



Attending The Nationals



COACH'S ROLE AT NATIONALS

The role of the Coach at the tournament is somewhat different than the role at practice. It is no longer time to drill new things into the players. However, there are some things that good Coaches *will* and *will not* do at this time.

BEFORE THE TOURNAMENT

Before leaving campus, the Coach should reconfirm arrangements, make sure that there is enough cash on hand for the trip, make sure that the players have clothes and money with them. Be sure that someone on campus has phone numbers to reach you in the event of an emergency.

Four players and a Coach MUST travel to the Nationals.

Bring duplicates of all paperwork, including team enrollment and player eligibility forms, etc.



ONCE YOU ARRIVE

Check in at tournament headquarters.

Double check that your paperwork is complete.

Collect all tournament handouts.

Make certain you have a clear understanding of:

- ✓ *Time and location for the Team Orientation Meeting*
- ✓ *When the first game will be played*
- ✓ *The schedule for the entire tournament*
- ✓ *Meal times and locations*

After check-in, you will have some free time

It is important for the Coach not to disappear at this point. Some of your team members, particularly those at their first tournament, may want to stay with a familiar person.

- ✓ *Some socialize with other teams and relax.*
- ✓ *Others acquaint themselves with their game room and discuss their schedule.*
- ✓ *Other teams do some practicing to loosen up.*

BEFORE THE GAME BEGINS

As your team is getting seated and the game is about to start, it's your final chance to relax the players and get them focused on the match. Again, there are some different approaches:

Remind them to have fun and relax.

Some teams will even toss a football or frisbee around before each game.

Some teams huddle and talk.

They rely on anything that gives them that little confidence boost, from petting the team mascot to giving a quiet pre-game chant.

Coaches rarely give specific advice to each player.

However, if the Coach has scouted the other team, this might be the time to share any insights.

DURING THE GAME

You will certainly be watching closely and cheering for your team. Here are some tips:

Don't sit near the other Coach.

This can be very distracting. During games, all your attention needs to be centered on your team. Your players need to know that you are as focused on them as they are on the game.

Be quiet.

Hearing cries of "Focus" or "Go for it" can confuse the moderator and can disrupt the game. In addition, your players may begin to pay attention to what you are saying and not to the questions.

Look positive.

When the team earns points, clap and look pleased; they may look to you for approval. If they are losing, seeing that you still are proud of them will help keep them from getting discouraged.

The Coach is the emotional anchor of the team. Your players look to you for guidance and support.

DURING THE GAME (CONTINUED)

Some Coaches will take very specific notes and statistical data during the game. Some possible approaches:

- ✓ *Keep a running score to confirm the official score.*
- ✓ *Keep track of each player and how many questions each one answered correctly. This scorekeeping system is similar to that used to generate player stats in the campus tournament.*
- ✓ *Keep track of the correct answer for every question and how the team handled each one.*
- ✓ *Keep track of the types of question (by subject area) and chart how your players handled each type.*
- ✓ *Keep track of the bonus conversion percentage: the number of points the team actually garnered, divided by the number of points available.*
- ✓ *Some teams bring a notebook and enter all of the statistics directly into it.*

Note instances in which the team played a question particularly well or poorly.

Praise good bonus teamwork or anticipation on a toss-up. Note instances in which they made mistakes, such as not listening to a question, interrupting a toss-up when the other team already had received a five point penalty, did not wait to be recognized, etc.

Note any relevant points related to a possible game review.

The Coach counsels players about registering complaints or game discrepancies and often spots game review issues that players may miss during the heat of a game.



Use half-time to praise, encourage and strategize with your players.

AT HALF TIME

At half-time, most Coaches like to talk to their teams. Here are some suggestions that you may use.

"Talk up" your team

If your team is ahead, tell them to keep up the good work. If your team is behind, remind them how quickly the game can turn around. Three toss-ups and bonuses can erase a hundred-point lead.

Help them stay loose.

Encourage players to get up and shake the kinks out of their arms or bring them a drink of water.

If you have specific suggestions,

Dispense them with care. This may be the time to share some analysis of the opposition. Post mortems are usually best left until after a game.

DURING GAME REVIEWS

Game Reviews are an intrinsic part of the game. Here's how to lodge concerns so you will get the best possible hearing:

Express your concern quietly to the designated game official at the end of the half.

Make a note of the question and the issue and then move your attention back to the game play. Teach your players to do the same thing.

Talk the matter over as a team.

Do you really feel wronged? Is it worth pursuing the concern? If a second-half discrepancy does not affect the outcome of the game, a game review will not occur. If you feel that a game official is negligent, share your concern with your division liaison, after making clear that you are not registering an official call for review.

Discuss your concerns with your team only.

Do not explain the details of your game concern to the other team and Coach. Let the game officials handle that. You do not want to turn the issue into a personal grievance.

Explain your case clearly and concisely.

If you need a player to speak for the group, it should be the captain. Game discrepancies should not be group discussions. Remind your team to simply keep their seats and be patient.

Try not to get too excited.

It can take several minutes to get an issue clarified. Finding the exact question, reconstructing the score at the time, finding the matching bonus question, etc. can take some time. Do not add to the pressure by arguing excessively, repeating yourself or physically crowding the game officials.

Once you and the other Coach have spoken, let the game review committee have the privacy to make a decision.

The committee uses the game play rules as printed in the Training Kit to guide its decisions on the issues at hand.

BETWEEN GAMES

Whatever the outcome, keep the team positive.

Remember, each game is a new opportunity to score and win. By keeping focused on the end goal, you can help your team keep a positive outlook and a competitive edge.

After the initial euphoria or disappointment of a just-completed game has worn off:

Some Coaches like to gather the team to discuss it. Between games can be the time for a critique of the game. If you took notes, you can refer to them now. Going over the scoresheet and stats, even recreating the game, can help the players to think about the game for the last time, before turning to the next one. But Coaches also need to be sensitive to the fact that some players prefer to be alone (especially after a difficult loss).

This is *not* the time to hand out "penalty" assignments.

It is a time to make a list of subjects and game skills for later practice and preparation.

Use the time to watch other teams play.

You can make this a formal "scouting" session and check out your competition. Are they tremendously quick? Are they weak in one area?

AFTER THE TOURNAMENT

Win or lose, be a good sport.

This is a key to making a positive impression during the tournament.

Be sure to fill out the online evaluation forms.

Offer positive as well as critical comments. Constructive criticism is always appreciated: list specific changes you suggest for future tournaments.

ETIQUETTE

One of the comments we regularly hear from Coaches is that they work to instill in their players a sense of etiquette and manners. As representatives of the school, it is important for the players to conduct themselves well. Players also mentioned that they appreciate playing against teams that are fun and nice:

Be friendly, both before and after the games.

Don't regard the other team as the enemy.

Don't make fun of your opponents.

They will play in a fired up fashion and be even more motivated to win.

Be alert and intense, but not combative.

Don't denigrate the achievements of the other team.

Don't gloat. Never rub in a victory.

Don't bang on the table. Stay calm.

Don't be cocky.

When you go into the finals, you want the crowd on your side. They won't be if you've been arrogant.

Don't get the other team mad.

Don't let them know if they've made you mad.

Keep the obnoxious players off your team.

It is more fun if you are proud of the people you are with, instead of apologizing for them.



Be a good sport and shake hands after matches.

WHAT TO WEAR

For the most part, the HCASC Nationals are a casual affair. Teams are encouraged to bring at least one team "uniform," like matching school shirts (polo or tee), sport coats, jogging suits, etc. (examples appear below). Teams that *look* like a team tend to *perform* as a team. Never underestimate the effect of school pride in a heated match.



There are two functions, however, where dressier attire is appropriate: the opening and closing banquets. For these events, business dress is expected, so plan ahead!



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NCT

Other than the Nationals team (4 players & 1 coach), who can attend?

Any student, faculty or staff member (no children) of your institution may attend the Nationals. This person must be pre-registered and should have submitted a signed confirming order to HCASC Headquarters. This person will be considered an Institutional Representative.

HCASC Headquarters reserves final approval on any individual's attendance at the Nationals.

What's the cost for an Institutional Rep. to attend?

Registration is \$1250; the fee covers everything except travel and hotel. Hotel is \$750; airline tickets are invoiced at cost, a good estimate would be \$400. HCASC will book the travel for the Institutional Rep. upon receipt of a signed confirming order.

When is travel booked for the Nationals team?

Upon receipt and approval of your NCT Qualifiers Part II roster & other paperwork, travel for those traveling via airline will be booked. Airline tickets are purchased based on seat availability, time constraints and cost. As in previous years, a majority of the flights will be early a.m. departures on Day 1 (arrival) and Day 4 (departure).

*If any members of the Nationals team are taking prescription medicine, do **NOT** place it in the checked luggage as luggage can be lost. Carry all medicines and valuables in your "carry on" bag!

I've submitted my NCT Part II paperwork, and a member of my team just informed me that s/he can not attend the Nationals. What should I do?

Pick up the phone and call (800-388-2272 x115) HCASC Headquarters **A.S.A.P.**, even if you don't know who the new player will be.

Why? If airline tickets have been purchased, your institution will be responsible for the cost of a new ticket, plus any additional charges.

You **must** have 4 team members in attendance at the Nationals.

My team has arrived at the airport and the carrier wants to put us on a later flight. What should we do?

Take your scheduled flight, do **NOT**, under any circumstance, allow yourself or any member of your team to be "**BUMPED**" for carrier perks (ticket voucher, money, etc.). The events scheduled to take place on Day 1 are based on everyone's arrival at the appointed time. We are aware that some flights may be delayed due to circumstances beyond your control.

If it comes to our attention that your "delayed arrival" was due in part to accepting airline perks, your institution will be **suspended** from HCASC play for **one year**.

Do we have to attend all of the events?

YES! Attendance at all scheduled events is mandatory, for the full duration of each event. Your team must be in the audience for the Final Games on Day 3.

How will my team be placed in its round robin division?

Teams are placed into divisions by a computer program. The program randomly assigns teams to divisions based on the following criteria:

1. The preceding year's top 16 teams are power placed, two to a division.
2. Where possible, no teams should be placed in a round robin division with teams they competed against in the round robin the preceding year.
3. Schools not in attendance the previous year are randomly assigned divisions.

During the round robin portion, when should my team arrive at our assigned room?

Your Nationals team should be in their assigned game play room **1** match prior to their scheduled match. So if your game is scheduled to begin at 11 am you should be in the room no later than 10:30 am.

DAILY ACTIVITY BREAKDOWN

DAY 1

- Arrivals & Registration
- Lunch
- Rules Briefing (optional)
- Opening Dinner & Ceremony

DAY 2

- Coaches Meeting
- Participants Divisional Meetings
- Captains Meeting
- Round-robin play followed by the first round in the "Sweet 16" single-elimination playoff.
 - Top 2 teams from each room advance based on: Win-Loss; Head to Head (if there are ties); Points/toss-up heard

DAY 3

- The tournament concludes in the morning with the 4 quarter final games, the semi-final games, followed by the best 2-out-of-3 Championship.
- Closing Awards Banquet

DAY 4

- Departures, most in the very early morning.