

ELIGIBILITY: Open to all students aged 9 to 18 years of age registered in the club's baseball and soccer programs during the Fall 2009 season. Participants must be residents of Miami-Dade county enrolled in its public, private or charter schools. See Contest Rules for details.

CONTEST: Essay contest for different age levels as follows:

Group	Age Group (yrs old)	Students typically attending	Minimum Length	Maximum Length
A	9 to 10	Elementary	250 words	300 words
B	11 to 13	Middle School	500 words	750 words
C	14 to 18	High School	900 words	1000 words

Note: **Age**, not school, determines which group the student belongs to

PRIZES:

Group	1 st Prize	2 nd Prize	3 rd Prize	Consolation Prize to all contest participants
A	\$150	\$100	\$50	Yes
B	\$250	\$150	\$75	Yes
C	\$500	\$250	\$100	Yes

TIMING:

- Start Date: September 1st 2009
- Submission Date: No later than midnight, Friday, October 16, 2009
- Award Date: November 2009 (coincide with a joint end-of-season picnic for both programs).

TOPIC:

Group	Topic
A	My Sports Hero
B	Fans: Do they Help or Distract from Winning
C	Sports & Academics: Conflict or Complementary

OPTIMIST CLUB OF WESTCHESTER

FIRST ANNUAL ESSAY CONTEST

CONTEST RULES

Section I - General Rules

1. Contestants must compose an original essay with limited guidance from others. Webster's dictionary defines an essay as an analytic or interpretative literary composition.
2. Works of fiction or poetry will not be accepted.
3. There must be a minimum of 3 contestants in each group (GROUPS A, B & C). If there are not enough contestants in a group, the contest for the group will be cancelled.
4. The Optimist Club of Westchester will have the right to edit, publish or otherwise duplicate any essay entered into the contest without payment to the author. The decision of the Essay Committee will be final.

Section II - Qualifications for Contestants

1. Participants must sign-up for an age group. For example, if they are entering Group A, he or she must be between the age of 9 and 10 as of September 1, 2009.
2. The contest is open to students from 10 to 18 years old as of September 1st, 2009.
3. Students must be registered in any public, private or charter school in Mami-Dade county.
4. Students must reside in Miami-Dade County.
5. All contestants at each level of the contest must furnish a birth certificate before participating.
6. Participants must be registered and playing in the club's Fall 2009 baseball or soccer season.
7. If for whatever reason, a student registered for the contest, but was not able to complete playing at least 60% of the games, then student will be disqualified from the contest

Section III - Contest Rules

1. Participants must write on the official contest topic.
2. A cover page containing the following must be included:
 - a. Name of the Contestant
 - b. Sport he or she is registered in
 - c. Name of school he or she is attending
 - d. Address and phone number
 - e. Group (A, B or C) he or she is participating in
 - f. The age and birthday of the student.
 - g. The topic
 - h. Total number of words
 - i. The cover page word count is not included in the number of words in the submitted work.
3. Essays must be double-spaced and could either be typed or handwritten. The essay must be submitted with the accompanying documents (completed application form and copy of a birth certificate) to a baseball or soccer coach OR to the Optimist Club

of Westchester concession stands located at Tropical Park. Submit all material by the contest deadline.

4. Essays must meet the minimum and maximum number of words for each group (Group A, B or C). Every word of the essay is counted. The title, bibliography or footnotes are not included in the word count for the essay.
5. Each page of the essay must be numbered starting with the first page of the essay. The cover page is excluded from the page numbering. The page numbers must be centered at the bottom of each page.
6. Any quotations or copyrighted material used must be identified properly. Failure to identify non-original material will result in disqualification.
7. No reference can be made in the essay that identifies the student, parents, school, sports team or team mates.
8. The essay must be written in English.
9. The entry must be stapled together in the upper left-hand corner. Covers or folders of any type are not accepted.
10. The Essay Contest Chair will decide all protests in conformity with the official rules. The decision of the Contest Chair is final, and no higher appeals will be recognized.

Section IV – Judging and Timing

1. Judging will be completed by a panel of three qualified judges selected by the Essay Committee.
2. Judges will not know the identity of the author of the work they are judging.
3. Judges will not discuss or compare essays being judged.
4. Only judges can assign a penalty or award points.
5. All submissions must be completed on or before October 31, 2009. Judging will commence immediately after all submissions are received.
6. Winners will be announced at the joint end-of-season picnic sometime in mid November 2009.

Section V – Prizes

1. All awards will be given to the winners in the form of a check from the club.
2. Consolation non-monetary prizes will be awarded to all participants.

Section VI – Scoring

1. Material Organization – logical interpretation of the subject, adherence to topic: 40 points
2. Vocabulary and Style – phrasing and continuity: 30 points
3. Grammar, Punctuation and Spelling: 20 points
4. Neatness: 5 points
5. Adherence to Contest Rules – prepared in the proper format: 5 points

Section VII – Penalties and Point Deductions

1. Failure to list official topic: 2 points
2. Failure to identify total number of words: 10 points
3. Failure to stay within the minimum or maximum word limit: 10 points for each 25 words over/under limit.