

Dear Band Directors:

I presented earlier, an idea to a few local businesses and band directors about an idea they may interest us all. The idea was to sponsor a "Rhythm Olympics Tournament" based predominantly on the "Mortal Kombat" game that I have done with alternates at several honor band clinics, as well as students at several summer band camps.

The "Rhythm Olympics" would be held sometime in November, after the marching season is over, and yet prior to the upcoming county and region honor band auditions. This would allow the students to benefit from their experience in preparing for the competition with the sight reading portion of their honor band auditions. Each school would be able to send up to four, four- person, teams to compete. Schools may wish to host their own preliminary tournaments to choose which students or teams will represent their school in the county competition. The students will basically be on their own in preparing for the tournament, with a minimal time commitment on the band director's part. Teachers and students can access all needed materials through this web site, or print out the rhythm vocabulary (kind of like a spelling bee) from which competition rhythms will be selected. I have played the game using both the "no staff, three line exercises" on this list, or, the "Power Grids" from "Rhythm Masters" books 1 & 2 (which can also be accessed from this web site). Directors may need to help their students out if they have a specific problem with any rhythms, or, can opt. to run through these materials, in class or in smaller groups, using the same team competition format. In addition, an individual student "elimination" tournament could be set up, based upon the junior, clinic and senior honor band age levels. Students could enter as a member of a school team, and/or independently for the "solo completion" (with their director's approval). Three band directors from nearby counties will be asked to judge the competition. It would take place on an available Saturday if we did all age levels at once, or on separate evenings, one for middle school and one for high school.

It has been my experience that many of our band students are very competitive by nature, so why not take advantage of it. By invoking school/ band pride in a county wide competition, this might be a great way to help motivate our students to focus on what they fear and dislike most about honor band auditions, the "sight reading." I also proposed the possibility of perhaps having a "traveling trophy" for the winning teams at both the middle school and high school level. In addition, I hope to have prizes for the top placing individual "soloist" winners, as well as the members on each of the team champions. Think about this proposal, and if you feel it may offer any potential benefits to your program, let me know. We are still in the "brainstorming" phase of this new concept, so if you have any suggestions, please feel free to forward them. Let me know your thoughts by e-mail, or when I see you at the All-State clinic, later on this year.

Sincerely,

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