Michigan to host battle of minds on Saturday

By Elizabeth Stevens
Lantern staff writer

While the Ohio State football team is participating in a battle of brawn on the Horseshoe, the OSU Academic Team, will be competing in a battle of the minds at the University of Michigan.

The winner of this meet competes in the Nationals Tournament in January, which is held at a different location each year, said Michael Starsinic, team captain and a graduate student in statistics.

Brad Savage, a senior majoring in classics and political science, said the team is prepared for the Regionals, because they know the other teams' strengths and weaknesses.

"We are also looking up new questions and reading up on current events," Savage said.

The team hopes to qualify, but it needs more members to become stronger, said Andy Wayne, a senior majoring in international business.

For now, the team relies on the annual Ohio Union intramural tournament for recruiting new members in the future, Wayne said.

In January, the Ohio Union will host a college bowl tournament, where anyone can show up and play, he said.

There are no academic criteria to be on the team, nor does one have to try out, Savage said.

"You don't have to be a super genius," Savage said. "It's fun and anyone can participate."

Academic Team tournaments resemble Quiz Bowl and Jeopardy, said Steve Pedler, a graduate student in international relations.

"Competitions are made up of multiple rounds, which are held in university classrooms and are usually supervised by students," Pedler said.

Each team scores points every time it answers questions correctly, he said.

The team's season lasts from October until April, and there are usually three tournaments per quarter.

The team prepares for tournaments by practicing two hours each week.

"During practice games, we use old question packets, because most questions are recycled at other tournaments," Starsinic said.

Science, history, literature, current events, sports, and pop culture, are all topics for questions, he said.

The OSU team consists of a first team and a second team. The OSU squad's first team, took first place with a record of 10-0, in the Nittany Lion Invitational Tournament on Nov. 9.

There, they competed against the University of Maryland, Cornell University, University of Pittsburgh, Johns Hopkins University, Penn State University, Swarthmore University, Bowling Green State University, and Western Michigan University.

The team went to the elimination rounds, beating University of Pittsburgh, University of Maryland, and Cornell University, 265 to 120, Starsinic said.

OSU's first team includes; Michael Starsinic, Steve Pedler, Bernard Grindel, graduate student in history, and Mike Haynes, a senior majoring in computer science.

Since the team was formed last year, it has made some major improvements, Wayne said. All of the top players are back, and the team has gained more depth in knowledge of the various subjects.

The team took first place overall, in a tournament at Michigan State University on Oct. 19. It also placed third overall, at Bowling Green on Oct. 26, Pedler said.

Competing with the Academic Team gives members a sense of accomplishment, self improvement, and pride, Starsinic said.

"Enthusiasm is more important than talent," he said. "If you're committed and willing to improve, you will get better with practice."

The OSU Academic Team meets every Monday at 7:30 p.m. in Hitchcock Hall 30.
Buckeyes seek national title

Academic team crushes Michigan, 18 other schools

By Tony Gottschlich
Lantern staff writer

Ohio State's success in bowl games this year continues.

OSU's Academic Team outsmarted the University of Michigan and 18 other schools this past weekend en route to winning the 1997 Region 7 College Bowl tournament. The victory sends the team to the National College Bowl tournament in April.

Tackling questions on current events, pop culture and academics, the OSU team cruised to the semifinal round by posting an 8-1 record in league play. The team then swept defending national champion Michigan in the best two-out-of-three series in semifinal play.

The team narrowly won the first game against the maize and blue by a score of 260-205, but went on to crush the team up north 325-85 in the second game.

The victory over Michigan was particularly satisfying to OSU team captain Christy Peterson.

"Michigan always has a good team," said Peterson, a senior majoring in chemistry. "Knocking them out of the finals made this the first year since 1990 that they haven't been in the finals."

After sending Michigan packing, the team squared off against defending Region 7 champion Western Michigan University in the finals.

The Bucks played possum in the first game, allowing Western Michigan to build up a lead before rallying to victory by a score of 255-225.

Western Michigan was no match for OSU in game two, however, succumbing to the intellectual might of the Buckeyes by a score of 430-130.

The Buckeyes have two months to train and one tune-up match before the National College Bowl tournament takes place April 18-20 at Monclair State University in New Jersey. The team will compete with schools from 15 other regions from around the country in the tournament.

Peterson isn't too worried, though, about matching wits with Harvard, MIT and other collegiate powerhouses.

"I think we'll do well," Peterson said. "We came out of a very strong region."
Competitive learning

Quiz bowls offer OSU students another avenue for knowledge

By Ken Gordon The Columbus Dispatch

Ohio State University's Academic Team practices for two upcoming national collegiate quiz-bowl championships.

[JONATHAN QUILTER/DISPATCH PHOTOS]

One after another with barely a pause, Hasaan Parker read a series of complex questions to the dozen students assembled recently in an Ohio State University classroom.

Despite the subject variety and difficulty, nearly every question drew a correct response:


Parker and the others form Ohio State's quiz-bowl team, which is preparing for two national collegiate championship tournaments — one on Saturday in Chicago and another April 21-22 in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

The team attracts bright students with a lot of curiosity and a passion for learning.
A buzzer being used during the practice

"I love the game, love the competition and all the camaraderie," team captain Chris Ray said. "There are so many fascinating things in the world that I don’t have the opportunity to study."

"Quiz bowl" is a generic term for various academic competitions that date to the 1950s. Different grade levels and states use various names for the contests — including, for example, "In the Know," Ohio’s high-school version.

Generally, the competitions involve four-player teams vying head-to-head on a series of "tossup" questions. The four- to six-sentence questions provide clues to the answer, and the clues get progressively easier. Any player can buzz in. A correct answer earns that team the right to a three-part bonus question, on which the players can collaborate.

The organizations that run the most prestigious collegiate tournaments are the Academic Competition Federation (the April 21-22 event) and the National Academic Quiz Tournaments (the Saturday event).

"Games can be intense," said Robert Hentzel, president of the NAQT. "You have very smart kids for whom this is their primary competitive activity. They practice every week and go to 10 or 12 tournaments during the year, so they are invested in it."

Ohio State calls its squad the Academic Team. Like other clubs at OSU, it receives funding from the university’s Office of Student Life. Ray said the team’s annual budget is about $5,000, including money contributed by members themselves.

When Ray arrived at OSU as a doctoral student in the fall of 2016, the club was less active than it had been in the past. Ray, who began competing in high school in Maryland and continued at the universities of Maryland and Chicago, recruited new members.

Among them was Clark Smith, a senior at Dublin Scioto High School who also takes classes at OSU. Now in his second year on the team, the 18-year-old is a top player.

"There’s always something new to learn, whether it’s anatomy or literature or archaeology," Smith said. "And then there are a lot of interesting people you can meet."

The 16-member club practices for two hours twice a week and competes about twice a month during the school year, Ray said.
To prepare for tournaments, members use a packet of questions from previous tournaments, available on the sponsors’ websites.

The players try to specialize in topic areas, to round out the team. For example, junior Aakash Singh has been focusing on Greek and Roman mythology and sophomore Lauren Spangler on current events.

Ray, 30, is the team’s top player, members say.

“Chris has been playing for a long time,” Smith said, “and he’s gotten pretty good.”

Last year, OSU placed third in the National Academic Quiz Tournaments championships in Division II, for teams with less-experienced players. (Ray didn’t compete because of a schedule conflict.)

With Ray available this year, the team will compete in the experienced Division I.

“We’ve improved a lot from last year,” Singh said. “You look on certain polls on the quiz-bowl sites, and we’re pretty much consensus top 10. We want to go as far as we can and maybe take first.”

gordon@dispatch.com @kgdispatch
State University Academic Team Constitution

Article I. Name

1. The club in question shall be officially named the Ohio State University Academic Team (OSUAT).

Article II. Mission

The OSUAT mission will consist of five parts:

1. The OSUAT will participate in various collegiate academic tournaments throughout the year, as determined by the leadership of the club. It is expected that the team will play as many tournaments per year as financially possible.

2. The OSUAT will dedicate itself to constant improvement to ever-increasing heights of quiz bowl prowess, culminating in the final goal of winning a national championship against the best competition in the country.

As of 2012, the most prestigious competitions in the country are ACF and NAQT.

This goal includes, but is certainly not limited to, holding AT LEAST one practice per week, every week during the quarter, save for finals weeks.

Writing sessions are also encouraged.

3. The OSUAT will encourage the growth of good quiz bowl in Ohio through the administration of various high school academic tournaments during the year and by otherwise fostering the development of high-caliber quiz bowl talent in the state of Ohio.

Good quiz bowl is generally defined by the two tenets of the toss-up/bonus format and pyramidality.
4. The OSUAT will maintain a culture of honesty, openness and good sportsmanship within the Ohio quiz bowl circuit, both collegiate and high school.

5. The OSUAT will, over the long term, attempt to expand interest and participation in quiz bowl throughout campus and the Ohio high school community.

Article III. The OSUAT is a Non-Discriminating Organization

In accordance with the policies of the Ohio State University, it is absolutely prohibited that the OSUAT allow any discrimination on the basis of age, color, disability, gender identity or expression, national origin, race, religion, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status.

Article IV. Club Organization

1. The club will be led by a President.

   Election: The President will be elected by a majority of club members each year. Should no candidate receive a majority, the club members will decide amongst themselves a proper mechanism for electing a new president.

   Duties: The President will have the final say over all decisions regarding the club. However, the President should make every effort to establish consensus. The President will be ultimately responsible for accomplishing the goals set forth in Article II. This includes all the necessary logistical and organizational tasks. The President will be responsible for deciding who is to run and read at practices, and when practices are to be held. The President should also be a role model

2. The President will be assisted in his duties by a Vice President.

   Election: The Vice President will be elected in the same manner as the President.

   Duties: The Vice President will share in the responsibilities of the President and assist the President in the execution of those responsibilities. The Vice President should engage in a
process of learning the President’s duties. This is in the hopes that there will be consistency and continuity in the administration of the OSUAT.

3. The finances of the club will be managed by a Treasurer.

Election: The Treasurer will be elected in the same manner as the President and Vice President.

Duties: The Treasurer is responsible for the club’s finances. These duties include maintenance of the club bank account, payment of registration fees and other related costs of tournaments in which the OSUAT is participating, and collection of fees from teams at OSUAT-run tournaments. All financial transactions involving the club must be approved by the Treasurer. The Treasurer is expected to be extremely conscientious and reliable. The Treasurer must be an active participant in the OSUAT’s affairs and must demonstrate a willingness and capacity to perform this extraordinarily important task.

4. Other Offices

The President and Vice President may create other offices both to assist in the execution of the club goals and to allow young players to gain experience in leadership roles. Possible duties for which additional positions may be created include, but are not limited to, a webmaster (should need for one arise), public relations, assisting in the administration of tournaments, etc.

5. Captain

Selection: The position of Captain is separate from the offices of President, Vice President, and Treasurer, but may be held by the occupants of any of those offices. The Captain must be selected by consensus of the members of the first team. The Captain's term of office is coterminous with the length of the tournament. The Captain has the right to relinquish his or her title at any point.

Duties: The Captain is responsible for leading the team during competition.

6. A Note on the Removal of Officers

Officers can be removed only through a majority vote of club members at a specified time and place, and only after a resolution for the removal of said officer is introduced by another officer.
Reasons for Removal: An Officer can only be removed before their term is up if they have failed to uphold their duties, as described in the Constitution, have abused their powers, or have become a disruption and hindrance to Academic Team activities.

Article V. Various other issues

1. A note on Money

It is the responsibility of the entire academic team to ensure that all academic team funds are spent wisely. This includes not spending team money on superfluous expenses like team dinners or pizza at practices. Acceptable uses of team funds include tournament entry fees, transportation costs (e.g. gas money) and lodging. It is highly encouraged that all packets be finished in time for the earliest submission deadline.

2. A note on Practices

Each practice should consist of at least two collegiate-level academic packets of appropriate difficulty, which is to be determined by the team. Given sufficient numbers, it is recommended to hold separate practices for novice and more experienced players. However, by all means, anyone is allowed to play at the higher-level practice. Stronger players should be discouraged from playing at the novice practice. It is also encouraged that separate team writing sessions be held at the discretion of the administration.

3. A Note on Trash

Playing trash tournaments is allowed on the two conditions that: firstly, team funds are not used to pay for trash tournament entry fees or other associated costs. Secondly, trash play must not distract from or come at the expense of academic play or any of the goals in Article II. Trash packets may be read in practice only after two academic packets have been read. Rare exceptions may be made to this rule. When in doubt, remember that academic play and competition remain the first, second and third priorities of the OSUAT.

4. A Note on Disruptive Players
Disruptive players may be removed from practices at the discretion of the senior OSUAT member present.

5. A Note on Collegiate Tournaments and Side Events

Club members may and should be encouraged to attend any collegiate tournament they choose, including tournaments not attended by the club itself, so long as their doing so does not conflict with their duties to the club. Players participating in events at which the OSUAT has no official presence may apply for team funds, which may be released at the discretion of the OSUAT leadership. An OSUAT-attended event is any collegiate-level tournament in which OSUAT members participate at the behest of the President and Vice-President. Academic side events and tournaments held during the summer (e.g. Chicago Open) can count as official OSUAT-attended events at the discretion of the OSUAT leadership. Side events can serve as valuable opportunities to develop the knowledge bases of particular players.

6. A Note on High-School All-Stars

In accordance with Article II, Section 3, the President, with the Treasurer's approval, may release team funds to directly support the activities of the Ohio High School All-Star Quiz Bowl team in national competition.

7. A Note on the Ohio NAQT State Championship

The OSUAT leadership should make every effort to ensure that this tournament remains in Columbus and is of the highest quality in every sense.

8. A Note on the Removal of Club Members

A Member can only be removed if he is deemed a true detriment to practices as well as a disruption to the overall productivity of the team. He can then be removed via an Officers vote, which must be unanimous, to be taken on a specific day and time.

Article VI. Amendments
1. This Constitution may be amended only by a unanimous vote of officers and a consensus of other team members.

2. Article III may only be amended to reflect the official policies of the Ohio State University in regard to discrimination.