



The History of the WNY Battle of the Businesses

Running for nine years in our region, the Western New York (WNY) Battle of the Businesses was actually born in Warren County Pennsylvania in 1989. Called the Business-to-Business Challenge, this precursor of the present two-day event held on the campus of Buffalo State College was conducted for four years under the auspices of the Warren County YMCA.

From its humble beginnings, the "Battle" has flourished and grown to enormous popularity. Since moving to Western New York in 1994, the first WNY "Battle" attracted some 10 teams comprising 270 competitors. Reaching a peak of more than 40 teams, the "Battle" now includes more than 2500 competitors. Clearly, the WNY Battle of the Businesses can rightfully be called an institution in our community.

Billed by its creator and coordinator, Shawna R. Dosser, MS, as a fund-raising and friend-raising™ event, each year the "Battle" donates funds to local charities. Computers for Children, Inc., National Multiple Sclerosis Society, Buffalo State Foundation and The Wellness Institute of Greater Buffalo and Western New York have all benefited from its proceeds.

In addition to its contributions to local charities, the "Battle" has become a pillar for health and wellness in the workplace in the WNY community. Each year, representatives of local businesses, universities, health organizations, and media – diverted from their everyday activities – enjoy this wonderful opportunity to play together in exciting, fun-filled sports and games.

With an emphasis on health and wellness, the "Battle" brings together people from all walks of life to join in healthy activities that nurture mind, body, and spirit. They come from industry, service, education, and government – managers, executives, secretaries, assembly line workers, technicians, teachers, clerks, journalists, and others – a virtual cross-section of our community. To ensure fairness, teams are separated into three divisions: organizations of more than 500 employees, organizations of 100-499 and those having less than 100. Division IA & IB teams consist of a maximum of 35-40 competitors, while Division II teams cannot exceed 20 members.

"Battle" planning begins at the kickoff breakfast in early March. From there, "Battle" excitement grows throughout the spring as planning continues unabated. The Captains' meeting complements the steering committee gatherings that chart the course and develop enthusiasm for the upcoming competition. As the hour draws close to "Battle" time in early June, an air of anticipation grips the campus at Buffalo State College. Day one – Friday evening – sets the tone with exuberant exhortations by local officials and other well-wishers. With a stirring send-off, it's on to the competition!

Once away from their customary surroundings and routines, all distinctions fade away rapidly, as competitors focus on having fun in the myriad "Battle" games and athletic matches. In two days of exciting events ranging from charades to rock climbing, competitors prove their mettle as they strive to gain points toward getting their team's name inscribed on the coveted "Battle" Cup. Structured to offer something for everyone, the "Battle" includes mind-teasers like Team Pictionary that test concentration skill rather than athleticism. For the mildly athletic, events such as Human Shuffleboard and Bocce Ball are included. And to satisfy the needs of the athletically endowed, there are Volleyball, Briefcase Race, and Obstacle Course. Events too numerous to mention – more than 35 in all – make for an enjoyable time for all!

Each year, as the "Battle" draws to a close, a somber tone engulfs the throngs that have gathered at Buffalo State College for this enthralling event. But, refreshed and revitalized by the "Battle," competitors return to their former duties with zeal and enthusiasm. The winners wallow in their success; others take solace in the old adage "Wait'll next year!"