Judging Team Projects

In years past projects undertaken by a team of two or three students were judged within a “Team” category. This resulted in projects from widely different sciences (“categories”) being judged against one another. To resolve this mismatch the Society for Science & the Public (the organizing body of the Intel International Science and Engineering Fair) changed the rules concerning team projects in 2011.

Team projects now compete within their respective categories rather than within a “Team” category. In other words, whether the project has been performed by one student or a team of two or three students if it is a “Biology” category project then it is to be judged along with all other “Biology” category projects.

Although this solves the problem of trying to judge a Chemistry project against a Computer project it raised the problem of having to judge projects performed by one student against those performed by two or three students. This problem was solved by using different judging guidelines for individual and team projects. This really was nothing new – we have always used different guidelines for individual and team projects. The guidelines for individual projects are:

- Creative Ability (30 pts)
- Scientific Thought (30 pts)
- Thoroughness (15 pts)
- Skill (15 pts)
- Clarity (10 pts);

while the guidelines for team projects are:

- Creative Ability (25 pts)
- Scientific Thought (25 pts)
- Thoroughness (12 pts)
- Skill (12 pts)
- Clarity (10 pts)
- Team Work (16 pts)

The big difference this change made to how we judge is that judges need to use both guidelines when a category includes a project performed by a team. To facilitate this your folder includes both individual (white) as well as team (pink) scoring sheets .Accordingly, when a category includes a project performed by a team:

- Use the individual guidelines (white scoring sheet) when scoring a project that was performed by a single student;
- Use the team guidelines (pink scoring sheet) when scoring a project that was performed by a team;
- Add the scores for each project and rank each project based upon their total score (A rank of “1” means you have picked that project as the best project).
- Turn in your rankings to your team captain. He/she will add the rankings for each project.
- The project with the lowest sum of the rankings “wins” and 2nd place through honorable mentions will be decided in order of the sum of the rankings.

If your category does not include any team projects then you only need to use the individual guidelines when scoring the projects within your category.

One final thought to keep in mind: a project performed by a team should demonstrate a significantly higher level of effort than an equivalent individual project – we should not reward a team for doing the same amount of work as performed by one student on an equivalent individual project.