

A Quick Guide to forming an ARML team

by

Steven L. Adrian (revised 12/3/2011)

1. Congratulations on deciding to become an ARML coach! I guarantee that you will find it most rewarding. How you organize your team is entirely up to you and your students. This guide explains what's involved. Enjoy!

THE EVENT

The 37th annual American Regions Math League (ARML) competition will take place on June 1 and 2, 2012. It will be held simultaneously at four locations : Penn State University, the University of Iowa, the University of Georgia. and the University of Nevada at Las Vegas. In all, about 140+ teams will participate. A team consists of 15 students, high school age or lower. Alternates are welcome, and will be grouped together to form alternate teams, so everyone participates. Each team must bring two coaches in order to help proctor and supervise. Most teams arrive on campus Friday afternoon, stay in University dorms, and leave after the competition on the next day. The competition begins early Saturday morning at Penn State, the University of Iowa, and the University of Georgia, and in the early evening on Friday at UNLV. Fees are \$400 per team, and \$65-\$75 per person (see site information). For a full team of 15 students and two coaches, this comes to \$1505. The fees cover Friday night lodging, two meals on Campus, as well as administration costs. Teams must arrange their own transportation to and from the event. All detailed logistical information will be provided well ahead of time in the coach's packet which can be found at www.arml.com.

WHAT TO DO

1. GET STUDENTS

ARML should be quite an easy sell for you: a weekend at the largest, most exciting on-site math competition in the United States. Start with students you know, then advertise through your math team and math classes. Use your state and local math associations to inform teachers in your area. If you have a math league you have a ready made organization from which to draw students. You'll need 15 students by two weeks before the date of the competition, but there's no hurry to finalize the actual team members. It is very likely that you will find more than 15 interested students. Good! You can use team practices, math league scores, and ARML scores as the basis for choosing the final team. Remember, alternates are welcome at ARML, and will get to compete. Set a goal of having 8 committed students by Winter break, to establish a firm base.

2. HOLD PRACTICES

Practices are a great way for the team members to get to know each other. But if you are eager to lecture, you're out of luck here. Your students will be too busy working together on the old ARML exams, forcing you to relax and watch them teach each other. ARML exams make perfect materials for practices. See the ARML website for information about purchasing ARML books. Hold one or two practices as soon as you have a core of team members, so they will get a feel for things. You'll probably wait until Spring to hold regular practices. Biweekly practice is a realistic goal. Of course, this is up to you and your team. I do stress that team practice leads to dramatic improvements on ARML exams, as three of the four ARML rounds involve teamwork. Practicing will definitely pay off, in more ways than one.

3. COLLECT FUNDS

The UNLV site makes it more financially feasible for teams from California to attend ARML. ARML requires a firm guarantee of attendance, in the form of a completed team registration by May 8. New teams attending ARML for the first time will have the \$400 team fee waived. Checks should be made payable to ARML, and sent to Treasurer Linda Berman, 241 Central Park West, New York, NY 10024. If this presents a problem, please contact Steve Adrian at sladrian1@aol.com and we can work something out. Encourage your team to raise funds. This can be as easy as running an article about the team in local newspapers and asking for community support, which has worked well for me in the past. Parents may also be able to solicit sponsorship from their companies; I have had much success with this approach as well.

4. FINISHING TOUCHES

The coach's packet, which includes all logistical information and application materials, will be available on the internet at www.arml.com on or about April 1st. Complete all forms on the website and forward those that request you to do so. Application materials will be due prior to May 8th so by then you should know how many alternates you intend to bring, if any. Please be sure the remainder of your fees can be paid by the time you arrive at ARML, at the latest. Of course, the info packet will remind you of details (like collecting consent forms), so you don't have to worry about them for now.

5. CLOSING REMARKS

I thank you personally, on behalf of your students, for making ARML possible for them. Trust me that they will be thanking you soon enough. Each year coaches comment to us about the positive energy generated amongst their team members. They really get excited about learning together as a team, in a way seldom seen elsewhere. Perhaps being brought together with 2,400 other young minds for a weekend helps to ignite their energy and deepen their friendships. I don't know. But I do know that every year, their gratitude convinces me to do my best to make ARML available to more students the next year