

September 25, 2009

To: Academic Decathlon Coaches
From: Meredith Davis, Coordinator

Re: Update of September 17 Meeting

- The September meeting agenda is posted online at <http://www.sjcoe.org/sae/decath.aspx>. It contains some pertinent information, so I suggest you look it up.
- Handbooks have been distributed or mailed so if you do not have your copy by the end of the month, please let me know (mdavis@sjcoe.net).
- Perhaps the biggest change to our program at the county level is the two-team policy. Schools may now bring to county up to two starting teams in addition to their alternates. These two teams will be competing against all other starting teams, and each team is required to pay the \$300 registration fees. This is a trial year, so we will see how it goes, but we are hoping that this change will spark even greater interest and higher scores among decathletes.
- It looks like the USAD Calculator Policy for 2010 will apply to California county and state competitions, so students will be on their honor not to use stored information. Please check your handbooks for a copy of the policy. Thanks to all who responded to my informal survey.
- Coaches, you may want to look at your USAD Eligibility Guidelines (see handbook) for a refresher, but there are no changes from last year. Please be aware, however, that USAD has furnished us a GPA Computation Worksheet which not only weights student grades but automatically figures the GPA and indicates the proper division placement. Unfortunately, the form found on the USAD and CAD websites still have glitches—especially with the 1/3 calculation. You may want to wait to use them until I have the ok. A sample can be found in your handbooks as well as a list of Specific Accepted and Unaccepted Courses. We will be using this form at the county, state and national competitions.
- You will want to visit the USAD website frequently (<http://www.usad.org/> for the newest curriculum corrections (although I do send these on to you as I get them) and to read through Essential Information for Coaches.
- The team divisions for the 2010 State Championship will again be based on regional scores. As always, the highest scoring team from each county will attend the state finals. The selection of at-large teams will be based solely upon the score obtained by the non-qualifying teams at the county level. Once all 60 teams have been identified, three divisions will be formed with the top 20 being placed in Division 1, etc.
- The ACE program (Accelerated College Entrance) will still be available to decathletes through Cal State University, Sacramento. The cost has gone up to \$15 dollars for 3 units (still a great

deal) and is available to juniors and seniors only this year. However, if you have a sophomore who is enrolled in ACE-equivalent AP, IB, honors or advanced courses, they will be considered eligible. Frosh-level students will not be able to participate in ACE. I will be sending out applications and directions in December or January. Please contact me if you have any questions.

- Below are some extra activities and opportunities you may wish to have your students take advantage of. More information on each is available in your handbook.

French Revolution Lecture—September 30 in Madera

Kern County Concert—October 21 in Bakersfield

San Joaquin County's Fine Arts Day—October 24 at Delta College

Capital Region Lecture—November 14 at CSU Sacramento

San Joaquin County Scrimmage—November 21

Capital Region Scrimmage—December 12 in Sacramento

- The dates to remember for our county competition are:
 - * January 30 for the Interview, Speech and Essay. This day is for starters only and will take place of the University of the Pacific campus in the Wendell Phillips Center. Appropriate student dress is required.
 - * February 3 for essay reading. Each coach is requested to recruit readers for this important task held in the Kingston Room of the ESC. Starting time is 3:30 and dinner will be provided. Alternate essays are completed at the school site and returned to me before reading begins.
 - * February 6 for tests, Super Quiz, and awards. Venues remain the University of the Pacific and the Stockton Scottish Rite.
- For curricular resources beyond USAD, you may wish to check out the materials available through DemiDec (see handbook).
- I am pleased to announce that I have a new assistant. Her name is Pam Carson, and she is a veteran employee at the County Office. She has much to contribute, and I feel fortunate to have her in our office. Stop by and say hello when in the vicinity! You can contact her by phone at the same number—468-4866—or by email at pcarson@sjcoe.net.
- Our county Academic Decathlon website at <http://www.sjcoe.org/sae/decath.aspx> has all event forms posted with the exception of the GPA calculation worksheet which will return when free of flaws. This website also has agendas, updates, additional information and important dates.
- Intents to Participate are due by Friday, October 2 (see above). Please indicate on the form if you will be bringing 1 or 2 teams.
- Our next meeting (the last before competition) is scheduled for Tuesday, December 15 in the Kingston Room of the ESC starting at 3:45. Coaches or designees are encouraged to attend and bring a transcript attached to the USAD computation worksheet for each starter and for only those alternates who may move up to a starting position on your team. Our main task on this day will be to review each other's transcripts and division placements for accuracy.

- Coaches, please remember to encourage others in your departments to volunteer as readers, test proctors or speech/interview judges. It takes a village...
- Below are some reminders of our county competition procedures (also see handbook for more details).

Essay—January 30 (starters only)

The scoring rubric is posted on our website.

There will be three prompts from Literature and Super Quiz

No copies of the poetry or short selections will be provided.

There will be 50 minutes writing time, and 5 minutes preparation with no pencils.

Coaches will be provided alternate writing packets and prompts on this day.

Alternate writing is to take place at the school site on Monday or Tuesday.

Super Quiz

We will be using the 30-question format for the oral relay.

Alternates participate only on the written Super Quiz.

The SQ written test is 60% of the team score and the relay is 40%.

All questions are generated directly from the SQ Resource Guide from USAID.

Multiple Choice Exams—February 6

All seven written tests are 30 minutes each.

All written tests are taken by both starters and alternates.

There are 40 questions on the written SQ, 35 on the math and 50 on all other tests.

Speech—January 30 (starters only)

The prepared speeches must be written by the student expressly for Aca Dec.

Time violations will be assessed but not location violations.

One minute, 30 seconds and 10 second timing cards will be used again this year.

Impromptu prompts will include a one-word prompt, a quote, and a question.

Interview—January 30 (starters only)

No student profiles will be required this year.

The Topics for Oral Interview Questions have been revised (see website)

Students are not to wear school insignias, but no location violations will be assessed.

No timing violations will be assessed.

- According to our state director, there will be two online scrimmages available to California teams this year. The scheduled dates are October 17 and January 9. These dates have not yet been confirmed nor has the cost been posted.
- At the moment, we have two teams from Santa Clara County joining us. They will not be competing directly with San Joaquin County teams but the higher scoring team will be eligible to attend state competition along with our winning county team.
- Awards available to county teams include:
 - SJCOE Foundation Scholarships (\$500, 200 and 100 to top three scorers in each division)
 - UOP Tuition Scholarships (\$10,000 renewable half tuition scholarship)
 - Walter Rathhaus Scholarship (\$1000 to highest scorer)
 - Team Plaques
 - Alternate medals and starter medals
 - Overall alternate recognition