

## The One Million Archer Tournament

By: Roy Grimes, President, NASP January 9th 2009

When the National Archery in the Schools Program (NASP) was launched nearly seven years ago, one of the items on our "wish list" was to someday organize and implement a "one million archer tournament". We had a few other items on that "wish list" including demonstrating NASP for Congress in Washington DC and implementing the program in 25 states by the end of our 6th year. With help from thousands of NASP friends, we achieved both those items on October 3, 2007 and December 31, 2008 respectively.

By the end of the current school year, NASP participation will have reached the 1,000,000 students/year mark. Conducting an event for all these student archers would surely be impossible, at least by current strategies. The NASP National tournament broke a North American archery tournament record with 2,856 student archers in May, 2008. We expect to add another 1,000 archers to this record at the NASP nationals in May, 2009. But, making room for 1,000,000 students would be a huge, daunting leap.

If every school could find the time to send their teachers and students and if every student could afford the travel expenses we'd still have a problem finding enough space for a live tournament of this scale. A flight of one million archers would need 250,000 target butts and shooting lanes. The shooting line would have to be more than 236 miles long! Several states couldn't contain such a tournament within their boundaries! Imagine what fine binoculars (future NASP sponsor?) the judges would need to coordinate shooting directions? (IF NASP had a program sponsor that made binoculars I would have mentioned their name at this point.) Of course such a tournament would be comprised of more than a single flight of archers. If we used our national format of 6 flights we'd only need a shooting line 39 miles long. If we tried to conduct such a tournament at the current national site in Louisville, Kentucky the tournament would last 365 days (actually with 4 flights per day we'd be 47,304 short of one million archers) - of course we'd start on next year's tournament the following day!



Obviously, I'm being a bit silly with these calculations yes, I had to take off my shoes for that ciphering. NASP's solution to this dilemma of meeting tournament experience demand by student archers is to go "virtual". For nearly six months now, a team of computer dudes have been working with us to create a web-based tournament management system to accommodate NASP archers. Our goal for this tool is multi-faceted, but the primary objective is to make it possible for every physical education class offering NASP lessons - to culminate the class with a world-wide competition. The virtual tournament tool will be used by NASP-certified teachers to register every NASP archer in the school to shoot the NASP tournament format during a specific time period. Using this tool the teacher/coach will register each student archer, pay small registration fees, and then report the results of the school-based tournament results as they occur. Then the tool will sort the results according to Elementary, Middle, or High School divisions, co-gender teams, and girl and boy individual ranks. Finally awards will be shipped to recipients and on-line results will be announced for everyone to ponder and celebrate.

Proceeds from the virtual tournament will be used to establish equipment grants for new NASP schools and for replacement items at existing NASP schools. An added bonus to participation in the virtual contests will be that a world, country, state, province, and or even city "rank" will be determined and kept updated for every student archer. Students will be able to go on-line to see where they rank in the world of NASP archers.

Other features of the virtual tournament tool are being designed to help student archers shoot more and more often. Eventually, we intend this site to be a place where students can find out about archery tournaments other than NASP and have their results from these formats entered in their name, influencing their world rank. We hope to even use the site and ranking feature to encourage community service among young people participating in the NASP. This good works factor could let the young person know what kind of "archer-citizen" they are becoming. Suggestions and ideas will be provided to help the archer grow in this personal development arena.

Of course NASP has no desire or intention of discouraging development of face to face or "live" NASP archery tournaments. Teachers continue to tell us that the more a student participates in archery, even beyond NASP, the greater are academic and personal development benefits to the young person. However, we realize that less than 3% of all NASP students will participate in a NASP tournament this school year. The barriers of priority, time and travel expense are just too great for too many. It is our goal that the virtual tournament will extend the feelings of excitement and belonging to every NASP kid that has learned to respond to the two whistle command to "get bow".

As the tool is completed it will likely be tested in a couple of NASP states, one in the Midwest and another in the western U.S. This will help these states have their first NASP state tournament. Then, we hope to launch the first world-wide invitational tournament before the end of spring, 2009. We anticipate establishing a series of sponsored virtual tournaments

during the school year 2009-10 beginning this fall. We are currently seeking corporate title sponsors of this tournament series to entertain NASP students in 46 NASP states, Canada, South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand. The NASP remains ever-grateful to several large charter sponsors such as Mathews Archery, the Archery Trade Association, and the National Wild Turkey Federation. Certainly without their help and that of a myriad of other supporters (see NASP web site) we wouldn't be ready to tick this item off our "wish list". If you or your company would like to help the effort, please let us know. The NASP is a 501 c (3) non-profit foundation, and eager to receive those who share our passion for "Changing lives, "one arrow at a time". [www.archeryintheschools.org](http://www.archeryintheschools.org)