



## Tips for Coaching

### REMEMBER . . .

Primary communication with Coaches and Sponsors is done through e-mail provided with the School/Group Registration done online. If a coach or sponsor is not receiving e-mail information about the contest, he or she should check Spam/Junk folders on the computer and contact Academic Rodeo for assistance with getting the current information.

Deadlines exist for a reason. Please be aware of them and follow them. The **Academic Rodeo Calendar** in a true calendar format is on the Getting Started and General Info pages. The **Mindset Timeline is on the Mindset Breaking Experience page**. If you have a problem with a date or deadline, please contact Academic Rodeo, realizing that usually it is not possible to make a change or give “grace” for deadlines. To be sure your students get to participate, follow the deadlines.

Please read the General Info for All Coaches and Sponsors. The following tips may be helpful.

- It is suggested that schools choose alternates **for preparation purposes only**. This gives you flexibility if students should become ill, ineligible, or have other reasons that prevent their participation **BEFORE** you register your team. **HOWEVER**, these Alternates may **NOT** be registered as a part of the team. **Only register 7 team members and only those 7 will receive awards** from Academic Rodeo if the team places. You may substitute team members up until the day of the Prelim Competition.

After the team competes in the Prelims, it **MUST** remain the same if it moves on to Finals. **ONLY** students registered to compete in the Prelim, may compete in the Finals if the team advances.

- Creativity is an element that adds dimension to problem solving. So often in the classroom setting, learners rely upon memorization to bring closure or to find solutions to problems, but when creativity is interjected into the experience and spontaneity is required, a fresh new way to solve problems arises. This method takes all the learned ideas and builds upon them using a “real world” technique.

Creative thinking builds on five abilities: fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration, and evaluation. For the problems in this contest, all these abilities must be applied in a quick, spontaneous manner. Fluency is the ability to generate many ideas. Flexibility is the ability to shift thinking from one category of ideas to another. Originality is the ability to think of and to recognize unique ideas. Elaboration is the ability to develop an idea for clarity. Evaluation is the ability to judge the appropriateness of an idea in relation to the problem or situation. These five abilities overlap but can be exercised separately or in combination. The problems in this contest are designed to encourage the development of all five of these abilities by individuals and by a team. Problems are a variety of verbal, tactile, and/or presentation.

Use a variety of coaching techniques.

- First, encourage learners to be as fluent and flexible as possible, avoiding premature closure.
- Second, encourage learners to avoid mindsets produced by lines on a page or characteristics of building materials. Urge them to move beyond the conventional boundaries. “If it doesn’t say you can’t, then you probably can” **within** boundaries.
- Third, help learners recognize group dynamics and how to effectively use them.

- Finally, use the contest as a springboard to other adventures into creativity and life-long learning.
- Sample problems are available on the Mindset Breaking Experience page on the website.
- Materials used in such competitions as Odyssey of the Mind and Destination Imagination may be useful in preparing your team to think creatively.
- Having students from different grades in the level allows you to build your team over time, always having students with experience and others who are new and bringing new creativity to the group.