

# MINI SO GUIDELINES

## A GUIDE TO THE MINI SO TOURNAMENT MODEL

Due to the global pandemic and schools shifting to distance learning models, many students will be competing in Science Olympiad tournaments from home in 2020 and 2021. While this creates new opportunities for engagement, it also carries specific concerns that tournament directors must be aware of. Science Olympiad officials and tournament organizers must follow school guidelines for online student safety, as well as ensure parents and guardians are knowledgeable about their student's participation and understand their responsibility for supervision.

### *What is the mini SO Model?*

Mini SO allows teams to compete in Science Olympiad from home through invitational and state-led tournaments. When mini SO was originally conceived in June 2020, no build events were included in the slate of events. However, the slate was modified in September 2020 to include a few hands-on events that could be performed in a home setting. See the Science Olympiad [Tournaments page](#) for the most updated list of approved mini SO events. We have held several free webinars on Ways to Play models; contact the National Office for access to these webinar trainings.

### *Science Olympiad Tournament Director Responsibilities*

Tournament directors should engage coaches and school staff to ensure student safety. Schools and districts have already set clear distance learning protocols that must supersede any Science Olympiad plans. Discuss the following issues with your tournament stakeholders:

- Which build events can be included in competition fairly and safely, and which build events can or should be included as showcase, or non-competitive events? Please refer to the mini SO slate which details permitted events; some are omitted for obvious safety reasons.
- Communication with participating coaches:
  - Work with coaches and school staff to develop a clear plan for online student safety, following the lead of school policies and expectations, including:
    - Ensuring that Science Olympiad officials and volunteers are not in direct contact with students - student communications should be transmitted through a vetted school staff member.
    - Ensuring that students are never alone with a Science Olympiad official or volunteer on an online platform. (Ex. set up a plan for a tournament that includes two tournament staff/volunteers and one school staff member online simultaneously, while interacting with students online.)
  - Work with coaches to develop a plan for parental/guardian permission and supervision, including:
    - Ensuring the coach will send out and collect permission forms in an electronic format, just as a field trip form would be disseminated.
    - Ensuring parents/guardians are aware they are responsible for supervising the safety of their child during a Science Olympiad competition or showcase event while at home. See the 2021 Science Olympiad Rules Manual for safety protocols during each event.