What is Orca Bowl?

Part of the National Ocean Sciences Bowl, Orca Bowl is an annual Washington competition that challenges high-school students’ knowledge of the world’s oceans. Students study as teams to compete in a tournament of Science Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) fields, including ocean-related physics, chemistry, geology, biology and technology. Teams face rapid-fire multiple-choice, short-answer and team-challenge questions that require strong problem-solving skills and close cooperation. Washington Sea Grant manages the event, with assistance from other College of the Environment divisions, including the schools of Oceanography and Aquatic and Fishery Sciences, and the Joint Institute for the Study of the Atmosphere and Ocean.

Orca Bowl offers teachers a vehicle to teach sciences in an interdisciplinary manner and provides access to marine educators and experts. It presents opportunities for students to meet UW faculty, staff and student volunteers and other ocean community scientists. Orca Bowl engages multiple levels of the science pipeline, with high-school, undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and professionals all participating in the competition.

All teams receive awards for participation in Orca Bowl. Top prizes include shipboard research experiences and a scholarship to the School of Oceanography.

In 2011, Hannah Snow, a member of the 2010 winning team from Friday Harbor, accepted the first scholarship offered by the competition. She is now a sophomore, majoring in oceanography and engineering — and she volunteered at the 2011 Orca Bowl.

“Orca Bowl allowed me to apply my interest in ocean science outside the classroom and helped get me where I am today, studying marine robotics at MIT.”
Nicholas Roberts, former Orca Bowl team member, Friday Harbor, Washington

“Everyone in the audience was amazed at the difficulty of questions these students could answer. The rapid-fire questions stumped even the PhDs in the audience.”
Ardi Kveven, Coach, Ocean Research College Academy (ORCA), Everett, Washington

2011 Teams by Congressional District
WA-01: Bainbridge Island High, Eagle High
WA-02: Friday Harbor High, ORCA
WA-03: Castle Rock High, EXCEL High, Winlock High
WA-04: Soap Lake High
WA-06: Shelton High
WA-07: Ballard High, Garfield High, West Seattle High

Orca Bowl 2011
After 10 rounds of competition on Feb. 26, Friday Harbor and Ocean Research College Academy (ORCA) faced-off in the final round. A close 11th-round match ended with Friday Harbor winning. The team traveled, all expenses paid, to the National Ocean Sciences Bowl finals, hosted by Texas A&M University in Galveston, Texas. Each member of the winning Orca Bowl team now qualifies for a UW Oceanography Undergraduate Tuition Scholarship, one academic quarter per year per student majoring in oceanography.

For more information:
Maile Sullivan,
Orca Bowl Regional Coordinator
Washington Sea Grant
3716 Brooklyn Ave. N.E.
Seattle, WA 98105-6716
orcabowl@uw.edu
www.wsg.washington.edu
206.685.9117