



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 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, and the question was completely read, 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 giving the answer.

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

Points:

4 points for giving a correct answer to a toss-up.

Acceptability of answers: see the footnote below.

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 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.

Important Rules & Tips Regarding Acceptable Answers:

Most toss-up 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 – rule 15)

X, I mean W, rain (still wrong - the first answer is the one that counts - rule 17)

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** who reads the questions, keeps the match running smoothly and determines if an answer is right or wrong. He/she stands at a lectern before the two teams.

The **Time Keeper** who controls the clocks.

The **Science Judge** who determines the validity of answers that are referred to him/her by the moderator and who settles any challenged answers. (See rules 10, 46 - 49) He/she also controls the buzzer system.

The **Rules Judge** who stands in the room where he/she can whack anyone who gets unruly and make quick interpretations of the rules.

The **Score Keeper** who keeps a running tally of the points earned by each team on a flip chart, within view of the competitors.

Timing & clocks

Each **match** consists of **two halves**, each including a **6-minute buzzer round** of approximately 14 question pairs. After the first buzzer round, **two team challenge questions** are administered. Then, a minimum **2-minute break** between halves is taken while team challenge questions are graded.

The **game clock** is used to time the halves 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 schedule

The Blue Crab Bowl combines round-robin and double-elimination formats. A “bracket diagram” is used to follow the teams seeded in the afternoon elimination rounds.

Round-Robin Matches

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

Elimination Rounds

After the morning rounds, the highest placing teams in each Division are assigned to the A Bracket, the remainder to the B Bracket for the **Elimination Rounds**. B teams are eliminated after 1 loss, A teams after 2 losses. During the initial Elimination Rounds, A teams play other A teams, B teams play other B teams; four teams are eliminated. Remaining match winners play losers in three successive double-elimination series and eight more teams drop out. It is possible for a B team stay in the running, just as it is possible for an A team to be eliminated – performance counts.

Trophy Rounds

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