

THS Math Team Making Solid Progress

The Math Team just had its two most successful meets in the Fairfield County Math League since 2008. While the overall results of the team are not where we eventually want them to be, the actions that have been taken have positioned the team to be in good shape in the next several years.

In 2008, there were barely ten students on the team and, while most of them loved math, they were not the top math performers in the school. The coaches had to beg to get the minimum of six students required to be on the A team for each month of the competition. The team had one star performer, who kept us from being on the bottom of the 24 schools that participate in the league, but we had very little “bench” strength.

In the last year, the coaches took a much more aggressive stance in recruiting for the Math Team, offering new incentives that significantly increased the membership and activity on the team. In the beginning of the year we focused our recruiting efforts on the math honors classes, where an experienced math team member spoke to every honors class at the school. We also focused on the younger students, so that they could grow and improve and be able to contribute in the long run. Our recruiting results were impressive.

While we had only ten team members in 2008, this year we initially signed up over sixty students to be on the team. Over the first few months, slightly more than fifteen students dropped away because they found that they could not commit the necessary time. We currently have 45 team members, 32 of which have participated at least six practices or meets. We will only be losing seven seniors next spring, leaving us with an experienced group of students to compete at next year’s events.

We believe that we improved over the year for several reasons. We required students to participate in a monthly “mock” meet, in order to see which students were better at the topics tested during each meet. We regularly communicated with the team about upcoming practices and meets through electronic communications, often on a weekly basis. This was very helpful during last year’s inclement weather school closures and mid-term changes to the calendar. We also had practice sessions where the students worked in groups in order to “teach” each other the topics of the upcoming meet, and we had the students only focus on their best three topics, in order to mimic what the actual meet would be like for each of them.

The Math Team still has a ways to go. Last year’s overall finish of 17th place out of 24 schools is a big step up from where we were at the beginning of the year. Our next goal is to get into the Top Ten and, if we continue the momentum with the leadership we have seen from our underclassman, we will be able to accomplish that goal within the next year or two.

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