



Science Olympiad 2020 Rules Replay Explanation & Rationale

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic-related cancellation of the 2020 National Tournament and the resulting disruptions to the 2020 Science Olympiad season across the United States, Science Olympiad has decided to replay the 2020 rules for the 2021 season which starts July 1, 2020. What this means for Science Olympiad teams is that we will be running the 2020 event slate again in 2021.

The 2020 Rules Replay does not mean that there will be no changes to the rules at all. As in every year when events return from the previous year, we will adjust the rules in response to the information we were able to collect through the Rules Clarification and FAQ process. Teams can expect revised rules for Detector Building, Ping Pong Parachute, Protein Modeling, and the National Bird List as well as tweaks, adjustments, and clarifications to other events. These revised and updated rules will be previewed and discussed at the 2020 Summer Institute in July. **All teams will need to download a new copy of the 2021 Science Olympiad Division B and Division C Rules when they are released on Tuesday, September 8, 2020 to ensure that they are using most current rules to prepare for competitions in the 2021 season.**

The 2020 Rules Replay also does not mean there will be no new events or challenges for teams in 2021. As part of the 2020 Rules Replay, Science Olympiad has identified 10 new or returning events to be featured as Trial Events during the 2021 season. It is expected that these events will become part of the competition in the next few seasons but right now they still need additional testing and trial. Besides being posted as Trial Events on our website (soinc.org), the rules for these Trial Events will be incorporated into the 2021 Rules Manual so that all teams, event supervisors, and tournaments have easy access to them. We will highlight and discuss a selection of these events at the upcoming 2020 Summer Institute. In addition, we will work with State Chapters and Tournament hosts to expand the number of tournaments running these Trial Events. These events offer participants looking for an extra challenge the ability to compete against like-minded peers while contributing important information to prepare these events to become part of the competition in 2022 and beyond.

For the following reasons we found the 2020 Rules Replay to be the best option:

- the 2020 Rules Replay **reduces costs** for teams as it ensures that purchased resources, kits, built devices and materials are still viable for 2021. We anticipated that schools would face massive closures and disruptions to calendars, budgets and staffing and that resources should be conserved.
- the lack of a National Tournament and travel restrictions imposed by schools and employers combined with CDC and Public Health guidance to avoid large meetings meant that we were **unable to hold** our annual National Event Supervisors and State Directors meetings to discuss and finalize any new rules in time for 2021. While we have

discussed digital meeting options, they would not provide the same level of thoughtful discussion and interaction needed to provide new rules for competition.

- an examination of event slate for 2021 showed that of the 35 unique Division B & C events that were expecting to run, 9 would have had no changes to the rules at all, 14 would have had changes limited to specifications, run times, or expected content, 9 would have been returning events that hadn't been part of the competition in over 6 years, and **3 events were brand new** and had only experienced limited trials.
- the lack of State Tournaments and the National Tournament meant we were **unable to collect essential data and information** about the incoming slate of events, especially the 12 essentially new events, to finalize the rules and prepare supporting resources such as videos, study resources, and logistics documents to allow all teams to successfully compete in those events.
- it simplifies things for Tournament and State Directors and tournament hosts who may have their focus elsewhere in response to the pandemic as the 2020 Rules Replay allows them to **reuse schedules, tournament resources, event logistics, Event Supervisors, and event sponsorships**.
- while 350 tournaments were completed prior to the COVID-19 disruption, 100 Regional and State **tournaments did not occur** leaving thousands of Science Olympiad participants with built devices, knowledge gained, and resources developed they did not get to use in competition.
- a critical part Science Olympiad – **the ability to learn and change** from prior attempts and the advancing tournament structure – was disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- the full **impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is yet to be felt or understood** and we expect the energy of our volunteer army of writers, contributors and editors to be focused elsewhere over the coming months – with their health, their families and their communities. The 2020 Rules Replay offers Science Olympiad the most certain and clear path forward to resuming competition in the 2021 season.

We realize that Science Olympiad nation expects new events every year; this year is an anomaly, and we are all dealing with sudden change, upheaval and disappointment. We hope that you will use this time to perfect your devices, to mentor new team members, and to become proficient in the new Trial Events. As more information about the 2021 season becomes available it will be posted on the Science Olympiad website (soinc.org). We look forward to seeing you at workshops and tournaments throughout the country once the situation and factors around the COVID-19 pandemic stabilize. Thank you for your understanding.