



The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

NEWS RELEASE

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SOLAR CUP™ TEAMS HEAD TO THE STARTING LINE *About 750 Southern California students to race solar-powered boats at Lake Skinner this weekend, May 17-19*

Leading up to the Metropolitan Water District's action-packed 17th annual Solar Cup this weekend, about 750 high school students will put their teamwork, leadership and communication skills to the test along with the application of academic concepts at the nation's largest solar-powered boat racing competition.

Starting this Friday (May 17) at Lake Skinner in the Temecula Valley, teams of students from 40 Southland high schools will race their self-built 16-foot, single-seat boats in sprint and endurance races, capping seven months of preparation.

"I'm really proud of the kids here. To see them struggle, fail and then succeed – it really puts it into perspective how much potential these kids have," said Calabasas High School robotics teacher and Solar Cup adviser Michael Yeung. "Seeing them doing things they love and things they never thought they could do almost brings a tear to my eye. It's just fantastic."

Before they hit the water, teams are put through a series of qualifying events by Metropolitan and a technical advisory team from Occidental College to ensure boats meet the program's requirements and are safe and seaworthy. On Friday, the boats will be qualified and tested on Lake Skinner.

The competition kicks off Saturday, May 18, when the teams face off in two 90-minute endurance heats around a 1.6-kilometer course, and continues Sunday, May 19, with 200-meter sprint races. The event closes with an awards ceremony on Sunday afternoon.

"I really like how you build an entire boat from scratch – with the wood and frame, then the motor and electrical components, and then you get to race it at the end, which is really fun," said Mira Costa High senior Ashley Anderson who joined the program her sophomore year.

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“The most important thing I’ve learned is to manage your time, because you have to time it out throughout the whole year and work together as a team.”

To help students build their boats, Metropolitan’s member agencies provide sponsorships of \$2,500 for veteran teams and \$4,000 for rookie teams. This year, there are 10 rookie teams, the highest number of new teams since Solar Cup’s early years.

Students spent afternoons and weekends for months building the boats, deciding which solar panels, batteries, motors, propellers and other components to buy. They then had the task of figuring out how to arrange those components with the goal of creating the fastest boat possible.

“In addition to the veteran teams that return year after year, the number of new teams we have in 2019 is a testament to the strength of this program and the value it brings to students,” said Solar Cup coordinator Julie Kalbacher, a state-certified teacher with Metropolitan’s education programs.

The program also provides a lot of new experiences outside of academics, she said, including spending the weekend camping at Lake Skinner. “For some students, building their boat will be their first time using power tools, others may have never been camping before, so camping at Lake Skinner is very exciting,” she said.

As part of the program, the teams created social media campaigns on the importance of water conservation, using their creativity to produce Instagram stories under the theme “It’s a SoCal Thing: Conserve Water Every Day, 365.” Along with racing results, teams earn points from these public service messages, as well as technical inspections and completion of technical reports.

Solar Cup began in 2002 with eight teams and about 100 students. In the 17 years since, it has grown into the nation’s largest solar-powered boat competition. Along the way, more than 10,000 young men and women have participated in Solar Cup competitions, learning about water resource management, alternative energy development and sustainability. Many have been inspired to pursue careers in math, physics, engineering and environmental science. More information, event videos and photos from past Solar Cup events can be found at mwdh2o.com/inthecommunity/education-programs.

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The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California is a state-established cooperative that delivers water to 26 member agencies serving 19 million people in six counties. The district imports water from the Colorado River and Northern California to supplement local supplies, and helps develop increased water conservation, recycling, storage and other resource-management programs.

Member Agency Sponsor	Team/High School	City
Anaheim Public Utilities	Anaheim High School	Anaheim
Burbank Water & Power	Burbank High School	Burbank
Long Beach Water Department	Cabrillo High School	Long Beach
Las Virgenes MWD	Calabasas High School	Calabasas
Western MWD* #	Centennial High School	Corona
West Basin MWD #	Centinela Valley Union High SD	Lawndale
Inland Empire Utilities Agency*	Chino Hills High School	Chino Hills
City of Compton	Compton High School	Compton
Municipal Water District of Orange County*	Costa Mesa High School	Costa Mesa
San Diego County Water Authority	Del Lago Academy	Escondido
Three Valleys MWD*	Diamond Ranch High School	Pomona
Upper San Gabriel Valley MWD	Don Bosco Technical Institute	Rosemead
Central Basin MWD	Downey High School	Downey
Western MWD* #	Eastvale STEM Academy @ Roosevelt HS	Corona
Western MWD*	Elsinore HS / Lakeside HS / Temescal Canyon HS	Wildomar
Three Valleys MWD*	Ganesha High School	Pomona
Eastern MWD*	Hemet USD Team (West Valley HS; Western Science Ctr; Hemet HS)	Hemet
San Diego County Water Authority	High Tech High North County	San Marcos
Pasadena Water & Power	John Muir High School	Pasadena
Foothill MWD*	La Cañada High School	La Cañada Flintridge
West Basin MWD	Lennox Math, Science & Technology Academy	Lennox
Upper San Gabriel Valley MWD	Los Altos High School	Hacienda Heights
Inland Empire Utilities Agency*	Los Osos High School	Rancho Cucamonga
Anaheim Public Utilities #	Magnolia High School	Anaheim
Long Beach Water Department	McBride High School	Long Beach
West Basin MWD	Mira Costa High School	Manhattan Beach
Upper San Gabriel Valley MWD	Mountain View High School	El Monte
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Narbonne High School	Harbor City
Three Valleys MWD*	Nogales High School	La Puente
Western MWD*	Norte Vista High School	Riverside
Las Virgenes MWD #	Oaks Christian School	Westlake Village
Municipal Water District of Orange County*	Oxford Academy	Cypress
West Basin MWD	Palos Verdes High School	Palos Verdes Estates
Eastern MWD*	Perris Union High SD Team (Heritage HS; Perris HS)	Romoland
Three Valleys MWD* #	Pomona High School	Pomona
Eastern MWD* #	San Jacinto Valley Academy	San Jacinto
Upper San Gabriel Valley MWD #	Sierra Vista High School	Baldwin Park
Eastern MWD*	Temecula Valley USD Team (Chaparral HS / Great Oak HS)	Temecula
Inland Empire Utilities Agency*	Upland High School	Upland
Los Angeles Department of Water and Power	Venice HS STEMM Magnet	Los Angeles

* Has Co-Sponsor(s)

Rookie Team