



August 2021

TO: Binghamton Area High School Principals
FROM: Scott Kroner, MasterMinds Commissioner
RE: New extracurricular offering

For over two decades, schools across the Thruway corridor in New York have enjoyed access to a program called MasterMinds. MasterMinds is a team-based, quiz bowl-style, question-and-answer academic competition similar to the old College Bowl program. It provides a competitive structure to recognize the strengths of academically talented students.

Two years ago, a record number of schools (134) across upstate NY participated in live, in-person MasterMinds competitions. Last year, despite the COVID-19 pandemic, over 100 schools participated in a remote version of the program. This modification garnered wide-spread appreciation from administrators, coaches and players. At a time when many extracurricular activities were drastically cut back or even cancelled outright, MasterMinds continued to provide students with a chance to participate and be involved. While most regions of the state are planning on a return to in-person play, previously non-participating regions — including your own — are being offered an introduction to the MasterMinds program through remote play.

The attached sample schedule gives you some indication of how the season might look. After the registration deadline, coaches will hold a Zoom conference call with league officials to set the dates of competition. The sample schedule shows a variety weekdays making up the schedule. In reality, we would expect just one or two days being a regular 'game day' for the league.

As MasterMinds would be a new program, every school that signs up would be scheduled for a new school orientation. Also held remotely, the orientation would explain the rules of the game, explore to tips, hints and strategies for game play, and would include at least one full game. All this helps familiarize the students and coaches/advisors to the program.

In addition to a full season of MasterMinds play — plus playoffs if we have more than one league — and the new school orientation, the participation fee also includes access to a bank of practice materials from NAQT, the program's provider of game questions.

Introducing a new program during COVID — a pandemic that has made life difficult in the schools — might seem counter-intuitive. But with the success of last year's remote play, and the prospect that many school activities may continue to be negatively impacted by restrictions, this is a great time to try out an academic extracurricular and help boost your program offerings.

The fee for MasterMinds for the 2021-2022 season is **\$739/team** and the cost for the optional JV program is **\$319** (with varsity participation as a prerequisite). We are asking for forms to be returned by **Friday, November 5, 2021**. For any questions about the MasterMinds program, contact Scott Kroner at 585-473-0864 or reach out by e-mail at nymasterminds@gmail.com.

We hope to see your school try out this popular program, and look forward to hearing from you!