

National Academic League®



The Huddle

This section of the newsletter is an information clearinghouse where coaches can share strategies and tips for team recruitment, practice and play. Coaches range from the undefeated veterans of 16 years of play to the new recruit. Sharing coaching advice will help everyone's games and enhance the competition. This month we asked for, and received, some quarter-by-quarter tactical tips from Marty Sharrow, a 15-year NAL® veteran and coach of the virtually undefeated Roland Park team in Baltimore, Maryland. These tips focus on maximizing scoring opportunities, and minimizing penalty points.

Quarter 1: Encourage first quarter players to have the difficult questions repeated. Discourage first quarter players from passing: since there's nothing to lose, encourage players to guess even if they are not certain of an answer.

Quarter 2: The second quarter team needs to have an active player watching the shot clock to make sure the team makes the most of the time available for formulating and delivering an answer. This continues to be important for the team who does not buzz in first, as they will be able to use remaining time on the shot clock should the other team answer the question incorrectly.

Quarter 3: Make sure your team addresses each question completely. Judges pay attention to how you address each of the specific points included in the third quarter question.

Quarter 4: If a team member does not know an answer, encourage them to PASS. This way, if the other team does not answer correctly and the question goes to free-for-all, another fourth quarter teammate may be able to answer the question correctly.

As in all sports, success requires a combination of talent, practice and strategy. Does your team take time to discuss and plan point-scoring strategies? Tactics such as these can make the difference between winning and losing, especially with evenly matched teams. Do you have a winning tactic that you can share with fellow coaches across your league or across the nation? Send your comments to us at office@nationalacademicleague.org.

Volume 1, Issue 3

January 11, 2007

Reminders

- If you haven't already, please mail or fax your league District and School Information to the Georgia office (address & fax below)
- Your NAL® 2008 National Tournament Black-Out Calendar with your District and School Information is due by February 1st. We will be unable to make last minute adjustments to Tournament Schedules this year.

Send or fax your information to:

National Academic League®
1445 Lakemist Court
Roswell, GA 30075
Fax 888-217-7999
office@nationalacademicleague.org

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NATIONAL OFFICE NEWS: January 18, 2008—Deadline to Submit Questions for the National Tournament

The NAL® Question Bank® has evolved over sixteen seasons of play, thanks in part to the contributions from our participants from across the nation. NAL® Question Bank® questions are correlated to and aligned with National Curricula Standards. These refinements are to ensure the accuracy of the questions with respect to students' curricula and question-level difficulty.

We invite all our leagues to submit questions for consideration for the NAL® Question Bank®. This year, January 18 is the deadline to submit questions which may be included in the National Tournament. If you are interested in contributing questions, there are some basic guidelines to follow:

- Question writers should be familiar with NAL® games and be able to correctly identify the quarter, subject and level of questions submitted.
- Questions should reflect district curricula and represent information students are expected to learn at school—especially topics students need to know for achievement tests (No Child Left Behind requirements).
- Begin all questions with active verbs (e.g. calculate, identify, name) so the players know immediately the expectations of the question.
- Do not submit trivia questions or questions about television shows, sports, entertainment, or other popular culture topics.
- Avoid questions with ambiguous, multiple choice, or dichotomous answers (yes/no, true/false).
- Provide a reference for each question and answer.

For specific Question Writing Guidelines, please refer to Appendix C on page 49 of the *NAL® Rules & Guidelines* book for the 2007-2008 Season. Remember, to be considered for inclusion in the 2008 National Tournament, questions must be submitted by Friday, January 18, 2008. Please email them to us at office@nationalacademicleague.org or fax them to us at 888-217-7999.



Spiritwear Clearance, while supplies last...

For a limited time, we have reduced prices on our current inventory of NAL® t-shirts, sports shirts, and sweatpants. Hurry because supplies and selections are limited. Of course, orders can always be placed for regularly priced t-shirts and sports shirts.

T-Shirts	originally \$ 9.00 CLEARANCE PRICE \$4.00
Sports Shirts	originally \$17.50 CLEARANCE PRICE \$8.00
Sweatpants (white only)	originally \$19.25 CLEARANCE PRICE \$5.00

See the National Academic League® Price List for more spirit wear, memorabilia, and awards. The List is attached to this Newsletter.

Would you like us to offer additional items, like water bottles or hoodies? If so, let us know.



Questions From the Field...

At the National Office, we receive a variety of questions, from the broad to the specific. We hope that the information in the following questions and answers will be useful to you. Please feel free to call or email us (office@nationalacademicleague.org) us with any questions – or with answers or solutions you are using in your league. We love hearing from you!

Question: *I have a 2006-2007 Study Book. Do I need a new one?*

Answer: In a word, yes. The NAL® Study Book is updated each year. The study statements in this year's Study Book are aligned to the questions in this year's games. In addition, the Study Book includes several new additions. First, under the Study Questions tab, are suggestions on how to structure and run practice sessions. Second, a tab offers Internet Resources that are useful for studying topics and researching answers. Finally, a tab of Practice Questions lists a representative sampling of game questions. We think you will find

the 2007-2008 Study Book a great resource in preparing for competition.

Question: *My 6th grader was just selected for her school's NAL® team. How do I find out what it's all about?*

Answer: One of the best ways to get a feel for what the NAL® is all about is to view the NAL® video, "Playing the Game." It illustrates the four different quarters of play, including how questions are answered, the use of the shot clock, scoring, passing, fouling, and many other particulars. Your league commissioner may also have videos of past games which you can view. When you are watching footage of an actual game, it is helpful to have an experienced player or coach who can pause the video and explain what is happening. Of course, experience is also a great teacher, and with all of the leagues' seasons underway, there will be a lot of opportunities to learn by doing. Take advantage of the experience around you, and remember, everyone was new at this at one time!

Question: *Will you send us strategies for success?*

Answer: Of course, study and preparation are very important in this game. The NAL® Study Book provides study statements specifically aligned to this year's game questions, along with other suggestions, resources, and practice questions. Skills will improve as players accumulate experience. In short: play lots of games!

One of the best strategies for success a team can employ is to use the NAL® Rules & Guidelines book to learn about rules, scoring and penalties (see The Huddle, this issue). A team who knows the rules well can outscore an equally matched team by avoiding penalties and understanding scoring opportunities. See Structure of the Game, pages 15-26 in the Rules & Guidelines book, and Appendix A: Summary of Point Losses, for complete information on scoring and penalties.

A team with a good balance of knowledge, experience, and tactical strategies will always make a great opponent.

Take Five Answers

*A note on the answer to last month's first question: "Calculate the area of a rectangle 9 inches long by 3 inches tall." Steve Jacobs, Baltimore City Public Schools NAL League, wrote, "As a dedicated official and screener of questions I would like to point out that your published answer to question one would be ruled incorrect if the answerer left out the unit, which in this case should be **square inches.**" Thank you, Steve – you are correct! The answer should have been "27 square inches."*

Q: State the word that describes animals

Q: State the word that describes animals with a backbone.

A: Vertebrates.

Q: Name the country in which former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was assassinated on December 27, 2007.

A: Pakistan.

Q: State the meaning of the prefix 'post.'

A: After

Q: State the complete name of the American civil rights leader for whom a Federal holiday in January is named.

A: (Dr.) Martin Luther King, Jr.

Q: Calculate the area of a triangle that has a base of 6 inches and a height of 4 inches.

A: 12 square inches.

National Academic League®

Unfolding the Future of America's Children

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Roswell, GA 30075
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In Utah:

1917 South 100 East
Salt Lake City, UT 84105
Phone: 801-487-8088

Email:

office@nationalacademicleague.org

Fax:

888-217-7999

*We're on the web:
www.nationalacademic
league.org*

Take Five Questions

Practice your question answering skills with our "Take Five" questions. They are great for warming up at the beginning of practice, for a break in the middle, or for cooling down after a study session. Answers are on page 3.

- Q:** State the word that describes animals with a backbone.
- Q:** Name the country in which former Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto was assassinated on December 27, 2007.
- Q:** State the meaning of the prefix 'post.'
- Q:** State the complete name of the American civil rights leader for whom a Federal holiday in January is named.
- Q:** Calculate the area of a triangle that has a base of 6 inches and a height of 4 inches.

Happy New Year!

A message from the NAL® National Office

It's January, and already some of our leagues are halfway through their playing season, while others are beginning their season of play as they return from winter break. Still other leagues have already wrapped up their regular season of play! Wherever you are in your season, we hope you are learning, growing, and having fun. We look forward to hearing game results and other feedback from all of you.

Best of luck to all players, and our continued gratitude for the time and effort of all the people who coach, officiate, organize, drive and otherwise support our teams.

*Donna L. Elmquist
President
Terrel H. Bell & Associates*

Are you on the Distribution List for the NAL® Newsletter?

Each month we prepare a newsletter full of NAL information for our participants. We strive to include information that is useful to our broad audience, including features on players and teams across the nation, news from the NAL National Office, answers to commonly asked questions, and even some practice questions. We hope that you are finding this information useful and informative. We welcome your suggestions on how to improve, extend, or enhance the content of the newsletter, and welcome contributions from NAL participants from commissioners to players to fans. In addition, we would like to make it easy for anyone who is interested to receive the newsletter automatically each time it is published. Let us know if you would like to be added to our newsletter distribution list, or if you have a list of recipients you would like us to add to our distribution, by emailing us at office@nationalacademicleague.org. Recipients will always be offered the option to discontinue receipt of the newsletter. And remember, you can always view the latest newsletter by going to our website www.nationalacademicleague.org and clicking on the link **[Check out our Newsletter!!](#)**

NATIONAL ACADEMIC LEAGUE® PRICE LIST
2007-2008 Season

(Prices do not include shipping and handling. Prices & availability subject to change without notice.)

Contact us at office@nationalacademicleague.org to order.

GAME MATERIAL

- Gameset* (Question cards, scoresheets, and scorecards for one game)..... \$20.95
*Available only to League Commissioners
- NAL® Rules & Guidelines® book..... \$17.45
- NAL® Mastery Certification® \$10.95
- NAL® Study Book® \$16.55
- "Playing the Game" training video or DVD \$19.95
- NAL Custom Gameset (Available: Level 1 Game, SAT Vocabulary Game, Mythology Game, Anne Frank Game)..... \$32.95

NAL STARTER KIT \$55.00

NAL brochure, practice Gameset (question cards, scoresheets, scorecards),
NAL® Rules & Guidelines® book, "Playing the Game" training. video

MEMORABILIA

- Sports Shirt (All colors available! Ask us!)..... \$17.50
- T-Shirt (All colors available!)..... \$9.00
- Color NAL Pin..... \$3.25
- Pewter NAL Pin..... \$2.50
- Pewter NAL Charm (With necklace chain \$4.20) \$2.50

AWARDS

- Foiled Certificate (blue or gold)..... \$3.50
- Non-Foiled Certificate (blue or gold)..... \$2.75
- Medal (Add \$1.00 if engraved)..... \$9.95
- Mylar Medal (Add \$1.00 if engraved)..... \$9.00
- 4" x 6" Plaque \$25.45
- 7" x 9" Plaque \$30.95
- Trophy \$89.95
- Star Trophy \$38.00
- Mylar Trophy..... \$14.50

PROMOTIONAL

- "NAL: An Introduction®" promotional video \$9.95
- NAL Brochures® (10) \$5.00
- Podium Banner..... \$60.45
- Wall Banner..... \$82.45

PLEASE NOTE THAT PRICES WILL BE INCREASED BY 40% FOR PARTICIPANTS IN ANY NAL® LEAGUES THAT DO NOT PAY PARTICIPATION FEES. THIS INCREASE WILL BE CALCULATED BY THE NATIONAL OFFICE AT THE TIME OF THE ORDER.