Coaching a Winning Science Olympiad Team
Keys to Small School Success

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Presentation Agenda

• Target Audience for this Session

• Maine-Endwell H.S. (NY) Profile and NSO History

• Six Keys to (Small School) Success

• Our Annual NSO Calendar (Example)

• Forming a Cohesive (Small School) Team

• Pre-Season Planning and Team Selection Process

• Group Discussion – Questions and Answers
Target Audience for This Session

• New Coaches Striving to Better Organize Their Teams

• Small Schools (<200/Class) Striving to Compete with the “Big Guys”

• Teams Seeking to Advance from Regional to State Level

• Teams Seeking to Advance from State to National Level

• Teams Ultimately Seeking a Top-10 National Finish

Experienced Coaches (State/National Champions)

• Your Comments are Welcome throughout this Briefing!
MEHS School Profile and NSO Record

• Suburban-Rural School District near Binghamton, NY

• Public, Non-Magnet School... Approximately 160 in Graduating Class

• Began NSO Participation in 1987... Two H.S. Faculty Coaches

• Five N.Y. State Championships (250+ Division C Teams)

• Eleven Trips to NSO National Finals (1990-2006)

• Highest National Finishes - 3\textsuperscript{rd} (1995), 5\textsuperscript{th} (1998), Multiple Top-10’s

IF WE CAN DO IT... SO CAN YOU!
Six Keys to (Small School) Success

1. Gradually Increased Coaching Staff from 2->12 (Faculty, Volunteers)

2. Developed a “12-Month Mindset” to NSO Season

3. Each Year, Practiced All 25 NYS Events from Day-1 (vs. 18 Regional)

4. Developed a Rigorous Pre-Season Planning Process

5. Leveraged Middle School Program as “Feeder” to High School Team

6. Took Specific Actions to Create Family Atmosphere & Team Cohesion

KEYS ARE APPLICABLE TO ALL SCHOOLS... VITAL FOR SMALL SCHOOLS
## Our Annual NSO Calendar

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>National Tournament Concludes - Event Lineup for Next Year</td>
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<tr>
<td>June</td>
<td>Coaches Meeting - Coaching Assignments &amp; Holes, Returning Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>July-Aug</td>
<td>NSO Summer Institute - Preliminary Draft of Event Rules</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aug</td>
<td>Informal Tech Event Planning and Practices</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>Team Meeting - Student Interest Forms - Event Planning Matrix</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct</td>
<td>Coaches Clinic - NY - Event Rules Clarifications</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct-Dec</td>
<td>Early Season Practices (All Events - Strong Tech Event Emphasis)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jan</td>
<td>NY Pre-Season Invitational Tournament - Coaches Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feb</td>
<td>NY Southern Tier Regional Tournament - Coaches Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mar</td>
<td>NY State Tournament - Coaches Meeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Apr-May</td>
<td>Final Practices and Fund Raising for Nationals (if Advancing)</td>
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<tr>
<td>May</td>
<td>National Tournament and Team Recognition (Picnic, School Board)</td>
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Forming a Cohesive (Small School) Team

• Develop a Tightly Knit Coaching Staff (Dinner Meetings, Cookouts…)  
• Recruit and Integrate New Coaches with Love and Care  
• Recruit a Minimum of 5-7 Students in Each Grade Level (Continuity)  
• Conduct a Parent’s Meeting in the Fall… Leverage their Strengths  
• Consider Team Dinners and a Weekly “Team Night” (with Food)  
• Leverage Existing Student Friendships and Working Relationships… Especially for Technology Events  
• Be Flexible on Practice Times… Small School Achievers Multiplex!!  
• Celebrate & Recognize All Small Victories… Success Breeds Success!
Pre-Season Planning Process

• Begin with Clear Knowledge of All Events at Your State Tournament

• Conduct Pre-Season Recruiting of New Team Members

• Hold Initial Team Meeting (Early Sept.) - Student Interest Forms

• Build an Event Planning Matrix - Compilation of All Interest Forms

• Conduct Coaches Meeting - Initial Team Assignments (State Sched.)

• Hold Second Team Meeting - Student Feedback and Minor Iterations

• Privately Plan on 12-13 Core Starters... Build Event Teams Accordingly

• Our “Contract” with Students... If You Work, You Travel with the Team. Those Who Work the Hardest Compete.
Your Comments and Questions?

Thank You and Good Luck!