



Elks National Hoop Shoot

During the Hoop Shoot, have you ever had instances when you asked yourself, “How should I handle this?” I’ve had these moments. So, I thought I’d share with you my experiences and explain how I handled a few challenging situations.

When a Parent is Unable to Attend

At the end of each state contest, I meet with contest winners to give them an overview of the Regional Semi-Finals weekend. During one of these meetings, a contestant once informed me that her parents would not be able to attend the out-of-state regional contest. The contestant was being raised by a single mother who needed to stay behind to care for her other children. As a result, the contestant’s older brother had accompanied her to the state contest and planned to escort her to Regionals, as well. He was 18 years-old.

To ensure things ran smoothly, I asked the contestant’s brother to provide a certified letter from his mother, stating that she allowed him to care for the contestant and accompany her to Maine for the regional contest. He received the letter and they came to the Regionals. At the contest, I also asked a couple from their state to assist them throughout the weekend.

When a Contestant has a Medical Condition

During a state contest, a contestant had a bottle of water with her on the gym floor while competing. After being asked by the State Director to remove the bottle of water, the contestant gave it to her parents. This same contestant won the state contest and, after the awards banquet, I was approached by her parents. They informed me that their daughter had a medical condition (asthma hydration) which required her to hydrate herself frequently, especially during stressful times. Since this contestant would now be attending regionals, I needed a solution.

To address the issue, I asked the contestant’s parents to provide a note from her doctor confirming the diagnosis. This was so I would have support, if approached by another parent or gym official regarding the water bottle on the gym floor. Her parents gave me a doctor’s note when they arrived at the regional contest and everything went smoothly.

When a Contestant has a Peanut Allergy

Peanut allergies are difficult situations to contain. Anyone who touches the basketball can spread the allergen if they have been in contact with nuts. So, it’s important to come up with a plan and share it with families and volunteers thoroughly.

To provide a safe environment for one of my regional contestants who had a peanut allergy, I provided a separate ball for her to use during warm-ups. When it was time for her age-group to shoot, we also wiped down the basketball and seats and asked that all contestants and contest officials cleansed their hands with alcohol wipes. I also informed a registered nurse who attended our contest so that she would be available, if needed. Thankfully, the alcohol wipes did the trick and there was no need for an EpiPen to be used.

Dick Blinn
New England Regional Director

The Elks National Hoop Shoot program is funded by the Elks National Foundation, Inc. The Elks National Foundation helps Elks build stronger communities through programs that support youth, honor veterans, and meet needs in areas where Elks live and work. For more information, visit www.elks.org/enf.

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