



August 2022

TO: Plattsburgh/Champlain Valley 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.

Three years ago, a record number of schools (134) across upstate NY participated in live, in-person MasterMinds competitions. Two years ago, 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. Last year saw a successful return to in-person play, with over 120 schools involved.

In-person play remains the gold standard for quiz bowl. However, recognizing that COVID and its variants could be a concern, and that travel may be difficult, we are going to offer competition in either in-person or remote forms. And we want to assure you that we have plans to make the program as vibrant and safe as we can. If circumstances make in-person play an unacceptable risk, we will suspend play until conditions improve. If conditions warrant, we can even convert to remote play until such time as health officials deem it reasonable to resume in-person play. Having completed a full season of remote play, we know how to do it, and do it effectively. Mask-wearing is always permitted but is not mandatory. Remote play would not be affected by those conditions.

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.

The fee for MasterMinds for the 2022-2023 season is **\$779/team** and the cost for the optional JV program is **\$346** (with varsity participation as a prerequisite). We are asking for forms to be returned by **Thursday, November 10, 2022**. For any questions about the MasterMinds program, contact Scott Kroner at 585-473-0864 or reach out by e-mail at nymasterminds@gmail.com. You can also check out the program website at: www.nymasterminds.com for more information including sample questions.

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