

## Preparation Strategies for the Decathlon Coach

- Identify a specific study location – utilize bulletin boards to establish ownership of location and to enhance team preparation.
- Develop and distribute a calendar of key activity dates — scrimmage dates, competition dates and study session dates.
- Meet with parents to explain the program, describe the time commitment expected of their children and secure their support for the program. Share the practice and competition schedule. Involve them in the preparation process.
- Have regular sessions each week – **Very Important.**
- Secure commitment from students to team preparation.
- Arrange team social activities to assist in building team spirit and camaraderie. Have special get-togethers, pizza or chili parties, watch videos or have snacks during study sessions.
- Recommend students read the assigned novel over the summer months.
- Determine number of sessions needed for each subject area. Cover one test area each week.
- Set realistic goals for team (review previous year's individual school performance report).
- Recruit assistance from teachers with specific strengths in the subject areas to be studied.
- Check with English Department; they might have students use the novel for their class, which helps in competition preparation.
- Schedule visits to art museum(s) and attendance at music concerts that highlight areas of study.
- Establish study notebooks for students to use for notes, handouts, resource material, etc. In addition, study boxes can be valuable for storage of ALL study materials in one location.
- Have students make their own flash cards for each test subject.
- Distribute workload through peer tutoring. Utilize the strengths of team members in the various subject areas. Allow them to teach the subjects.
- Develop a regular schedule that includes practice testing (tests prepared by the coach, students or professionals) essay writing, delivering speech and participating in mock interviews. Post the students' scores – an excellent motivational technique.
- Arrange mock competitions/scrimmages with neighboring schools.
- Bring in staff and/or community members to critique speeches and conduct interviews.
- Encourage the school community to support and recognize the students for their participation in this rigorous academic program.
- Have decathletes give speeches at faculty meetings, club meetings, etc.

