so that the judge can score it.)

c. **Inappropriate** - A student is being given a chance to change a socially unacceptable or non sequitur answer, with or without loss of points, depending upon intent.

d. **Repeat** - A student has given a duplicate answer and must come up with another response.

What a Team Brings to a Meet:

Box, Kit, & Assigned Items

Each team must bring a 10-ream printer paper-type cardboard box with lid, a Competition Kit in its own separate container, and its assigned P.A.R.T.Y. contributions to each Meet. P.A.R.T.Y. item assignments are included on the season competition schedule. The lidded P.A.R.T.Y. box and materials go to the registration table upon arrival, so boxes and items can be reapportioned equally to all teams. Teams don't necessarily get their own box back; but this shouldn't matter, since all boxes should be similar and in good condition, without special markings, holes, etc. The boxes become part of P.A.R.T.Y. materials and may be altered or destroyed in the course of preparing for the skit.

The Competition Kit, labeled with the team's number, is carried by the team to all three events, and must include only the following:

- ✓ One 8-marker set of standard-color, wide-tip markers, or bingo daubers in red, blue, orange, yellow, black, purple, brown, and green
- ✓ One five-pack of highlighter markers in a variety of colors
- ✓ Six pencils
- ✓ Two paperback dictionaries
- ✓ A 1/2-inch stack of scratch paper
- ✓ Two rolls each of masking tape and Scotch tape
- ✓ Two pairs of scissors
- ✓ Name tags of any size to which the team letter may be attached. (Stick-on, pin-on, or on-a-string tags, etc., are all okay.) Teams are strongly encouraged to make and decorate their own name tags and may wear team "jerseys" or other clothing provided that (limited to what would usually be worn during the school day). No hats, please.

NOTE: It is all right to refill colored bingo dabbers using any water-soluble temporary paint. It also is all right to make bingo dabbers from foam topped bottles such as those used in offices to moisten envelopes.

Competition Kit items may be used during P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box preparation, but not during the show itself unless otherwise specified. If a team wonders whether it is okay to use any Competition Kit item during a P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box show performance in any certain way, they may use this guideline: If the item has been provided in exactly the same form to every team, it may be used in the show. If it came with them in their Competition Kit or was brought from their school for their use exclusively, it may not become part of their solution.

Using Competition Kit tape to affix a backdrop to the backdrop holder is fine and is not use of outside materials. The large cardboard box and its lid need not be intact.

Role of the Head Coach

Head Coaches work with USAT staff at the national office to ensure that the program is run with fair play, civility, and good sportsmanship as its hallmarks.

Head Coaches have special responsibilities. They must:

1. Provide accurate and complete registration and fees for teams under his or her umbrella application for membership.
2. Maintain the telephone number, e-mail address, and street address list of competing teams for contact purposes.
3. Receive and maintain security of questions for Meets.
4. Disseminate all relevant program information to team coaches. Manuals are downloadable as soon as a team registers; other pertinent information is distributed electronically.
5. Communicate with the national office if questions arise within the district's program.
6. Facilitate team coaches' training to make sure every team has a volunteer/coach, at least 16 years of age, at each Meet familiar with the Program Manual.
7. Provide leadership with regard to good sportsmanship, practice aids, transportation, Meet times, and facility use permits.
8. Handle publicity and act as an information contact within the district. Head Coaches must get permission to use students' photos, if published.
9. Hold continuing coaches' training roundtables, as appropriate.
10. Supply street addresses of schools that are to host Meets. (Meets cannot be mailed to post office boxes, so Head Coaches must make certain that USAT has a valid street address to which Meets may be shipped.)
11. Be familiar with district policies regarding student participation.

Rules For All Coaches

1. Coaches must agree to abide by the rules and spirit of USAT, to conduct themselves according to their state's High School League rules, and to host a Meet. Coaches/volunteer Facilitators must be at least 16 years old.
2. Coaches must run Meets as prescribed by the program manual. In the event that a coach intentionally does not follow this format, her or his team or the coaches may be disqualified for the remainder of the season.
3. Copyright laws must be respected. No alterations to Program Manual rules or the challenges themselves are allowed without prior written authorization from the national office. Meet forms may be downloaded and photocopied by coaches during any year in which dues have been paid. Other materials, such as used Meet challenges, may be reused in the district classrooms that year.
4. Coaches must refrain from assisting their teams during a Meet. This includes prep times as well as when answers are being given. From registration until after all P.A.R.T.Y.s have been judged, no adult should confer privately with team members. A neutral Facilitator should be present in special cases, and the Host/Facilitator should be informed.
5. Coaches must set high standards of sportsmanship and fairness during and surrounding competitions.
6. Coaches must reward good ideas and positive attitudes as they see them displayed by students of all participating schools. Use the Mary Ann Berdan and Peggy L. Sheldon awards for this purpose (see page 34).
7. Coaches must serve as Facilitators during Meets or provide a prepared substitute in their place if they are unable to attend. "Prepared" means familiar enough with the rules of USAT to serve as a judge/Facilitator at a Meet. As a professional courtesy, Head Coaches and team coaches will make sure that all volunteers have a good, basic working knowledge of USAT to ensure the integrity of Meets.
8. Facilitators must let a team member finish giving a response if a verbal answer has been started before time is called. They must respect student competitors' rights to compete in an atmosphere of acceptance.
9. Coaches must exercise good judgment in serving as Facilitators for Meets. This includes the occasional hard decision regarding the levying of penalties on their own or another team (see pages 31-33). Issuing a warning is often recommended, though not required, before assessing a penalty.

10. Coaches need to make sure their teams are familiar with the use of Caution Comments:

- a. **Louder** - A student should repeat the answer, enunciating for the sake of the Facilitator.
- b. **Clarify** - A student must explain why an answer is pertinent to the question. (If the student says “Make a boat” as a use for the flyswatter, it may be necessary for the student to say, “Use the handle as a raft,” so that the judge can score it.)
- c. **Inappropriate** - A student is being given a chance to change a socially unacceptable or non sequitur answer, with or without loss of points, depending upon intent.
- d. **Repeat** - A student has given a duplicate answer and must come up with another response.

As each team is required to be willing to host at least one Meet per season, the coach of the hosting team (or the Head Coach) becomes the Host/Facilitator of that Meet. Schedules and hosting assignments are determined by the national office. Each Host/Facilitator (H/F) must learn to handle site set-up, running a Meet, and scoring a Meet. Checklists are provided to make running an AT Meet easy (see page 23). Coaches who have any questions about Meet rules not covered by the Program Manual may contact the national office.

Mind Sprint Rules

Mind Sprints take quick, critical, and divergent thinking skills; group cooperation; and leadership.

Each Mind Sprint comes in its own envelope. The Host/Facilitator can easily assign Facilitators to tournament duties by passing out event-specific envelopes as coaches sign in. The instructions and Score Sheets for each Mind Sprint are explicit. Each assigned Facilitator sets up their assigned Mind Sprint while using the “Quick Set-Up” instructions as students complete the written *Face-Off!* round. Mind Sprints are judged by stated, objective criteria. One to two Facilitators run each Mind Sprint event and are expected to set up and run Mind Sprint rooms, decide how to do the problem fairly and consistently throughout a Meet, and keep scores. Facilitators must preview the problem during set-up time.

Teams rotate among three Mind Sprint rooms during one of their scheduled Tris. Mind Sprints last 10 minutes. If a time is not specified in the directions, then run the activity until 10 minutes have lapsed from the time a team entered the room.

Mind Sprint Facilitators must:

- ✓ Identify the team as the correct one as they enter.
- ✓ Time accurately.
- ✓ Score consistently.
- ✓ Score each team in its proper Score Sheet row.
- ✓ Be familiar with how to use Caution Comments.
- ✓ If there are multiple values for different parts of a Mind Sprint, multiply before adding, to get an accurate weighted score, if there are multiple values for different parts of a Mind Sprint.
- ✓ Give the Score Sheet to the Host/Facilitator before P.A.R.T.Y. presentations. Discuss with the H/F any questions or penalties that arise.
- ✓ Keep an eye on the objective of the exercise: To help students practice flexible thinking.
- ✓ Take note of individuals or teams that display exceptional creativity or teamwork, as they may earn Mary Ann Berdan Creativity Awards or Peggy L. Sheldon Teamwork Awards.

Any questions or concerns arising in the mind of the Facilitator should be discussed with the H/F prior to running the problem. The “Objective” section also helps explain the educational rationale behind the exercise, as Mind Sprints may vary greatly from Meet to Meet. Some samples are included on the USAT website.

It is really important that Facilitators conduct each Mind Sprint the same way for all participating teams. It is much less important that a question/challenge be done exactly the same way at different locations, since these variables won't affect

team standings nearly to the extent that changing a challenge “midstream” could. During the Meet, each Facilitator will be faced with challenging his/her own team. Students should be cautioned that they must not ask for any special treatment or assistance because they are “special” to the Facilitator. This is an excellent time for coaches to show that “fair play” is an important part of USAT or any competitive activity. Yes, students are watching you.

Facilitators should remind students not to discuss Mind Sprints after they leave the room. Facilitators should not give teams their raw scores.

The US Academic Triathlon staff tries to make Mind Sprint questions open-ended, but this also invites wide interpretation of how a challenge might be conducted. USAT recognizes and appreciates that running a Mind Sprint room takes a well-prepared Facilitator who is a flexible thinker.

Mind Sprints Facilitators may rest assured that if they found a method to consistently score their own event, they’ve done well. Do not feel pressure to inflate scores or give hints to make sure that students feel as though they have succeeded, as any single Mind Sprint is only a small percentage of the points they may garner for the round, and especially in the Meet overall. In fact, it is possible for a team to earn no points in one room and still win a Meet.

Facilitators are cautioned to stay on schedule, to time accurately, and to score consistently. For example, suppose that a Mind Sprint is a verbal challenge: “Name as many things as you can that are green and fuzzy.” The set-up rules tell the Facilitator that concrete or “literal” responses get one point (e.g., “a tennis ball”) while unusual, creative responses get two points (e.g., “A rotten carrot”). If the “rotten carrot” comes up in round after round, it should still be scored as a creative response, even though the Facilitator may be feeling that it’s not such a creative answer anymore, having heard it so often.

Facilitators may have to read a problem that the team solves individually, member by member. Teammates are not allowed to offer assistance to one another, except as rules state, but are always allowed to encourage their teammates.

If a Facilitator feels that a Mind Sprint challenge is too hard to conduct alone, s/he may request a helper. The H/F will assign a second person to help, asking a different volunteer to travel between two P.A.R.T.Y. prep rooms. The same Facilitator must conduct the same Mind Sprint all teams, if at all possible.

The sample challenges, found online, are typical Mind Sprint problems. They are in the form given to Facilitators and will be in envelopes with necessary materials for administering and scoring the problems. If special cards or game pieces are needed, enough items are supplied for all teams scheduled at a Meet.

Face-Off! Rules

Teams compete for points in this event by answering questions in five general areas:

Science & Health (questions ending with numbers 1, 6)

English Usage & Literature (questions ending with numbers 2, 7)

Math & Music Theory (questions ending with numbers 3, 8)

Social Studies & Culture (questions ending with 4, 9)

Current Events & Consumerism (questions ending with 0, 5)

A written *Face-Off!* round is administered by the *Face-Off!* Facilitator to begin Challenger and Cross-Trainer Meets. Exactly at the appointed time, each team gets one copy of 15 questions and works on answers together for eight minutes. This round enables less aggressive teams to answer every question without buzzing in first. The written score on this round is added to the verbal *Face-Off!* Tri raw score. Answers must be legible, complete, and spelled correctly to receive credit. No additional scratch paper is allowed for this round. However, they are allowed to use their Competition Kit dictionaries.

Each oral *Face-Off!* round consists of 40 questions. Five alternate questions are provided in case of accidental misreading, ambiguous or outdated answer, and so on. The Facilitator is assisted by a scorer/timer. At the beginning of each Tri, the Facilitator makes sure that the correct teams are competing, and s/he asks the team's captain to be identified, as the captain or his/her designee must answer for the team each time. Buzzer strips should be tested before each round starts, to make sure they're working.

Face-Off! questions are written in order, so that teams will not only know the subject matter in advance, but so that Triathletes will be assured of myriad, balanced topics during their rounds.

Buzzer-Run Oral *Face-Off!* Rules

Teams sit at tables with buzzer strips (attached to the operating box) in front of them. They may have paper and pencils. The Facilitator begins reading question No. 1, and stops if a team hits the slap tape, causing the computer to buzz. The computer operator calls upon the team that has buzzed in, and timing starts.

The team has 15 seconds to confer and offer its answer. Only a team's first response is considered. The team captain may designate another team member to give an individual response if s/he wishes. The team must answer BEFORE

TIME RUNS OUT. If 15 seconds elapse without an answer, and no other team has buzzed in, teams may request that the question be read again from the beginning for the remaining teams.

If, however, a second team has buzzed in, the computer operator calls upon and starts timing the second team. If they don't give a correct answer, and the third team has hit its slap tape, the computer gives that team 15 seconds to give its response. The H/F will make sure that each answer in the oral *Face-Off!* is worth five points. (There is no penalty in *Face-Off!* for giving a wrong answer.)

NOTE: If a team buzzes in before a question is completed, the reader **MUST** stop reading. If a reader accidentally finishes a question, s/he may use one of five alternate questions provided.

Both reader and computer operator may wish to keep score as a crosscheck. The reader is the final arbiter of disputes regarding correctness of answers, and the scorer is the person who decides whether a team has answered in the allowed time. The reader may disallow an answer due to mispronunciation, ambiguity, or other similar reason.

If a team has begun its answer before time runs out, they may be allowed to finish - provided, of course, that the team captain has said more than something such as, "Umm...well...."

If no team buzzes in, the reader may declare "time," give the proper answer, and go on to the next question. (A mental count of 10 is the usual amount of time the reader waits, if s/he sees lots of "blank" looks.)

If the Tri ends before all questions are used, the *Face-Off!* is over. If a question is being read when time ends, it may not be answered. If a team has been recognized and time ends, it may complete its answer; but if the team is wrong, each other team who has buzzed in may have its 15 seconds to answer.

No protests are allowed. The Facilitator's judgment is final. (Right or wrong, they're still the umpire.)

Alternate Timing & Scoring

During power outages, creative Facilitators have used everything from staplers to empty apple cider jugs plus foot-long rulers as items that students can tap to "ring in" to give *Face-Off!* answers. Another coach used a calculator, assigned each team a number, and had the team captain hit the assigned number to register the right to answer. The same could be done with a computer, word processing program, and assigning a different letter to each team. All of these

coaches were trying to make a fair oral *Face-Off!* situation, and the students were very grateful for their efforts! All coaches present must accept any alternative method used for the Meet result to be official.

Call or email the national office for other ways to run *Face-Off!* manually. It is all right to use lock-out buzzer systems, but the rules must still be enforced. A stopwatch and a manual scorecard may be necessary in such cases.

The 15-second allowance and scorekeeping must be done manually by the person helping the reader. Since two people usually are assigned to run the *Face-Off!* room, staffing needs still may be easily met.

NOTE: If two teams, instead of three, compete in *Face-Off!* at a Meet which also has three-team *Face-Off!* rounds, all 40 questions are used as the scored portion of the two-team *Face-Off!* in that round; but their scores are multiplied by 0.67. (H/Fs round up or down on the scoring spreadsheet when tallying scores.)

- ✓ Have leftover questions? The rest of the questions are done by the teams “just for fun” as remaining time permits.
- ✓ Have leftover time? Ask students to write *Face-Off!* questions, then use them on the P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box audience while final Meet scores are being tabulated.
- ✓ Above all, do not let them discuss questions and answers from Mind Sprints or the P.A.R.T.Y. scenario while waiting until the next Tri begins.

Face-Off! Facilitators tips:

- ✓ The *Face-Off!* Facilitator must start the Meet on time, while the scorer/timer checks on the buzzer system.
- ✓ It's most convenient if announcements, written, and oral *Face-Off!* all take place in the same room, or near one another.

NOTE: The reader must stop reading if a team buzzes in, or a captain offers an answer before being called upon. If the answer is not correct, the reader reads the question FROM THE BEGINNING for all remaining teams, or until another team buzzes or offers an answer. A team that has buzzed in may not have a question reread.

- ✓ Try to be fair about “false” buzzes. Sometimes a buzz is reported by a computer strip that nobody touched. Then it's time to say, “Let's ignore that.”
- ✓ During math questions, students might not ring in until they feel they're within 15 seconds of answering.
- ✓ If you need to use the paper Scoreboard (found in the “Forms & Aids” packet or online at usacademictriathlon.com), manually multiply the oral round's raw score by 5 before adding it to the written round raw score.

The *Face-Off!* buzzer strip system is produced by the Media Department at the Lakes Country Service Co-op. Order the computerized buzzer strip system used for *Face-Off!* by contacting:

Media Department at the Lakes Country Service Co-op.
1001 E. Mt. Faith
Fergus Falls, MN 56537
800.739.3273

lcsc.org/Domain/47

(Click the link for “Knowledge Bowl Equipment Order Form”)

NOTE: An alternate, inexpensive lock-out buzzer system, which may be appropriately operated with additional stopwatch and other scoring materials, is Eggspert, available from www.educationalinsights.com. However, using Eggspert may require an extra facilitator to help score or time during *Face-Off!*

P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box Rules

“Planning, Assembly, and Re-Enactment Theater is Yours—in a Box!”

This round appeals to the creatively adventuresome - and those who like to “ham it up.” When each team enters a P.A.R.T.Y. prep room, they receive a cardboard box containing one set of materials, which may range from plastic cups and cardboard to a grocery sack and some cotton balls, as well as the one-page P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box challenge itself.

By brainstorming, dividing the work, and composing dialog as they go, teams develop a skit or other presentation to solve the challenge. Each team has one Tri during which to decide how to address the challenge or skit prompt given to them. Teams are given paper to use at least part of for a backdrop. One team might choose to draw a comic strip on the 10 feet of white paper provided, while another team uses the same paper to make costumes and writes their rationale in rap or poetic iambic pentameter. Point values are listed on the problem so that the savvy team concentrates on issues that will earn strong scores.

In such scenarios, teams may earn points for building a structure or apparatus. By carefully reading these guidelines, cooperating, and drawing upon their talents and strengths, students can plan an effective, high-scoring presentation. There is a penalty of five points for each team member who does not appear in the presentation.

When their prep time is over, teams leave their presentation box in the staging area or in the prep room depending on the instructions given by the room Facilitator. (This is at the discretion of the Host/Facilitator, who makes the decision based on room availability, distance to the staging area, etc.)

At the end of all three Tris, all of the teams meet at an assigned location to view the presentations. Facilitators will act as the judging panel. Teams have up to five minutes to complete their presentations. One Facilitator acts as the timer. S/he holds up a yellow folder as a warning to indicate when 30 seconds are left, so that a team may wrap up its presentation. At the end of the allowed performance time, the timer stands up, and teams must yield the “stage” or risk an overtime penalty.

The “stage” for Challengers and Cross-Trainers can be any designated area, often in front of the backdrop holder. It does not need to be raised or contain any special lights. It must be at least 8' x 10' feet in area.

At Round Robins, students may be asked to evaluate other teams' P.A.R.T.Y.s, too. During this process, teams learn how hard it is to be a judge, to remain objective, and to see a P.A.R.T.Y. from another viewpoint. Students gain a greater appreciation of other teams' ideas, too.

Teams must observe good theater etiquette during performances and could lose points for inappropriate behavior or language, failure to clean up the performance area, and so forth. Good theater etiquette includes being quiet and attentive during other teams' presentations.

The H/F provides Score Sheets to Facilitators of teams A, B, and C, who become judges at the time that everyone assembles to view the presentations. If any of the Facilitators A, B, or C decline, the next Facilitator in alphabetical order takes on the task. The next person, in order, becomes the timer. Judging Facilitators read the scenario before viewing the shows, using "Scoring Guidelines" printed on the back of their scenario copies to preview their task.

One Facilitator should serve as emcee and should read a scenario summary to audience members before teams begin. S/he may use the Sign-In Sheet to introduce each team by number and may indicate, for example, the number of students on the team that day. The same Facilitators must serve as judges for all of the teams. The H/F may wish to begin tabulating scores during presentations, and may ask another judge's help at this time.

The scores each team receives are added together following all the shows, then entered in the scoring spreadsheet. These three scores provide the basis for ordinal ranking of this event on the scoring spreadsheet.

P.A.R.T.Y. judging has been called "somewhat subjective," because not all pertinent items are quantifiable. How, then, can a judge - student or adult - be fair and consistent among teams?

Judges may wish to make notes or score during each team's P.A.R.T.Y. and clean-up time; but they need not finish scoring until all teams have presented. Scorers may use Team "A" as a yardstick for judging other shows, then go up or down for the others, as appropriate.

Taking these additional notes may help:

- ✓ Make a note of the P.A.R.T.Y. theme.
- ✓ Note who and what is outstanding about the P.A.R.T.Y.
- ✓ Note areas for improvement of the P.A.R.T.Y.
- ✓ What is above/below average about the P.A.R.T.Y.?
- ✓ Did you enjoy it? Learn from it?
- ✓ Were you moved by it - to action, to emotion? If "yes," reward that.

Most of all, remember that it isn't up to a judge to agree with students' conclusions in order to score a P.A.R.T.Y. performance highly; it is the function of the judge to listen and to evaluate the students' ability to communicate a position through a staged presentation.

Judges should tabulate the raw scores, without including adjustments for penalties, on their Score Sheets before giving them to the H/F at the conclusion of the shows. P.A.R.T.Y. penalties are suggested by the judging group or individual, but only the H/F actually levies the penalty, since someone has to decide how severely a team should be penalized. Judges should never be asked to surrender their Score Sheets until they have seen all of the solutions. They may adjust their scoring of all teams between presentations.

Students are responsible for a careful reading of the rules and, in general, if it doesn't say they can't, do it. For example, it doesn't say that they may not use the paper box in their show, so they may. Facilitators should not answer such questions, but tell the students that they must decide such matters for themselves. This ensures consistency among prep rooms, and signals students that they should look only to themselves for a solution to the P.A.R.T.Y. challenge.

As with other penalties, a "Discipline and Consequences" form may be used; or the Score Sheet citing the infraction must be returned, with explanation, to the team. A five-point penalty for "Outside Use of Materials" because a student used his belt as a blindfold certainly is less severe than an infraction for students intentionally refusing to clean up a messy and misused P.A.R.T.Y. prep room.

At the first Meet of the season, a H/F might decide to only issue a warning to all students that, in upcoming Meets, would be seen as a rules infraction. It isn't necessary for all judges to agree that an infraction occurred for a penalty to be received. And the penalty points only should be subtracted on one Score Sheet, depending upon the severity of the infraction.

While this may put extra onus on the H/F to make a tough call, this reflects the trust factor basic to USAT, that Facilitators always will focus on learning, rather than on any Pyrrhic victory that might be accomplished through score manipulation. A H/F may wish to try for a consensus among judges, showing students that the process is as important as the product.

NOTE: Coaches can help their students build empathy in order for a team to produce a mature evaluation of other teams' work. Students need to practice positive assertiveness. In fact, it's a good Mind Sprint. Have the team write 15 negative comments, such as "Your costumes were dull," and have the students restate them as positive or constructive comments: "Adding color might make your costumes stand out more" is a positive way to help a team understand what to change to improve skit planning.

The Meet schedule indicates what teams must bring for the P.A.R.T.Y. segment of each Meet. Bring enough of the assigned items for each team in the Meet:

- W 10 ft. of white paper (at least 3 ft. wide) and an 8-page newspaper section per team
- B 1 brown paper grocery bag, 1 empty plastic 2-liter or 1-gallon milk jug (cleaned), and 3 paper clips per team
- M 5 ft. of aluminum foil and 3 (10-in.) colored paper plates per team
- P 2 plastic garbage bags and 2 colored plastic cups per team
- S 6 ft. strip of colored yarn, garland, or streamers per team
- C 3 sheets construction paper, 4 drinking straws, and an inexpensive bright item of choice per team
- R 1 or 2 sizable safe, cheap, shiny items of choice per team

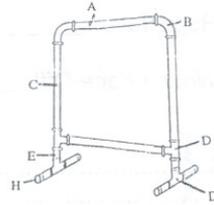
Directions for building the USAT backdrop holder are found on the next page.



Backdrop Holder Construction Plans

Materials you need:

- 1 - 10-ft. length of 1.5 inch PVC pipe
- 1 - 12-ft. length of 1.5 inch PVC pipe
- 2 - 90-degree PVC pipe elbows
- 4 - T-type PVC pipe joints
- 4 - PVC pipe end caps
- 1 - can PVC joint compound (glue)



Directions for Assembly:

1. Cut the 10-foot length of pipe into two 4.5-foot lengths [C]; and two 6-inch pieces [E]. Cut the 12-foot pipe into two 4-foot lengths [A], and four 1-foot lengths [G], as shown [Figure 1].

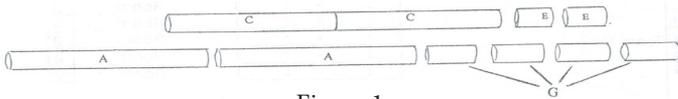


Figure 1

2. Glue the 90-degree elbows [B] to either end of a 4-foot length [Figure 2]. (The uprights [C] will not be glued to anything, so the frame will be easy to take apart and transport.) Piece A/B is the upper cross brace of the structure; A/D is the lower cross-brace.



Figure 2

3. Make the bases by gluing 1-foot pieces [G] into each end of the two T-type [D] joints. Glue caps [H] on the ends of the 1-foot extensions. Glue a 6-inch pipe [E] into the middle hole of T [Figure 3]. (This piece will be the linking extension that will slip into the lower end of the upright.)

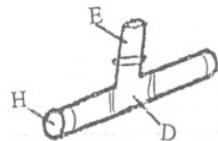


Figure 3

NOTE: To add stability during performances, please use duct tape or strapping tape to reinforce the joints that have not been glued. The backdrop holder should maintain its integrity during performances. Should the backdrop holder come apart during a P.A.R.T.Y. presentation, stop the timer, fix the holder, and then let the team resume its presentation without penalty.

Hosting a Meet

It's easy to host a USAT Meet, since it is delivered to a hosting school in self-contained units. A seven-point set-up checklist (page 23) for the hosting school helps walk the Host/Facilitator (H/F) through the procedure.

Meets using the same questions and materials are held on the same day to ensure security of questions. Each fall, dates are published in advance of the first Meet. Meets usually are held Fridays. One competition make-up date/snow date is included as part of the schedule. Should weather become a factor, follow state high school league rules regarding the cancellation and rescheduling of a Meet. Feel free to contact the national office for guidance.

Meets pit up to nine teams against each other. Teams' Meet locations for the season are set by the USAT national office in advance, so schools can schedule rooms, transportation, and volunteers.

Tips and Tricks:

- ✓ The Host/Facilitator manages the Meet.
- ✓ The *Face-Off!* Facilitator starts the Meet on time, because s/he hands out the written *Face-Off!* packet.
- ✓ Often Host/Facilitators ask one or two extra volunteers to attend the Meet to help the Meet start smoothly. H/F may use students, 16 years and older, as well as adults.
- ✓ It's extremely important to divide up P.A.R.T.Y. materials right away at a nine-team Meet, since three teams prep their P.A.R.T.Y. presentation during the first Tri.
- ✓ Good uses for the lull created by scoring time:
 - a. Discuss Written *Face-Off!* answers, and quiz the audience.
 - b. Ask teams to clear away debris and trash.
 - c. Discuss student scoring of the P.A.R.T.Y. shows, if used.
 - d. Share with the audience the Meet's challenges. (Each Facilitator could do one room.)
 - e. Talk about strategies used by teams in Mind Sprints.
 - f. Announce special awards, such as the Mary Ann Berdan Creativity Award and the Peggy L. Sheldon Teamwork Award.

Host/Facilitator Guidelines

These guidelines are to be used with the seven-point H/F Checklist, found on page 23. Meet material packets are sent to the hosting team's coach (or Head Coach) before each Meet. Each packet contains all of the following:

- ✓ *Face-Off!* questions - oral and written - appropriate for the grades included in the Meet; Facilitator's *Face-Off!* Score Sheet
- ✓ Facilitators' name tags
- ✓ Lettered stickers in sets of five for appropriate number of teams
- ✓ Mind Sprints challenges, materials, and Score Sheets for recording raw scores
- ✓ Team sign-in form
- ✓ P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box scenario, facilitator judging criteria, P.A.R.T.Y. Score Sheets for judges
- ✓ Ribbons for placement appropriate for the size of the Meets

All other necessary forms, such as the Meet schedules, can be found online at usacademictriathlon.com/forms.

NOTE: As a courtesy, please notify the Meet Host/Facilitators if your team is not able to attend a Meet. The Meet schedule is set by the Host/Facilitator, dependent on the number of teams scheduled.

Tips & Tricks:

- ✓ Meet materials will reach your school no later than the Tuesday of Meet week. Use the materials online at usacademictriathlon.com/forms to plan a well-run Meet.
- ✓ Kits become the property of the host school at the end of the Meet and may be reused for one year or thrown away.
- ✓ Kit items and this Program Manual are to be used with a regulation USAT backdrop holder (directions for building and setting up the backdrop holder are on page 20).
- ✓ Sign up to receive blog updates for Meet notes or rules clarifications. You'll receive an email from the national office alerting you to updates. Head Coaches must pass these on to their teams' coaches.
- ✓ Additional H/F aids are a stopwatch, pens or pencils, directional signs, bucket or box from which to draw teams' letters, photocopier to scan/duplicate, Score Sheets for coaches and self if mailing to the national office, letters on the wall under which teams may drop off their P.A.R.T.Y. box and items, computer, and scorekeeping spreadsheet (noted above).

Host/Facilitator Checklist

Before the Meet:

- 1. Reserve the following rooms:
 - a. 5 classrooms that have a 12' x 12' work area
 - b. 1 classroom containing 3 tables, computer, and buzzer system
 - c. 1 room containing 60 seats, a performance area 8' x 10', and large trash can
- 2. Review rules on hosting and scoring a Meet.
- 3. Fill in schedules with room numbers and times; make at least 20 copies. Call visiting coaches, if necessary, about exact Meet times and location. Host/Facilitators are to check with every visiting team's coach to make sure they know the exact starting time and location of the Meet.
NOTE: It is your responsibility to advise all teams and the national office if the time or place of the Meet changes. Remember, every school address has been provided to visiting schools.
- 4. Familiarize yourself with Meet questions, but keep them confidential. Inventory the supplies to be certain you have the right amount of materials for the size of Meet you're hosting. Only the Host/Facilitator may preview the Meet materials.

The Day of the Meet:

- 5. Set up registration area for sign-in; post room and directional signs, and put large letters on the wall where each team is to drop off their P.A.R.T.Y. materials.
- 6. Set up the backdrop holder in the performance area; secure joints with duct tape.
- 7. Set up the scoring spreadsheet, completely fill out the top of the Scoreboard, if necessary. Assemble materials such as calculator, stopwatch, pencils, etc.

At the End of the Meet:

- 1. Double-check the scoring spreadsheet/paper Scoreboard to make sure they coincides with the team Sign-In Sheet, including division, Meet location, Meet date, team membership numbers, etc.
- 2. Make copies of the final scoring spreadsheet printout/official Scoreboard, team Sign-In Sheet, and any "Discipline & Consequences" forms used. Send the Sign-In Sheet to the national office via email or mail. After Regionals, send both the Sign-In Sheet and final scores (either the scoring spreadsheet or Scoreboard).
- 3. (Optional) Send a news release and pictures to your local paper, including the names of the students, their coaches, and Meet results.

Meet Format

Meets consist of three 40-minute segments called “Tris” (which are pronounced “tries”). The Meet timetable, including starting time, is set at the discretion of the H/F, who may wish to check with attending coaches for a consensus of what is best for participating districts. Host schools have the right to adjust the Meet start time to the time of day that best serves their school, as they are aware of local scheduling factors.

This is a typical Meet format:

3:45-4:00 Team Registration and Facilitator Assignments
4:00-4:05 Announcements & P.A.R.T.Y. item sorting
4:05-4:15 Written *Face-Off!*
4:15-4:20 Passing Time
4:20-5:00 Tri #1
5:00-5:05 Passing Time
5:05-5:45 Tri #2
5:45-5:50 Passing Time
5:50-6:30 Tri #3
6:30-6:40 Passing Time
6:40 P.A.R.T.Y. presentations begin (Length of P.A.R.T.Y. presentation period depends on Meet size.)

Adding a 10-minute break after Tri #3 for snacks, bathrooms, and costume changes allows teams to assemble in costume before P.A.R.T.Y. presentations begin. The H/F may announce such information when the Meet starts.

If necessary, a Round Robin may be shortened to 30-minute Tris due to an emergency; however, it is not recommended as it puts stress on the facilitators and scorers.

If a team is unavoidably detained for any reason, Facilitators may allow the team to do the written *Face-Off!* after they’ve performed their P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box at the conclusion of a Meet (before official scoring results are tallied and posted). Facilitators may use scoring time to inform audience members about the events and challenges that the teams have faced that day: Read the Written *Face-Off!* questions and answers and share especially creative Mind Sprint solutions.

Starting a Meet

Each Meet is set up by the Host/Facilitator in the prescribed way listed in the “Host/Facilitator Checklist,” page 23. Teams and coaches/Facilitators must check in during a 15-minute registration period prior to the start of the Meet, or be disqualified. (This is at the H/F’s discretion, since extenuating circumstances may apply.) Facilitators sign in first, receive their assignment, and proceed to their area for set-up. They also drop off whatever their team is to provide for the P.A.R.T.Y., plus a lidded 10-ream printer paper-type cardboard box.

Team captains sign in all members in attendance, including alternates, and draw a letter designation for their name tags. These letters establish the order in which teams compete throughout the Meet. Teams prepare their name tags, receive a competition schedule, and mark or highlight their times and locations. Announcements follow.

While the *Face-Off!* facilitator administers an eight-minute written round, the H/F verifies that all competition sites are ready, directs teams to room locations, then declares the start of the Meet.

Each team moves quickly to the site of its first Tri. No other bells or breaks will be sounded. It is up to each team to continue moving in an orderly way throughout the Meet, with site help from the Host/Facilitator.

Part of team growth and maturity comes with learning to stick to the schedule. Facilitators should check with teams as they enter a site to verify that they are in the right place at the right time. These USAT events move fast. “Down time” is minimal to keep students busy and involved.

Facilitators should greet each new group and verify their identity and schedule. Facilitators should maintain a relaxed, fun atmosphere throughout the Meet, since this is the children’s competition. No grumpy grown-ups, please.

Facilitators for each room must maintain consistency throughout their segment of the Meet. For example, if a chair used in a Mind Sprint is sitting next to the board for the first team, it should be sitting next to the board for the next eight teams, as well. The Facilitator should recheck the room each time s/he gets ready to admit a competing team.

Meet events - especially Mind Sprints and P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box - may vary greatly from Meet to Meet, so Facilitators should be ready for any challenge. It is advisable for Facilitators to bring a stopwatch and a pencil or pen to each Meet. Students are not allowed to have smart devices (i.e. phones, watches, etc.) on their person during Meets, so the use of smart phones/smart watches to keep time is strongly discouraged.

Meet Schedules & Modifications

Meet schedules, found online at usacademictriathlon.com/forms, are intended for up to nine teams. Choosing the form based on the number of teams is the duty of the hosting school as well as informing visiting teams of any schedule change.

Schedules may need to be modified slightly, depending on the number of teams expected at a Meet. A nine-team Meet schedule works for seven, eight, or nine teams. For an eight-team Meet, cross out “Team I” events on the schedule; for seven-team Meets, cross out “Team F” and “Team I.”

A six-team Meet schedule works for three to six teams. For a five-team Meet, cross out “Team F” on the schedule; for three-team Meets, use only “A,” “B,” and “C.” Four teams? Cross out “Team C” and “Team F.”

Due to these modifications, one round may consist of only two teams doing *Face-Off!* For this round, use all 40 questions, multiply each raw score by two-thirds (0.67), round up or down, and record that as the team raw score. Teams use the same rules as for a regular *Face-Off!* and remain in the room for the full length of the round. If leftover time, it’s a teachable moment to ask students to write *Face-Off!* questions for one another. Share such “Q&A” work during P.A.R.T.Y. scoring.

At smaller Meets, an adequate number of Facilitators still will be on hand; but they may be administering more than one of the events. For example, if three teams compete, the teams and Facilitators are all in the *Face-Off!* room at the same time. Then they move to Mind Sprint rooms, rotating among the three facilitators’ areas during Tri #2. Finally, they may each go to a room and prepare for their P.A.R.T.Y.s. Each Facilitator would supervise and rotate among teams’ rooms every 10 to 15 minutes to remain objective, then all three would judge all P.A.R.T.Y. presentations.

During the Meet, raw scores are to be kept confidential by Facilitators, as scores are meaningless until they are ordinalized.

Scoring the Meet

Event Score Sheets come with each US Academic Triathlon Meet packet. These sheets are designed to be user-friendly and simple, to minimize the chances of computation error. Each event score is tabulated as a “raw score,” then ordinalized. Penalties are always assessed on the combined raw score for the event in or near where the infraction occurs. For more details, see page 32-33.

A downloadable Excel spreadsheet designed especially for scoring a USAT Meets can be found online. The spreadsheet must be downloaded as is with the same file name (ATSCORE97) in order to work. Enable Macros when the file is opened. The spreadsheet converts teams’ raw scores to ordinals automatically as the blanks are filled in. In order to make all three events of the triathlon equally weighted, event raw scores are ordinalized on the basis of 100 being the highest score possible in any event. At any size Meet, the team receiving the top raw score receives 100 points. Then, ordinalizing takes over. Team rankings decrease at 10-point intervals (100, 90, 80, 70, 60, 50, 40, 30, 20 points), regardless of Meet size. The spreadsheet does this automatically. No team ever gets a zero; ordinalized scoring gives credit for participating and positive risk-taking.

A copy of the Scoreboard can be found online at usacademictriathlon.com/forms and can be used if a computer isn’t available. Regional Scoreboards/final score spreadsheets must be filled out completely and sent to the national office. Round Robin scores do not. The Student Sign-In Form must be sent in after each Meet, and must include teams’ players’ names and team numbers (assigned by the national office at the beginning of each season).

Mind Sprints and *Face-Off!* Facilitators are to immediately deliver scores to the Host/Facilitator’s scoring area at the conclusion of the three Tris, before the beginning of the P.A.R.T.Y. presentations. Rankings from these events are prepared at this time. The scoring spreadsheet may be used to calculate scores, or it may be done manually.

Facilitators who intend to assess penalties arising out of the three Tris must explain the situation to the Host/Facilitator prior to P.A.R.T.Y. presentations. **ANY PENALTIES ASSESSED MUST BE MADE KNOWN AT THIS TIME.** Facilitators should, therefore, consult with Host/Facilitators when handing in their Score Sheets. These discussions should occur immediately and confidentially, and not be discussed after a penalty has been assessed.

A “Discipline & Consequences” form must be filled out for each assessed penalty. A copy of this form can be found online at usacademictriathlon.com/forms. Not all penalty forms result in loss of points. The assessed penalty should be subtracted from the event’s combined raw score.

If a Facilitator knows of a necessary penalty resulting from something that happened in a hallway, bathroom, or other common area, it should be brought to the attention of the H/F as discretely, confidentially, and quickly as is convenient after the infraction occurs. If a point deduction is to be made, it should come from the Facilitator's event raw score, or from the event raw score closest to the infraction. This is the H/F's call. Improper Facilitator conduct also should be dealt with as needed and at the H/F's discretion.

No penalty points may be assessed unless either:

1. A signed Discipline and Consequences form is used
2. One of five standard, prescribed P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box penalties is clearly assessed and delineated by the H/F. This teaches respect for rules and promotes fairness and social order. It also clarifies misunderstandings and lends closure to any problems.

Rooms should be left in good condition, and any items used for the Meets should be removed before P.A.R.T.Y. presentations begin. All Facilitators should report to the P.A.R.T.Y. room at this time to become judges and timers or to help with scoring, if designated by the Host/Facilitator.

At the conclusion of P.A.R.T.Y. presentations, judges' scores are tabulated and added to the Scoreboard or spreadsheet. Then grand totals are calculated. All discipline and consequences issues must be dealt with before scores go out.

The Meet concludes with the announcement of the top grand total scores. Copies of the Scoreboard then should be available for teams/coaches who wants to check individual scores. Raw Score Sheets and answers to questions should be available for teams/coaches at this time, as well. (You may wish to make an extra copy of the Scoreboard or final spreadsheet, fill it out, and cut it into strips so each team gets its own results.)

Regional Meet scores are reported to the national office by mail or email at the conclusion of the Meet. By mail, simply photocopy the Scoreboard or print the final spreadsheet, and include the identity of each team by name or registration number, as well as its "letter" designation. Mail hard copies or email scanned scores, along with any Discipline & Consequences forms and Sign-In Sheets.

After every Meet, send to the national office (via mail or email):

1. Team Sign-In Sheet
2. Copy of Discipline & Consequences form(s), if used

After Regionals Meets, send (via mail or email) the above along with:

1. Meet Scoreboard/final score spreadsheet
2. Winning team's contact information

Tournament Eligibility & Tiebreakers

Regional Meets may include up to nine teams, and are arranged by the national office as deemed necessary. Guest judges may be used. All Facilitators must be 16 years or older. Meet tiebreaker rules go into effect, because winners must be determined.

The scoring spreadsheet (found online) automatically breaks ties. To break ties using manual scoring (after properly assessing any penalties):

1. In case of tied ordinal score rankings, the team with the highest combined raw score wins
2. If still tied, the team that did the best in the most events wins
3. In the unlikely case that teams are still tied, the Host/Facilitator flips a coin.

Duplicate ribbons will be awarded at Round Robins, but they won't be available until a few weeks after the Meet.

To be eligible to compete in a Regional Meet, a student must have participated in at least one Round Robin Meet, either as a team member or as an alternate who was signed in. Only team members who signed in as either a team member or an alternate for the winning team may advance to the State Meet. If not all team members are available for the State Meet, and no alternate is eligible, the team still may compete with fewer team members without penalty.

To compete in a Regional Meet, each team must provide two trained Facilitators (see rule 7 in "Rules For All Coaches" on page 8). They must bring any materials or equipment assigned to them. They may bring visitors and alternates, who are required to wear name tags at the Meet. Parents and other interested persons are always encouraged to attend P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box presentations. An additional fee to offset State Meet costs will be assessed to participating teams.

Discipline as a Teaching Tool

Student discipline is rarely an issue at USAT Meets; students want to be free to participate excitedly, but generally not destructively, or in an antisocial way. Nevertheless, occasionally a “Discipline and Consequences” form becomes necessary. A copy of this form can be found online at usacademictriathlon.com/forms. The Meet format generally attracts able learners and keeps them too busy to do anything except concentrate on their own successful outcomes.

Pointing out consequences of thoughtless behavior may be unpleasant, but it’s part of the educational process, as well. Warning or disciplining students early in the season results in minimal instances of misbehavior. Facilitators are urged to work together to promote good sportsmanship through proper discipline and by setting a good example. Facilitators can use the Golden Rule as an evaluative yardstick toward other teams, schools, and individuals. If consequences include a loss of points, the deduction must be taken from the combined raw score for the event; e.g., if it occurs outside of one Mind Sprints room, subtract it from the combined raw score of the nearest event in which it occurs.

USAT staff urges Facilitators to remember to “catch students being good,” and reward the healthy spirit of camaraderie through creativity and fair play. The Mary Ann Berdan and Peggy L. Sheldon awards are useful for this purpose.

Discipline Issue:	Suggested Penalty*:
Disrespect of another person	20-35 points
Disresepct of the facility	15-25 points
Disrespecting personal property	25-50 points
P.A.R.T.Y. penalties	See problem Score Sheet
Disruption, delay of Meet	10-30 points
Unfairness/Disrespect of Rules:	
Sharing questions/answers	Disqualification from Meet
Discussing skit outside prep time	15-30 points/Disqualification
Use of additional outside materials	5-50 points/Disqualification

*after initial warning

How are Penalties Assessed?

A penalty (warning or loss of points) is assessed by one or more Facilitators and is modified at the discretion of the Host Facilitator (H/F). Deductions of points range from 5 to 50. Any reported infraction must be acted upon even if it is a warning. Discipline - instructing on what is appropriate and sportsmanlike behavior - is what adults do. The deduction must be subtracted from the total raw score of the event in which the infraction occurred. If the H/F is using a scoring spreadsheet, such as that found on the website, the adjusted score should be entered into the program for that event.

These situations seldom arise; but it is important to set a strong, fair example by guiding young behavior as best you can.

Three steps to assessing penalties:

1. Identify the infraction.
2. Determine its severity.
3. Issue a warning; or, if levying a point-deduction penalty, subtract the points from the event at which (or nearest to which) the infraction occurred. The proximity may be either physical, e.g., in the room used for an event; or it may be proximal in time, e.g., it happens right before or after an event takes place.

These are some possible scenarios that could result in a Discipline & Consequences situation:

1. A team decides to destroy another team's backdrop.
2. Another team calls someone a bad name at the lavatory or shows disrespect for the Host/Facilitator.
3. A team comes with a prepared skit that is really good, but obviously doesn't solve the problem.
4. Team members keep planning their skit out loud after their P.A.R.T.Y. prep period.
5. A team is boisterous during the Written *Face-Off!*, preventing the Meet from beginning on time.

In the case of an overtime penalty for P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box, for example, a team that finishes at 5:27 loses 5 points from its total combined raw score. Do not average the three judges' raw scores before subtracting the penalty, as this changes the results.

Another example: A student is using a cell phone during the Oral *Face-Off!* and refuses to put it away. After the student receives a warning and promises not to use it, the cell phone comes back out a few minutes later. The H/F assesses a 15-point Unsportsmanlike Conduct penalty on the team's total combined *Face-Off!* raw score and enters that altered raw score into the scoring spreadsheet.

NOTE: The penalty isn't deducted from just the Oral *Face-Off!* score, which would take 5 x 15 points off of the team's score.

Facilitators can decide how egregious the infraction is, assess the penalty based on a team's or individual's actions, and assess any type of penalty that seems fair but also addresses the problem.

As with all other rules, the final arbiter is the H/F working the Meet, who is charged with the education and explanation of any Discipline & Consequences.

NOTE: "Combined raw scores" for each event means:

- ✓ *Face-Off!* - The written round total plus the oral round total
- ✓ Mind Sprints - All three of the Mind Sprints, including bonus round points, if earned, added together
- ✓ P.A.R.T.Y. in a Box - All three judges' scores, added together (not added and then averaged)

Awards

USAT provides both Round Robin and Regional ribbons. Regional Host/Facilitators receive them with the Meet packet.

Every student who competes in a USAT Meet is eligible to receive a Certificate of Participation for that season. Certificates of Participation will be sent with Regional Meet packets.

The number of teams at a Meet determines how many winners are announced and how many ribbons are presented. Seven- to nine-team Meets award first, second, and third place ribbons. Five- and six-team Meets award first and second-place ribbons. Any smaller Meet awards only first-place ribbons.

At the State Meet, trophies, certificates, and ribbons are presented to students and their school.

The Mary Ann Berdan Creativity Award is a certificate named for an artist/educator and long-time USAT board member, now deceased. Any student or team showing an exceptional degree of creativity and follow through during any USAT Meet is eligible for this special honor.

The Peggy L. Sheldon Teamwork Award is a certificate named for the USAT creator, founder, and long-time director who retired in 2014. Any student or team showing exceptional teamwork above and beyond what is required of average Meet expectations is eligible for this award at any USAT Meet.

Candidates for these special awards should be brought to the attention of the H/F before the conclusion of any Meet. A copy of these certificates may be found online at usacademictriathlon.com/forms.

Important Information

To contact the national office, please direct correspondence to:

US Academic Triathlon
204 7th Street W, #123
Northfield, MN 55057
507.645.2560

usacademictriathlon.com
info@usacademictriathlon.com

For information regarding copyright limits, use of logos and other illustrations, proper ink colors, and fonts for publicity purposes, please contact the national office at the address above.

US Academic Triathlon is a charter member of the Synergy and Leadership Exchange. USAT subscribes to the Minnesota State High School League Rules of Conduct. These rules are available at:

mshsl.org/mshsl/sportsmanship/goodsportsmanship.pdf

Interested in hosting an Invitational Meet?

If you are interested in hosting an Invitational Meet at your school we'd love to help! We just need a couple things from you.

First, we need to know:

Name _____

School or District Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Number of teams competing in the Invitational Meet _____

The Invitational Meet kit is free! However, there is a \$15 charge for shipping and handling costs.

Send you order as well as check or money order to:

US Academic Triathlon
204 7th Street W, #123
Northfield, MN 55057

If you have any questions or need assistance placing you order, contact the national office at 507.645.2560 or email info@usacademictriathlon.com.

Notes:

Notes:

Notes:



204 7th Street W, #123
Northfield, MN 55057
507.645.2560