

Clarksville Black History Bowl Competition

Official Rules and Competition Procedures

Sponsored by Greater Missionary Baptist Church and Black Clarksville

Purpose

The Clarksville Black History Bowl is designed to encourage the study, appreciation, and celebration of African American history and achievement. The competition will challenge participants' knowledge of significant people, events, institutions, movements, inventions, cultural contributions, Tennessee history, and other subjects that have shaped the Black experience in America and throughout the world.

The competition will be conducted in a spirit of **knowledge, fellowship, fairness, respect, and Christian sportsmanship.**

1. Team Composition and Participation

Each registered team will compete with **four active contestants**. Teams may also register up to **four alternate contestants** who may substitute during authorized breaks or time-outs. Four contestants should be seated and ready when a match begins. A team that is not prepared to compete at its scheduled starting time may be subject to forfeiture at the discretion of the Competition Director. All substitutions must be reported to the match officials before the substitute enters play. Under no circumstances can a contestant switch teams during competition. This is specifically for organizations with more than one team entered into the competition.

2. Match Format

Each match will consist of **two 15-minute halves or up to 50 questions per half, whichever occurs first**. Questions will primarily require contestants to provide an answer rather than select from multiple-choice options. Questions may address individuals, organizations, historical events, accomplishments, quotations, locations, dates, inventions, music, sports, religion, civil rights, military history, Tennessee and Clarksville history, and other approved Black history topics.

3. Buzzer System

A lockout buzzer system will be used whenever available. The contestant whose buzzer activates first earns the first opportunity to answer. The designated official will identify the contestant before an answer is accepted. If an equipment malfunction prevents officials from determining which team buzzed first, the question may be canceled and replaced.

4. Toss-Up Questions

Each half begins with a toss-up question. Toss-up questions are worth **one point**. Any contestant from either team may buzz in. Contestants may interrupt the reading of a toss-up if they believe they know the answer. Once recognized, the contestant must begin answering promptly. If a contestant interrupts the moderator and gives an incorrect answer, the moderator will finish reading the question for the opposing team only. Team

members **may not confer verbally, in writing, by signals, or by gestures during a toss-up question.** If neither team answers correctly, play continues with another toss-up. These procedures are adapted from the source rule set's recognition, interruption, five-second response, and no-conferring requirements.

5. **Bonus Questions**

A team that correctly answers a toss-up earns a bonus question. The bonus is worth **one additional point.** Team members may quietly confer on a bonus question. The team's designated captain must give the official answer unless the moderator specifically authorizes another contestant to respond. The team will have up to **10 seconds** to begin its answer. After the bonus is completed, competition returns to a toss-up question. This retains the basic bonus structure of the source rules while adapting the wording for this event.

6. **Acceptable Answers**

The first complete answer given after recognition will normally be considered the contestant's official answer. Judges may request clarification when an answer is partially correct but requires additional specificity. An answer given by the wrong contestant, after time expires, before proper recognition, or following prohibited conferring on a toss-up may be ruled invalid. Reasonable pronunciation variations will be accepted when the judges can clearly determine that the contestant knows the correct person, place, term, or event.

7. **Time-Outs**

Each team receives **one 60-second time-out per half.** Only the team's coach may request a time-out. A first-half time-out does not carry into the second half. An unused second-half time-out may be used during overtime. Time-outs must normally be requested after a completed bonus question and before the next toss-up begins. Coaches may speak with contestants and make substitutions during a time-out. Both teams may use the time-out period even when only one team requested it.

8. **Competition Officials**

Each match should include, when staffing permits, a **Moderator, Head Judge, Buzzer/Recognition Official, Timekeeper, and Scorekeeper.** The Moderator reads the questions. The Head Judge determines whether answers are acceptable and interprets competition rules. The Buzzer Official identifies the contestant entitled to answer. The Timekeeper manages match time, answer periods, and time-outs. The Scorekeeper maintains the official score. The Head Judge may consult the other officials before making a ruling.

9. **Coaches and Spectators**

Coaches, parents, teammates, and spectators may not provide contestants with answers, clues, gestures, signals, or assistance while a question is active. Spectators should remain quiet from the beginning of a question until the moderator announces the result. Electronic devices should be silenced. Repeated interference may result in a spectator being asked to leave the competition area. Use of study material is not permitted during competition.

10. **Sportsmanship and Conduct**

Greater Missionary Baptist Church expects every contestant, coach, parent, volunteer, and spectator to demonstrate respectful conduct. Arguing with officials, intentionally distracting another team, inappropriate language, mocking another contestant, or other

unsportsmanlike behavior may result in a warning, point penalty, removal from the competition area, or forfeiture in serious cases. Competition should remain consistent with the fellowship and ministry values of Greater Missionary Baptist Church.

11. Challenges and Questions About Rulings

Coaches may challenge a ruling concerning either **competition procedure or the correctness of an answer**. Challenges must be submitted in writing to the Head Judge within **three minutes following the end of the half or overtime period in which the disputed situation occurred**. Appropriate procedural challenges may include an incorrectly read question, timing problem, incorrect contestant responding, scoring error, or incorrect application of a competition rule. Answer challenges may include a questionable official answer, an alternate correct answer that was rejected, an incomplete answer that was accepted, or an answer believed to have been judged incorrectly. The attached source similarly limits formal inquiries to procedure or answers and requires them to be submitted in writing within three minutes.

12. Challenge Review

The Head Judge will make the first ruling on a written challenge after consulting other officials when necessary. If the coach disagrees with that decision, the matter may be referred to the **Competition Director or designated Chief Official**. The opposing coach may be permitted to submit a brief written response. The Competition Director's decision is final for that match. Once the tournament has concluded, completed match results will not be changed except to correct a documented clerical or scoring error discovered by competition officials.

13. Correcting Scores After a Successful Challenge

If a toss-up previously ruled correct is later ruled incorrect, the point for that toss-up will be removed along with any bonus point that resulted directly from it. If a toss-up previously ruled incorrect is later ruled correct, the appropriate point will be awarded and officials will make any necessary adjustment to points that resulted from the original ruling. If a bonus ruling is reversed, one point will either be added or removed as appropriate. An additional question required because of a successful challenge may be played without running time from the match clock. These principles follow the scoring-resolution system in the source rules.

14. Tied Matches and Overtime

If the score is tied at the end of regulation, the match proceeds immediately to overtime. Overtime continues using the toss-up and bonus format. The **first team to score five points during overtime wins the match**. Overtime begins with a toss-up question.

15. Tournament Format

Unless otherwise announced before the competition, the Clarksville Black History Bowl will use a **double-elimination tournament format**. Tournament bracket positions will be determined by a random drawing or another neutral method approved by the Competition Committee before play begins.

16. Question Authority

Only the official question sets approved by the **Clarksville Black History Bowl Competition Committee** may be used during tournament play. Competition questions and answers should be reviewed in advance for accuracy using reputable historical, academic, museum, biographical, governmental, church, and archival sources.

17. Final Authority

Greater Missionary Baptist Church reserves the right to interpret these rules, resolve circumstances not specifically addressed in the rules, make reasonable accommodations, and modify tournament procedures when necessary to preserve fairness and the orderly operation of the competition. Any changes that materially affect competition will be communicated to coaches before the affected round whenever possible.

These competition rules have been adopted and modified from the Hopkinsville Human Rights Commission's Black History Bowl competition rules.