

How to Conduct a Battle of the Belts

What is the Battle of the Belts Contest?

It's a fast-moving competition where teams of 4 youth see who can buckle-up the fastest. To start, the team runs from a starting line, to a 4-door car. The Starting line is 15 feet from the back of the car's rear bumper. Team members get in, buckle up, and throw their hands in the air until a Referee shouts "ROTATE!" Then they unbuckle, get out, rotate clockwise around the car to the next seat and buckle-up again. They rotate twice more until they have been buckled in all four seats. The team with the fastest time after four "buckle-ups" is the winner!

Who can do "Battle"?

Middle school-age (grades 5-8) competitors compete in the Junior Division and high school-age competitors compete in the Senior Division. Teams may be comprised of mixed genders and grades.

When does the "Battle" begin?

That is up to you! Look for times when risk is higher like prom and graduation. However, you can hold your battle of the belts at any time during the year. Since this is usually an outdoor activity it would be best to plan for warmer months. The organization "Sean's Run" conducts a Battle of the Belts World Championship every year. Sean's Run was founded in memory of Sean Patrick French lost his life on January 1, 2002 as a passenger in a drunk-driving car crash. If your youth group or school conducts a Preliminary Battles by April 15th they can be eligible to compete to be champion! For more information go to www.seansrun.com.

How do we plan our "Battle?"

Begin by getting approval from your Principal or Program Director and they can help decide who needs to be involved, as well as how and when the Battle will be conducted. Schools and youth groups may want to ask local police to help conduct the event. The contest can be held as a club activity, a SADD chapter event, a student council or PTA event, an after-school activity, an assembly program, a weekend event or however deemed appropriate by school or youth organization officials.

Once the date of your Battle has been set, then it's time to promote the "Battle of the Belts," encouraging teens to sign-up in teams of four. Be sure to use posters, public announcements and flyers to let everyone know about the event. Place "Battle of the Belts" Team Sign-Up Sheets in locations around where teens can sign up their teams.

Encourage participants to come up with original team names that are reflective of a message to promote seat belt use. How about: "The Belters?" "Seatbelt Sallies?" "Benny and the Belts?" "Click Notes?" (We bet you can come up with better names!)

Also, you will need to recruit a Referee, a Timer and a Recorder for each car. The Referee watches closely to be sure all team members buckle up before telling them to rotate to the next seat. The Timer uses a stop watch which starts when the Referee signals the start and time ends when the Referee blows a whistle signaling that the team has completed its buckle-up in the fourth seat. The Recorder writes the time for each team on a time sheet. You may want to give awards to fastest teams, teams with best names or to teams that tried the hardest.

Equipment / Supplies Needed

- Promotional posters
- Sign up sheets
- 4-door Car(s)
- Stop Watches
- Time Recording Sheet
- Whistle
- Awards
- You will need one or more 4-door cars to use in the Battle.

Safety First!

The Battle needs to be conducted safely – No injuries in this Battle please! Car doors stay open during the Battle.

Optional Activities To build interest, Preliminary Battles may include a special fun run-off that includes teens competing against teams of school faculty and/or police officers.