



2024 New Coach Q&A Emily Owens, State Director



2024 New Coach Q&A

Welcome new and prospective coaches!

Agenda:

- A Year in the Life of a Science Olympiad Coach
- Starting a Team
 - Recruitment
 - Registration
- Organizing a Team
 - Event Assignments
 - Practices
- Supporting a Team
 - Resources
 - Competitions
 - Community Engagement
- What else is on your mind?



2024 New Coach Q&A

A Year in the Life of an SO Coach

September-October

VASO Registration
Team Interest Meeting

October-November

Assign Events to Participants
Start Practices

October

Oct. 14 - Coach's Clinic
Finalize Participant Group
Nationals Webinars begin

November

"Hints & Hacks" Video Series



2024 New Coach Q&A

A Year in the Life of an SO Coach

November-December

Invitationals Begin
Dec. 9 - Lake Braddock Inv. (B)

February

Feb. 3, 17, 24
Regional Tournaments

January

Jan. 6 - Fairfax Inv. (C)
Jan 27 - VT Inv. (C)
Regionals Ramp-Up

April

State Tournament (tentative)

May

May 24-25 - Nationals at MSU



2024 New Coach Q&A

Starting a Team - Recruitment

VASO suggests starting with one team for your first year.

- 15 students are easier to manage and organize while you learn than 30 or 45!
- 15 is the *max* per team. You can field a smaller team.
- If the student interest is there, you can field more, but don't be afraid to set boundaries for yourself in this if 2 or 3 teams feels like too much.



2024 New Coach Q&A

Starting a Team - Recruitment

What matters most is finding students with excitement for and consistent commitment to the team.

- Interest Meeting to Highlight Events, Set Expectations
- Advertise a Meeting Schedule and Stick to It
 - Pick a Practice Day, Time and Location
 - Make sure it follows your school's expectations for after-school activities
- Advertise the Regional Tournament Commitment Up Front



2024 New Coach Q&A

Starting a Team - Recruitment

Talking Points:

- Events cover a wide range of science topics, so students often have expert topic areas
- Students compete in all events with a partner or two
- Students receive medals by event
- Team scores determined by student scores in individual events
- Top teams progress to the next level of competition



2024 New Coach Q&A

Starting a Team - Registration

Registration Opens Tuesday, September 26

- All you have to know to register is how many teams you're fielding
- All you have to submit is [two forms](#) with principal signatures and payment for your team(s)
- [VASO Coach Portal](#)



2024 New Coach Q&A

2024 Registration Fees

2023-2024 DIVISION B/C REGISTRATION						
	<u>1 Team</u>	<u>2 Teams</u>	<u>3 Teams</u>	<u>3 Teams</u> + 1 Additional Invitational-Only Team	<u>3 Teams</u> + 2 Additional Invitational-Only Teams	
	ED% < 36.0%	\$260.00	\$430.00	\$600.00	\$675.00	\$750.00
FUNDED BY NORTHROP GRUMMAN GRANT	36.0% <= ED% <= 45%	\$130.00	\$215.00	\$300.00	\$375.00	\$450.00
	ED% > 45%	\$26.00	\$43.00	\$60.00	\$135.00	\$210.00

% Economically Disadvantaged Determined by [Virginia School Quality Profile](#)



2024 New Coach Q&A

VASO Outreach Initiative

To be eligible for the grant, schools must:

- Be a middle or high school
- Be in their first or second year of participation in Science Olympiad
- **Not** be located in Alexandria City, Arlington County, Falls Church City, Fairfax City, Fairfax County, or Loudoun County

Available for the first team fielded by the school. The school may select to field additional teams, but those teams are not covered by the grant.

For the first year, the entire registration cost for one team will be covered.

For the second year, half of the registration cost for one team will be covered.

Our donor says "Let's put the entire 'VA' in 'VASO!'"

If you have any questions, please reach out to the treasurer at: treasurer@virginiaso.org



2024 New Coach Q&A

For Division C: Student Leadership

- VASO allows high school club officers to access registration/signup tools
- We ask that your team create a generic officer's email (like bluevalleywestscioly@gmail.com) and **not** use personal student email addresses
 - Student leaders can all check the account or have it forward to them
 - This email can be passed on to officer groups from year to year
- This email can be used in the VASO Portal, with a name indicating it is a student leadership account



2024 New Coach Q&A

Organizing a Team - Event Assignments

Our Coach's Clinic (October 14) will go over this thoroughly.

- Download rule books from the link to Nationals on [our website](#).
- Students and families can download them, too!
- Your team doesn't have to do every event. *You* decide.
- To cover all regionals events with 15 team members, each student does on average 3 events.



2024 New Coach Q&A

Organizing a Team - Event Assignments

Some events require building a device to bring and test.

- These are often events that rookie teams consider skipping because of the materials and upfront prep for students.
- If you have students interested in building, go for it! We suggest not giving a student more than one build starting out.
- “Hints and Hacks” Series in November will be a resource for builders, so it is helpful to have event assignments scheduled by early Nov.



2024 New Coach Q&A

Organizing a Team - Event Assignments

Events are in set blocks, so some of them conflict.

Don't double-book a student!

Group A
Disease Detectives B
Fast Facts B
Meteorology B

Group D
Codebusters B
Forestry B
Reach for the Stars B

Group B
Can't Judge a Powder B
Ecology B
Write It, Do It B

Group E
Experimental Design B
Fossils B
Microbe Mission B

Group C
Crime Busters B
Optics B
Road Scholar B

Group F
Anatomy & Physiology B
Dynamic Planet B
Wind Power B

Self-Scheduled
Air Trajectory B
Flight B
Roller Coaster B
Tower B
Wheeled Vehicle B

[2024 VASO B/C Events Document](#)



2024 New Coach Q&A

Organizing a Team - Event Assignments

Events are in set blocks, so some of them conflict.
Don't double-book a student!

Group A
Disease Detectives C
Fermi Questions C
Forensics C

Group B
Detector Building C
Fossils C
Write It, Do It C

Group C
Experimental Design C
Geologic Mapping C
Microbe Mission C

Self-Scheduled
Air Trajectory C
Flight C
Robot Tour C
Scrambler C
Tower C

Group D
Chem Lab C
Codebusters C
Ecology C

Group E
Dynamic Planet C
Forestry C
Wind Power C

Group F
Anatomy & Physiology C
Astronomy C
Optics C

[2024 VASO B/C Events Document](#)



2024 New Coach Q&A

What if you have a smaller team?

You don't have to do every event!

Group A
Disease Detectives B
Fast Facts B
Meteorology B

Group B
Can't Judge a Powder B
Ecology B
Write It, Do It B

Group C
Crime Busters B
Optics B
Road Scholar B

Self-Scheduled
Air Trajectory B
Flight B
Roller Coaster B
Tower B
Wheeled Vehicle B

Group D
Codebusters B
Forestry B
Reach for the Stars B

Group E
Experimental Design B
Fossils B
Microbe Mission B

Group F
Anatomy & Physiology B
Dynamic Planet B
Wind Power B

This is just one example of how you could make it work, but you could pick *any* events. This works for 8-12 students, covering 2-3 events each.

Note: Most teams that qualify for the State tournament participate in every event with a full roster.



2024 New Coach Q&A

What if you have a smaller team?

You don't have to do every event!

<u>Group A</u>	<u>Group B</u>	<u>Group C</u>	<u>Self-Scheduled</u>
Disease Detectives C	Detector Building C	Experimental Design C	Air Trajectory C
Fermi Questions C	Fossils C	Geologic Mapping C	Flight C
Forensics C	Write It, Do It C	Microbe Mission C	Robot Tour C
			Scrambler C
			Tower C
<u>Group D</u>	<u>Group E</u>	<u>Group F</u>	
Chem Lab C	Dynamic Planet C	Anatomy & Physiology C	
Codebusters C	Forestry C	Astronomy C	
Optics C	Wind Power C	Optics C	

This is just one example of how you could make it work, but you could pick *any* events. This works for 8-12 students, covering 2-3 events each.

Note: Most teams that qualify for the State tournament participate in every event with a full roster.



2024 New Coach Q&A

Organizing a Team - Practices

Pick a Practice Day, Time and Location

- Make sure it follows your school's expectations for after-school activities
- Once a week after school is a good starting point

What can practices look like?

- In early practices, getting to know each other!
- Having students explore events and giving input on what they want to do
- After event assignments, students should work with their partners to **thoroughly** read the rules. *May need adult support in this for younger B students.*



2024 New Coach Q&A

Organizing a Team - Practices

Event Rules Guide the Rest - What are they being asked to do?

- What information do they have to learn?
- What device do they have to build?
- What task do they have to practice?

Some teams use parent/adult mentors to support smaller event groups.

Other teams make a schedule of what events have guided sessions on a certain day and others are in independent practice/research.

High school tends to be more student-driven rather than coach- or parent-driven.



2024 New Coach Q&A

Supporting a Team - Resources

- The Nationals Rule Book is the #1 place to go for information on an event.
 - VASO will also post event information and any important changes, called "[clarifications](#)," on our website.
- Wide variety of online resources and communities, including official resources from Nationals (all optional)
- Specific supplies needed for events are in the rule book
 - Calculators
 - Goggles
 - Chemistry Event Supplies
- Other Building Events give parameters on what can/cannot be built, but material and design decisions are up to the students.



2024 New Coach Q&A

Supporting a Team - Resources

VASO Policies to Help Guide:

- [Team Composition](#)
- [Team Expectations](#)
- [Parent Participation Policy](#)
- [Cheating and Misconduct Policy](#)
- [Construction Policy](#)
- [Event Safety](#)



2024 New Coach Q&A

Supporting a Team - Competition

The only competition you are committing to is Regionals.

Everything else is extra and up to you.

Regional Tournament - February 3, 17 or 24

- At Designated Location
- It's a full-day competition with all regional events
- Coaches and competitors plan for all-day commitment
- Teams provide volunteers to run and assist in events
- Awards Ceremony at the end



2024 New Coach Q&A

Supporting a Team - Community Engagement

You can't do it all on tournament day.

(Believe me, I've tried.)

- Teams are responsible for covering volunteer shifts on tournament days. **Set this expectation early for your team families.**
 - Last year we asked for **three** volunteer shifts **per team** for the State tournament. Shifts were approximately 2.5 hours in length.
 - Duties included helping to time or measure devices in build events, assist in proctoring written events, helping grade or math check in the score room, etc.
 - Family members cannot volunteer for an event that their student competes in.
 - High school students can volunteer for service hours, but they can only volunteer in select Division B events or in a few other general capacities.



2024 New Coach Q&A

Supporting a Team - Community Engagement

You can't do it all on tournament day.

(Believe me, I've tried.)

- Teams will also be asked to provide **event supervisors**.
 - This is a full-day tournament commitment where they are running and grading an event.
 - More guidance on this later, but just know this expectation for your team to relay to families or to recruit other faculty support.



Our tournaments at VT and Charlottesville in the past have had less of an ask for teams in terms of volunteers and event supervisors because we get college students/SO alums to run things. Something to think about...



2024 New Coach Q&A

2024 Regional Tournaments

This is just an example. It won't match all regionals.

But you can see that it is a *full day*.

7:30	Impound Devices 8:00-8:50	Events	Session 1 (9:00-9:55)	Session 2 (10:05-11:00)	Session 3 (11:10-12:05)	Lunch Break (12:10-12:40)	Session 4 (12:40-1:35)	Session 5 (1:45-2:40)	Session 6 (2:50-3:45)	Session 7 (3:55-4:45)	Clean-Up (4:45-5:30)	Teams Must Pick Up All Remaining Devices and Vacate Home Base Rooms *No Later than 5:30 PM*	Awards Ceremony 6:30 PM		
Doors Open/Head Coaches Check in Students Report to Home Bases*		Event	1-10	11-20	21-30										
		Event	1-10	11-20	21-30										
		Event	1-10	11-20	21-30										
		Event	21-30	1-10	11-20										
		Event	21-30	1-10	11-20										
		Event	21-30	1-10	11-20										
		Event	11-20	21-30	1-10										
		Event	11-20	21-30	1-10										
		Event	11-20	21-30	1-10										
		Event	11-20	21-30	1-10										
		Event													
		Event													
		Event													
		Event													
		Event													
		Event													
				Air Trajectory	sched	sched	sched		1-10	11-20	21-30				
				Flight	sched	sched	sched		1-10	11-20	21-30				
				Roller Coaster / Robot Tour	sched	sched	sched		1-10	11-20	21-30				
				Tower	sched	sched	sched		1-10	11-20	21-30				
		Wheeled Vehicle / Scrambler	sched	sched	sched		1-10	11-20	21-30						

DRAFT



2024 New Coach Q&A

Supporting a Team - Competition

Invitationals are a great way to get students practice before the Regional tournament, *if you're up for it*.

- In Virginia, there will be a few invitational opportunities:
 - Lake Braddock (Div B) - Dec 9
 - Fairfax (Div C) - Jan 6
 - Virginia Tech (Div C) - Jan 27

- Some other invitationals are now virtual across the country, so it's an easy way to get written test questions for practice without having to travel.



2024 New Coach Q&A

Supporting a Team - Competition

- Schools qualify for the State tournament based on their regional performance against only the other schools at their regional.
- The number of schools that qualify from each regional depends on how large the regional is and how many schools (not teams) compete.
- In the past years, we have invited 24 schools per division to State.
- Don't put pressure on yourself or your team to qualify for State in your first year.



2024 New Coach Q&A

New! Gold Bids to State

Our new Gold Bids can instead be a great motivator, especially for smaller teams or new teams with a few highly invested participants.

If a school does not qualify for the State tournament but does have an event team that takes gold (first place) in a regional event, the specific students of that event team are invited to the State tournament to compete in that specific event.



2024 New Coach Q&A

New! Gold Bids to State

Example from the 2023 Michigan season:

- Haslett HS did not qualify for the State tournament, but they took first place in Experimental Design at their regional.
- The three students who earned that regional gold (no subs!) were invited to State to compete in Experimental Design.
- They earned second place at State in that event as an exhibition team:

1st - Athens HS

2nd - Haslett HS (Gold Bid)

2nd - East Lansing HS

3rd - Eisenhower HS



2024 New Coach Q&A

More Support for Starting the Season

- **Coach's Clinic**
Saturday, October 14 on Zoom in the morning
- **"Hints and Hacks" Video Series** - starting in Oct.-Nov.
- **For Competitors** - Student-Focused Webinars from Nationals (starting in October)
 - **Tech Tuesdays** - Build Event Focused, How-To
 - **Thinking Thursdays** - Core Knowledge Focused, Understanding Content
- **Questions Anytime:** emilyowens@virginiaso.org