

Carolina 2019 Spring TEN80 Invitational

“How to Organize a Regional Event”

Objective: Host a regional TEN80 sanctioned event for Southeast ten80 teams to compete face-to-face

Purpose: Create TEN80 awareness in the Charlotte area

Procedure:

Step 1: The first part of hosting an event was lining up a host site. I was lucky enough to establish a really good relationship with my Kenan Fellows Program internship partner and mentor. I approached them about being involved and, while my Kenan mentor was all for it, I still had to get permission from the grounds manager and sales team manager. With the help of my mentor, I requested to use the Xfinity garage at the Charlotte Motor Speedway as the event site. I visited the garage a few times from July until the final event in February to see how to best utilize the space.

Step 2: I had to contact TEN80 and find out what was needed to host an event. They sent me a packet on everything that would need to be planned out in order to host an event. As a coach for a TEN80 competition team the last three years, I have been to a few events and seen first-hand how the event is run. After talking with the TEN80 support staff, I was informed I would need training to become a sanctioned official, and would need a sanctioned official on hand during the first event I hosted. During the Fall regional in Columbia, SC I shadowed the TEN80 official to be trained how to run my event. He also volunteered to be on site for my competition to help from the event. David Prigge, the sanctioned official also offered to bring the track as I only had the timing equipment. If he had not volunteered to bring his equipment, TEN80 did offer to ship one to us to borrow. The track equipment runs between \$1,500 - \$2,000 which I was trying to avoid coming up with this time around.

Step 3: Finding judges was probably the easiest part of the planning process. I had several people from the speedway offer to be judges as they wanted to be part of the competition. They were my 3-minute pitch judges. Our lunch sponsor also volunteered to be a judge. With his company connection to NASCAR I put him as the graphic design judge. Mr. Prigge and I were the judges for the racing events and in charge of totaling all the points at the end. I also had a few people from one of my school's community partners volunteer to judge as well. The day of, I had to go over each rubric/criteria with the judges for the different events. The events that took place were, 3-minute business pitch, drag racing, graphic design/car design and three race events.

Step 4: Of course one of the biggest needs for hosting a competition is having enough teams to compete. TEN80 requires you to create a flyer that they can post on their dashboard for all

teams across the United States to see. Along with that, I contacted a few teams that we have faced in the past to inform them of the competition. All three teams I contacted participated in the competition, along with five other teams that signed up through the TEN80 dashboard. We had a total of seven race teams and one rover team compete. The top two overall teams get an automatic bid to Nationals. This year, Nationals will be held at Texas A & M, April 27-28.

Step 5: If you are going to have a competition, you need trophies that the students will want to earn. For this, I reached out to an acquaintance—Ken—who has a small welding business. Last year at the TEN80 Nationals the trophies were all made out of spark plugs. Using that concept, I explained to Ken what the event was and asked if he would be willing to weld some old car parts/tools together for trophies. To my surprise, he jumped at the chance and he did it for free, provided that I supply the car parts. I went to the local Midas shop and the manager was more than willing to help out. He had his shop save a box of junk car parts over the next three weeks, which I then delivered to Ken, who assembled the completed trophies.

My TEN80 team then raised \$105 to pay for the plaques that ended up on the front of the trophies. See the pictures below.

Step 6: With the competition running from 9am - 2:00pm, everyone needed to have lunch. I found a lunch sponsor and someone who wanted to come to the event and be part of it—Spectra Premium, a company that makes radiators. He told me to get a quote and an explanation of the event, to send to his corporate office. I went to Harris Teeter, priced out sandwiches for 150 people, and sent him the quote. Within a week, his company approved the sponsorship and gave him the day off to attend the event. I also had one of my team sponsors, Santi Designs, donate water and chips to go with the sandwiches. If nothing else, this experience gave me a reference point for a budget to use for future events.

Step 7: My original purpose for this competition was to create awareness of TEN80 education in Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools and the Charlotte area. With my principal's blessing, I wrote the superintendent and invited him to the competition. Unfortunately, I never heard back and he did not attend.

Originally, one of the judges was going to be a staff member from the NASCAR Hall of Fame. Unfortunately, due to scheduling around the Daytona 500, she was unable to make it. That said, she was then able to attend our school's career day as a guest speaker.

I also invited the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' Media Team. One of their staff did attend and interviewed me and several students.

Step 8: The day of the competition I arrived at the speedway at 7:30am to set up for the event. I set up 50 chairs and 13 tables that the speedway staff left in the Xfinity garage for me. I met with my Kenan Fellows mentor the week before in the garage to determine the final amount and arrangement of table and chairs that would be needed.

Teams were to arrive between 9 - 10am to set up their pit area. With the competition not officially starting until 10am this would give me plenty of time to set up. The track did not arrive until around 9:30am, 90 minutes after I expected it to arrive. Kris Gorman, another Kenan Fellow at my school, was given permission to attend the event. He helped with setup and also took pictures for me throughout the day.

After the competition was over, all teams helped break everything down and clean the garage so it was as clean as when we arrived. We had leftover sandwiches and drinks, which we gave to the teams traveling long-distance.

After everyone was out of the garage, I locked it back up and debriefed with the speedway.

Reflection:

When I started planning the event in September, everything seemed to all be going smoothly. In the weeks leading up to the competition, it seemed as if I was always running one way or the other to have something completed and ready for the event.

Overall the event was a success. We had eight teams: five from Columbia, SC and three from Charlotte, NC participate in the event. The Charlotte Motor Speedway was so enthusiastic about the event that they offered to be an annual host and are interested in possibly hosting a national tournament. I have informed my TEN80 contact of the Speedway's interest and they are looking into the venue as a possibility for future events.

I learned that things were not going to go as planned the day of the event. We had to make adjustments almost immediately and I would need to make adjustments as new challenges arose. I had not taken traffic into account on the morning of the competition, causing me to adjust the event schedule to keep us on pace for the remainder of the day; this was especially important for teams whose students had to return to school in time for afternoon dismissal. I also had a judge back out the morning of the event, which left me with about two hours to find a new judge for an event.

One thing I did not prepare for, was how to balance my time as both the event host and as a support for my own team. Thankfully, I had a few parent volunteers who attended the event and stepped in when I was not available. This is something I will need to work on as I plan to partner with the Charlotte Motor Speedway and make this an annual event. I think it did have an effect on my team, as I was not there when a problem arose and/or they needed suggestions.

Luckily, those were the only two hardships of the day. Based on teams' Instagram pages and general talk at the event, everyone had a great time. Teams that arrived on-time volunteered to go first, in order to give the teams that were late a chance to set up and prepare. That was just one example of teams helping each other out. There were multiple occasions where teams

offered help to one another, even though they were competing against each other. This was great to see, since the top two seeds earned a bid to nationals at Texas A & M.

Taking what I learned from this event, I will use it to improve next year's event. One thing I definitely would like to improve is getting more press at the event. While I did have Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools media personnel there, I would like to have more district-level support and local news media coverage. Since my purpose was to create awareness of TEN80 Education in the Charlotte area, I would have to say that I failed in that area. I was hoping to involve more media and STEM educators in the area, but it just didn't work out.

Lastly, I would have never thought to host this event myself or had the opportunity to have it at the Charlotte Motor Speedway if it was not for my Kenan Fellows Internship. This has been a life-changing year. From having to leave Cullowhee in the middle of the night as my wife went into labor with our first child, to learning how to take care of my child, to having a three-week internship with a 4-week old at home, to buying a new house the same month of my event, to planning the event in between all of this has definitely tested me. I can say that I am grateful for the partnership I have created with my internship. They asked me to have my students be on display at their Fall STEM EXPO—an event that I helped plan during my internship. We will be returning as a vendor during the Spring Expo in May, as well. Finally, I will continue to partner with Charlotte Motor Speedway and make the Spring TEN80 Regional Invitational an annual event. This was all made possible through my Kenan Fellowship.

I have built a great partnership with my internship and look forward to working with them in the future. I would highly recommend anyone participating in the Kenan Fellows Program. My only regret is having to leave my retreat early and missing out on the final retreat in Raleigh when I will be in Texas for my team's National tournament. Go Asphalt Motorsports!

See pictures from the event below.

Sponsors









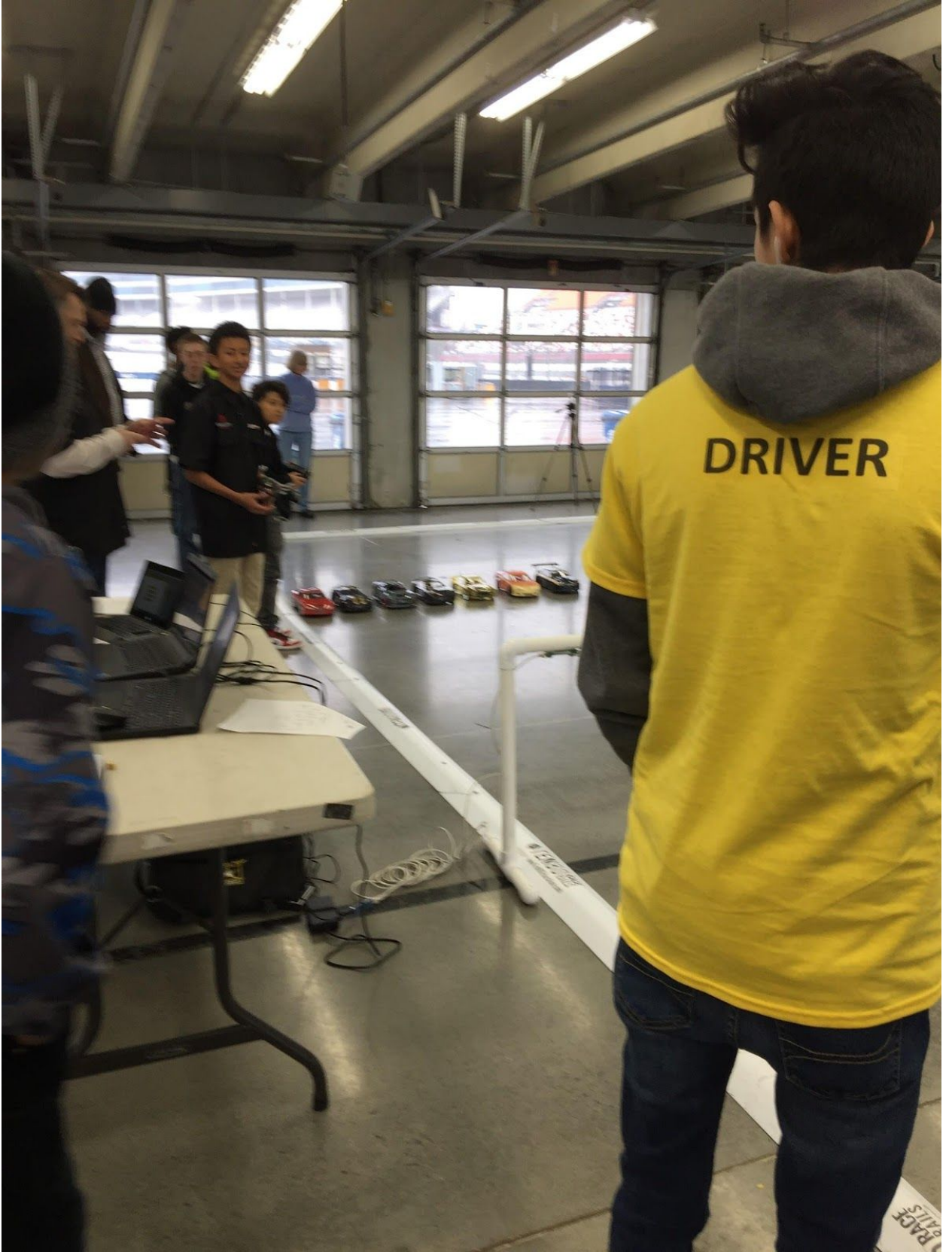
Pit Area











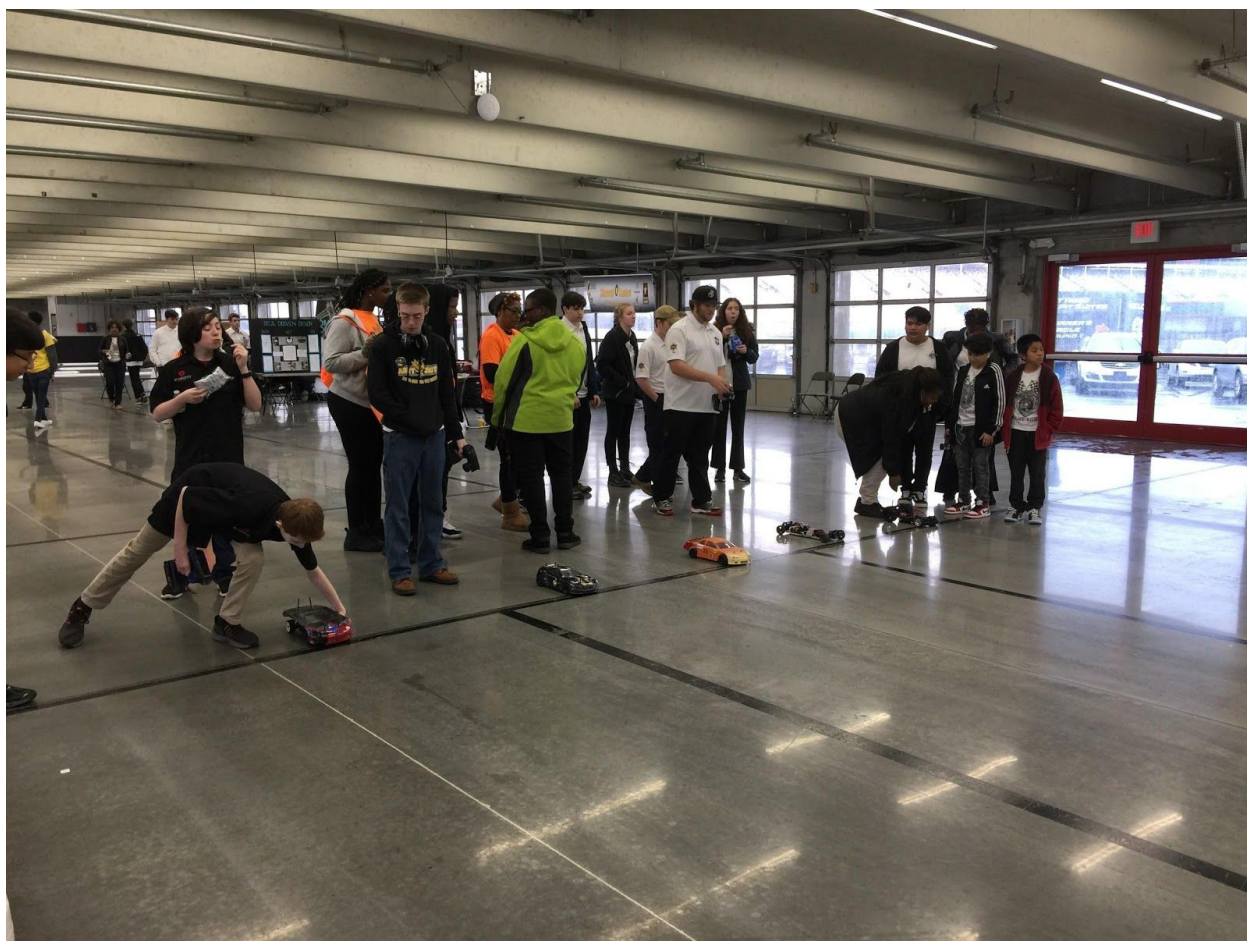
Racing







Drag races









1st Place Overall
TEN80 Education
2019
Carolin's Spring
Invitational



1st Place Race Events
TENSO Education
2019 Carolinas Spring Invitational



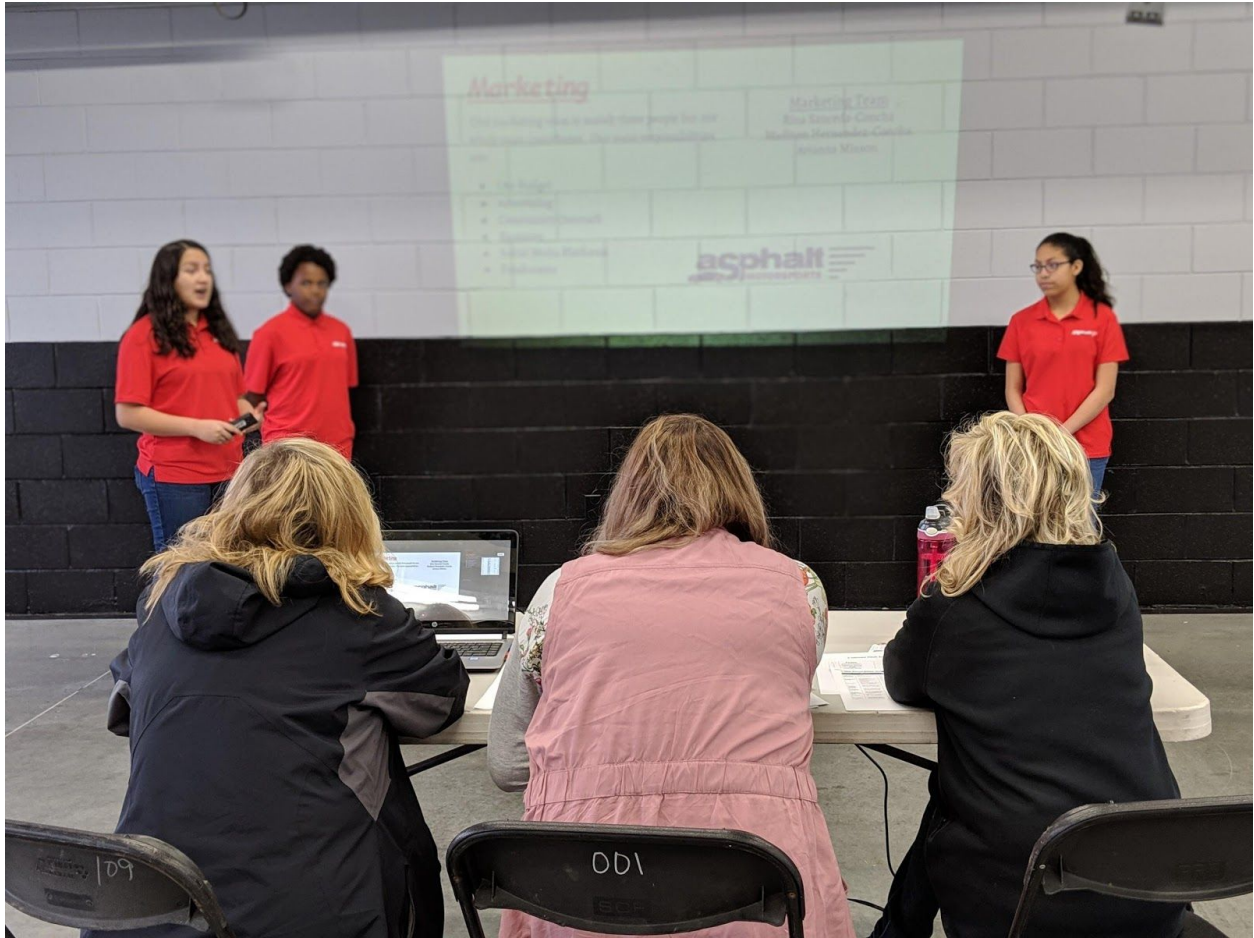
1st Place Drag Racing
TEN80 Education
2019 Carolinas Spring Invitational



1st Place Rover
TEN80 Education
2019 Carolinas Spring Invitational



3 Minute Pitch







Awards









Asphalt Motorsports







