

## Navigators vs. Explorers: And the winner is ... everyone

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Nearly 150 "learnballers" turned out for a tournament with a new twist at Elizabeth Forward Middle School auditorium last week.

The Learnball Tournament, a two-hour academic and athletic challenge open to the public on March 23, was planned and conducted by seventh grade world geography students at the middle school. Parents, teachers and friends watched as the participants drained their brains in academic games, shot hoops, took part in talent demonstrations, watched a variety act and viewed a geography video. Prizes and refreshments were also featured.

The tournament highlights the ongoing competition between two teams - Navigators and Explorers - that formed at the beginning of the school year. Under the spon-



**Game officials**—Student leaders call the shots in the Learnball Tournament

sorship of geography teacher Lindy Marwood, the two teams have competed daily in the areas of conduct, attendance and learning.

"The ongoing contest idea keeps motivation high," said Marwood. "There are no losers, because even though one team walks out ahead, the points keep accumulating so there are plenty of opportunities for others to catch up."

Marwood said students of all academic levels can participate because the point value of questions, ranging from five to 30, correspond to the difficulty of that query.

"The higher the point value the more critical thinking and comparing and contrasting are required to answer the question," said the teacher.

Marwood said a challenge and double challenge feature built into

the competition helps students maintain their concentration throughout the evening.

"Everybody pays attention," said Marwood. "The bright students don't tune out and the slower ones can keep pace."

Students Dale Thornton and Alissa Lombardo serve as president and vice president, respectively, of the Navigators, while Carmen Teolis and Lindsay Ruhling were elected to those

positions for the Explorers.

The officers appointed an 18-member council to design and carry out the tournament.

"It was their program," said Marwood. "They put it together, made decisions, got in touch with the media, arranged for refreshments, prepared the questions, rented the hall and contacted folks to take pictures."

Marwood said the competition will continue until the conclusion of the school year. She said rewards in the form of tickets are presented at the end of each grading period based on the number of earned points. She said a drawing will be held after the final day of classes, and prizes will be mailed to the recipients.

"It was very successful," said Marwood of the Learnball Tournament. "The students were pumped up about it."