



BLUE CRAB BOWL COMPETITION: THE GAME IN A CRAB SHELL

The Blue Crab Bowl is an academic competition that tests competitors' knowledge of the marine sciences. It is played in a quiz-show format with 2 teams of 4 students competing in each game. The competitors for each team sit at a table before the officials and audience. Questions are read aloud and are answered with quick responses by the competitors. Each competitor has control of a buzzer that will shut out all the other buzzers when activated.

Questions -- There are three types:

Toss-up/Buzzer questions are answered by the first competitor who buzzes in and is verbally recognized by the Moderator. If the answer to a toss-up question is wrong, the other team is given the opportunity to answer the toss-up question.

Bonus questions are only offered to a team that has correctly answered a toss-up. Bonus questions may only be answered by the team captain, but team members may consult with each other before the answer is given.

Team challenge questions (TCQs) are offered to both teams at the end of the first buzzer segment of each match. Both teams have the same amount of time to answer the two written questions (2 - 5 minutes each) and collaboration among team members is encouraged. The team captain must turn in the team's answer.

Points:

4 points for giving a correct answer to a toss-up/buzzer question. See rules below regarding acceptability of answers to toss-up questions.

Deductions: 4 points deducted from a team's score when a competitor **interrupts** the moderator, **is recognized** and **gives the wrong answer** for a Toss-up/buzzer question. If a competitor interrupts the moderator but is not recognized before giving the answer, it is ruled a "blurt" and that team loses the chance to answer the question, but does not lose points.

6 points for a correct answer to a bonus question.

20 points maximum for a correct answer to a team challenge question. Partial credit can be awarded.

Important Rules Regarding Acceptable Answers:

All toss-up/buzzer questions are multiple choice with the choices labeled W, X, Y or Z.

Saying the letter of the correct answer is an acceptable way to answer.

On a toss-up question, the first answer given is the only one that counts.

For a multiple choice answer: If a participant gives both a letter answer and the scientific answer, both must be correct. Further, the scientific answer must be identical with the correct answer in the NOSB answer book.

Here are some examples of how toss-up and bonus answers are judged:

Question: What is the liquid called that falls from the sky when it rains?

W) rain X) sleet Y) hail Z) snow

Acceptable right answers: "W" or "W, rain" or "rain"

Unacceptable answers:

X (this is easy to do since instinct makes some of us put X first)

X, rain (still wrong since rain was not labeled X when read by the moderator)

X, I mean W, rain (still wrong - the first answer is the one that counts)

A (also an easy impulse answer since most multiple choice tests are A, B, C, D)

Precipitation (wrong because not given as a choice by the moderator)

Competition Officials - There are five for every match

The **Moderator** reads the questions, keeps the match running smoothly and determines if an answer is right or wrong. The Moderator sits at a table or stands at a lectern facing the two teams.

The **Science Judge** determines the validity of answers that are referred by the moderator and settles any challenges to scientific answers. The Science Judge also controls the buzzer system. Sits/stands next to the Moderator, facing the two teams.

The **Rules Judge** stands at the front of the room, watching teams, officials and audience. Ensures all rules are followed, watches for scorekeeper or other procedural errors, maintains quiet and monitors audience behavior, assures that there are no disturbances or inappropriate communications.

The **Time Keeper** controls the game clock and answer time clock. The Time Keeper sits/stands next to the Moderator, facing the two teams.

The **Score Keeper** keeps a running tally of the points earned by each team on an overhead, within view of the competitors, officials and audience.

Additionally: One or two **Room Runners** assist the Rules Judge in monitoring the room, relay Team Challenge Questions to the Grading Room, take score packets to the Head Scorekeeper, and other duties as needed.

Timing & clocks

Each **match** consists of **two buzzer segments**, each segment is **6-minutes or up to 10 toss-up question pairs**. After the first buzzer segment, **two team challenge questions** are administered. Then, a minimum **2-minute break (halftime)** is taken while team challenge questions are graded.

The **game clock** is used to time the segments and break. It sits in view of the competitors and it may be stopped at the request of any official or when a team player challenges the validity of an answer.

The **answer clock**, typically a stopwatch, is used by the Time Keeper to time the brief intervals allowed for teams to answer questions. These intervals are as follows:

5 seconds from when the Moderator finishes reading a **toss-up** question to when a competitor buzzes in.

3 seconds from when a competitor buzzes to when he/she begins to give an answer.

20 seconds from when the moderator finishes reading a **bonus** question to when the team captain starts giving an answer.

Competition structure

Round-Robin Matches: Rounds 1-3

The 16 teams are divided into four Divisions of four teams each. In **Round-Robin** competitions, each team plays all others within its Division, so every team plays 3 matches during Rounds 1-3 (during the morning). Teams accumulate points based on number of wins, ties and losses (rather than raw scores).

Elimination Rounds: Rounds 4-7

The highest placing teams in each Division are assigned to the A Bracket, the remainder go in the B Bracket for the Elimination Rounds (during the afternoon). B teams are eliminated after 1 loss, A teams after 2 losses. During the initial Elimination Rounds, Round 4, A teams play other A teams, B teams play other B teams; four teams are eliminated. Starting with Round 5, remaining match winners play losers in three successive double-elimination series and eight more teams drop out. It is possible for a B team to stay in the running, just as it is possible for an A team to be eliminated – performance counts. Note: Teams eliminated in Round 4 will play a required Consolation Match during Round 5 – not for position, but prizes.

Trophy Rounds: Rounds 8-11

Four teams progress to the Trophy Rounds, competing for 4th through 1st place.