

NSSL Constitution

THE CONSTITUTION OF THE NORTH SHORE SCIENCE LEAGUE

PREAMBLE

We, the science teachers of the Massachusetts North Shore region, hereby establish the North Shore Science League in order to stimulate interest and achievement in science; to provide recognition for scientifically talented students; and to foster communication among the students and staff of the North Shore high schools. We establish this Constitution in order to insure the proper functioning of this organization.

Article I: NAME

The name of his organization shall be "North Shore Science League", hereafter referred to as the "League" and abbreviated as "NSSL".

Article II: PURPOSE

The purpose of the League is to further the study of science among the high schools of the North Shore region (in Massachusetts) by holding contests between member schools and by offering awards to deserving competitors (individuals and schools) at League competitions and at a general gathering at the end of the League season.

Article III: MEMBERSHIP

Any high school, located in the North Shore region or any school outside this region subject to approval by the coaches in accordance with Article V that agrees to abide by this constitution shall be admitted, provided that application is completed before the first meet of the year. The Executive Committee (see Art. VII) Shall have the authority to admit schools at a later date.

Article IV: MEETINGS and COACH RESPONSIBILITIES

Section 1: Meetings

A minimum of two organizational meetings shall be held each year, one before the first meet and one after the last meet. Notice of each meeting shall be given in writing (or posted on the league's website) to each participating school at least one week prior to the date of the meeting. An event schedule for the year shall be determined at least one week prior to the first meet. At the final meeting the following officers shall be elected for the next year: President and Treasurer. Two Co-Presidents may be elected in lieu of a single President.

Section 2: Coach and School Responsibilities

Each school will be required to EITHER develop and facilitate an event OR host the league at least once per year. League hosts will be awarded on a first come – first serve basis with preference given to new host schools. Schools will be required to submit their event (title/subject area) or hosting ability for the upcoming year by the second Tuesday in May of the current year (coaches meeting). Schools who fail to meet this requirement will be able to continue their involvement in the league but will not be counted toward league standings. If there is an excess of events (>18), the coaches in attendance at the May coaches meeting will determine which events will be used in the upcoming year and possible uses for excess events.

Article V: QUORUMS

A quorum shall consist of those members who present themselves at an administrative meeting after proper notice has been given in accordance with Article IV.

Article VI: VOTING

Each team coach or his/her representative as well as the League officers shall be entitled to vote. A majority vote is sufficient to pass all simple motions. Each member school may yield one vote only.

Article VII: EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE - COMPOSITION and DUTIES

The elected officers shall constitute the Executive Committee of the League, and the duties of such Committee shall be as follows:

Section 1: President

- a. To call and preside at all meetings and competitions.
- b. To select and pay, with approval of the members, the authors of events.
- c. To suggest a meet schedule to be approved by the members.
- d. To appoint team coaches to tasks as necessary for the proper execution of meet procedure.
- e. To maintain records of each meet and to keep the members informed on the current standings.
- f. To select an appeals committee consistent with Article XIV, Section VII.
- g. To handle League publicity.
- h. To keep clerical records of the League.
- i. To provide members with written notice of meetings.
- j. To appoint any other personnel considered necessary to help carry out any duty.
- k. To act as Past President in the year following his/her presidency.
- l. To adjudicate any matter not covered by this constitution, including irregularity in meet procedure.

Section 2: Treasurer

- a. To collect dues.
- b. To render a financial report at the end of the League year.
- c. To buy all awards in accordance with Article XVI, or to arrange payment of such from League funds.
- d. To perform the duties of President as needed.

Section 3: Web Master

- a. To post league information
- b. To post notices from the executive committee
- c. To update scores from month to month
- d. To post monthly events and have links to chat rooms
- e. To perform the duties of President as needed.

Section 4: Scorekeeper

- a. To collect scores, team answer sheets, answer keys, and evaluation (or method of evaluation) given in each event.
- b. To ensure that each event has been scored out correctly according to A. XIV, S. 6.
- c. To make corrections and repost scores in the event that a mistake or a correction has been made to the scoring sheet of an event.

d. To perform the duties of the president as needed.

Section 5: Past President

- a. To attend executive committee meetings.
- b. To supply information concerning the activities of the previous year.

Section 6: Stipends for Executive Positions:

- a. President: \$800/year
- b. Treasurer: \$200/year
- c. Web Master: \$200/year
- d. Scorekeeper: \$200/year

Article VIII: NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The Executive Committee shall act as nominating committee for officers of the League.

Article IX: DUES

The Executive Committee subject to member approval shall determine the annual dues. Teams are expected to have initiated the payment process by January of the current league year. Schools that have not provided proof of payment by this time are considered to be on probation until payment is made. If a payment has not been received by the time of the coaches meeting (May), such schools will not be permitted to participate in league activities or hold a place in the official standings until back payments have been made. The Executive Committee shall have authority to permit a school to make late payments. Dues shall cover expenses such as authorship stipends, awards, end-of-the-year banquets, and correspondence. Dues are currently \$175/team/year. **Dues will increase to \$200/team/year and \$300/dual-teams/year in September 2009.**

Article X: TEAM COMPOSITION

Section 1. Eligibility

Any undergraduate student of any member school is eligible to participate in any contest.

Section 2. Team and Event Membership

Each member school may field only one team; a team shall consist of not more than twelve (12) eligible students per meet. No more than four (4) team members shall participate in each event, and each team member shall participate in only one event per meet. Teams violating the numerical constraint shall have their score discounted for the event in which the violation occurs. Schools may request for the enrollment of multiple teams into the league under the following guidelines: the league grants the request under Article V, the team pays a surcharge of half the yearly dues (currently $\$175/2=\87.50 (**$\$200/2=\100 for 9/2009)) for each additional team (Team B), and the said team need to inform the president and treasurer of their intent to form multiple teams. Teams may only count one team toward the final standings and must declare which team is to be counted in the official standings (Team A) in each event at every meet. Teams that do not declare their "official" team will receive the lesser of their scores in each undeclared event.**

Article XI: AUTHORSHIP OF EVENTS

The events for each meet shall be authored or compiled by team coaches. Authors are normally responsible for administering their event. Authors shall receive compensation for their services as voted upon by the Executive Committee; currently \$35/event.

Article XII: EVENTS

Section 1. Type of Events

An event may take one of the following forms:

- a. An event that requires a team effort to solve a problem involving the application of lab or field skills
(e.g. dissection, quantitative analysis, population estimation.)
- b. An event that requires the application of scientific reasoning, mathematics, and/or scientific knowledge to solve a problem (e.g. Mendelian genetics, balancing chemical equations, calculation of heat of reaction.)
- c. An event structure on a quiz-team format. This would test knowledge and understanding of scientific principles and facts.
- d. An event that requires extemporaneous invention in a team problem-solving situation.

Events of other types may be used subject to member approval.

Section 2. Event Descriptions

Each event description shall be worded to avoid ambiguity. The description must specify the goals to be attained and the materials to be allowed. The description must include the author's name, school, and contact information. Events must be prepared and distributed (via paper and website) at the meet prior to meet at which the event will run. Event descriptions for April events must be available at the February meet. Events must include safety concerns and equipment needed to ensure the safety of students performing in the event. Violations of safety constraints will receive a uniform 10-point penalty assuming the team in question can procure equipment from other sources. Teams that cannot obtain the appropriate safety equipment will be disqualified. Event runners must also post an electronic copy to the Web Master

Allowable/Disallowable procedures and behaviors should be explicitly listed, and a precise scoring rubric must be included for the purpose of ranking team performance. Penalties for disallowable procedure and behaviors should be explicitly listed.

Subjective scoring (e.g. for "originality" or "ingenuity") must be explicitly detailed within the scoring rubric. (i.e. "1-5 points for originality" is NOT sufficient; each award step must have specific criteria listed)

Section 3:

Once an event runner puts an event into the public domain, the event runner will monitor the website for three days answering clarifying questions posed by schools. Once three days has passed, the event will remain as is and no additional modifications can be made to the event except for exceptional cases...where the event runner should contact the league president before making any additional modifications. The events CAN ONLY BE INTERPRETED FROM THE ORIGINAL POSTING AND THE CLARIFYING QUESTIONS posed within three days of posting the event. If the rules of an event change in mid-month, the president will put out a notice via e-mail and/or in the chat rooms. Otherwise, the judges and quorums will strictly interpret the original draft and clarifications of the event. It is the

responsibility of the teams to monitor the chat rooms for updates. It is not the responsibility of the league or the event runner to inform you of interpretations or news regarding a particular event.

Article XIII: Meets

There shall be at least four regular meets per year. Each meet shall consist of three events. Participants shall be informed of the topics for each event at least one month in advance of each meet. Host schools will receive a \$400 stipend to defer cost associated with the facilitation of the event that generally includes but is not limited to providing food and drinks to the students and a separate room with food and drinks for coaches.

Article XIV: MEET PROCEDURE

Section 1. Starting Time

All meets shall begin at 3:30 p.m. (if possible considering busing and the host school's location) on the scheduled dates. The President may make exceptions to this article as needed. Host schools will have the ability to start the meet in the absence of the president if 75% of schools are in attendance. Other officers of the league will assist in this process if available.

Section 2. Personnel

2A. The author (or agent thereof) of an event shall control that event and be designated the "moderator" for that event. The moderator shall coordinate assisting coaches, these coaches designated as "judges".

2B. The team captain or coach shall assign team members to events prior to the contest.

Section 3. Event Timing

Events shall be allotted an appropriate amount of time according to the specifications of the event description.

Section 4. Problem Solving Methods

Only the materials provided and/or specified may be used. Other materials may be allowed at the discretion of the moderator.

Section 5. Safety

A team shall be disqualified from an event if any team member fails to follow accepted safety precautions or if carelessness is evident. The moderator and judges for that event have sole power in this regard. There shall be no appeal for safety issues. Safety precautions must be in accordance with Massachusetts General Laws (M.G.L.) and Regulations.

Section 6. Scoring

Each event shall be worth a maximum of 50 League Points (to be tracked over the year in order to determine a League champion.) The team with the highest performance rank in each event (according to the author's ranking rubric) shall earn 50 League Points for that event. The team with the next highest performance rank shall earn 49, etc., with a lower limit of 25. Participating teams failing to meet some minimum specified performance should earn 15; disqualified teams shall score 5. Teams whose performance rankings for an event are equal shall earn the average score for their combined rankings. The President shall track League Points exactly, with no rounding.

Section 7. Appeals

The current rules for appeals will be suspended with the proposed changes (below) enacted for the 2008-09 Season. If any participant believes that his/her answer, procedure, equipment, etc., is correct or appropriate, even though the moderator disallows it by rule of event description, he/she may appeal the issue to the President. The President shall appoint three team coaches and the moderator to a four-person committee (subject to conflict-of-interest restrictions), which will, after hearing relevant argument and discussion, adjudicate the appeal. A three-out-of-four vote from the appeals committee is necessary to overturn the original decision of the moderator. All similar issues shall be summarily adjudicated based on the appeals committee decision.

1. **Proposed changes to Section 7 regarding appeals (September 2008):**
 - a. **Teams will have 3 days after an event is posted to ask clarifying questions on the league website.** Answers provided by the coach sponsoring the event will become part of the event. This is to reduce interpretations during the running of the event. It is each team's responsibility to ask clarifying questions and check the website for answers during this time. (Coaches need to have their events prepared on time with a paper copy available at the meet prior to the meet where their event is to run (Feb for Apr meets) and an electronic copy uploaded to the Web Master (Mike)).
 - b. **Three coaches proctoring events (but not the event runner) will be designated the event quorum of judges whose job (besides general proctoring) is to circulate the room and adjudicate problems during the running of an event.** Once a team engages the quorum in a question, the quorum will step back and take a moment to discuss and formulate a response to the team. The quorum will then respond to the team's inquiry and announce any significant event interpretation(s) to the entire body of students engaged in the event. **Rulings on behalf of the quorum are considered binding on all teams.**
 - c. **In the event that the quorum is not unanimous in its response, teams may file a written request for review after the team has completed and submitted their work product.** Requests must be brief, to the point, and submitted to the quorum BEFORE leaving the room. Teams will have 10 minutes to write down and submit their request. Three coaches removed from all events at the specific meet will be deemed the meet quorum whose job it is to adjudicate all outstanding conflicts in any of the three events at the meet. The meet quorum will read the request, listen to the event quorum and the event sponsor, and will yield a response that will **be considered final and binding on all parties.** Individual teams (A-Teams) can only submit up to two written requests per season; B-Teams cannot submit written requests for review.

Section 8: Alteration of Events

Coaches should remind their teams that the alteration of any event is an automatic disqualification of the team from the event. Continual infractions will result in a review of the team's place in the league by the Executive Committee. If the Executive Committee cannot reach a consensus, a review of the team and the circumstances leading to the review will be taken up and voted upon by the coaches of each team. The league encourages strong competition among teams that will hopefully bring out the best in each student/team...but not by altering an event to gain an edge.

Article XV: DROPPING of EVENTS

If for any reason an event must be discounted, then a substitute may be proposed for a later meet. If this is not feasible, then that event alone may be dropped.

Article XVI: AWARDS

Section 1. School Awards

Trophies will be awarded to the top five teams in the league at or after the last meet of the year based on the final standings of the league. "Best of" plaques will be awarded to each team with the top composite score for each of the following categories: Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Instant invention, and Hodgepodge that will include miscellaneous events that do not fit a subject specific category. A Sixth plaque may be awarded in a subject other than that listed above that runs at least three events during the year.

Section 2. Other Awards

The Executive Committee shall determine whether awards in addition to those described in Section 1 above shall be issued.

Section 3. Ties

Teams tied for any place shall share the place.

Article XVII: RESULTS

Results of each meet shall be posted at the conclusion of the meet when possible and posted by the Web Master to the NSSL website in a timely manner.

Article XVIII: AMENDMENTS

Any member may propose an amendment to this document. The proposed amendment must be sent in writing to the President, who must then forward it to all members. The proposed amendment must be voted upon at the next League meeting. A two-thirds vote is required for the ratification of the proposed amendment, and the President shall initiate the incorporation of such ratified amendments into this document.

(This Document updated 18 June, 2008)

Charlie Duggan, President, North Shore Science League