



The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California

NEWS RELEASE

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DOWNEY HIGH SCHOOL TAKES EARLY LEAD AS THREE-DAY SOLAR CUP™ KICKS OFF LAKE SKINNER **Metropolitan Water District's 14th annual event—nation's largest solar-powered boat competition—hits the water today**

Downey High School may be the team to beat at Metropolitan Water District's 14th annual Solar Cup, which starts today at Lake Skinner, just north of Temecula in southwest Riverside County.

The school has the top preliminary score among 38 teams from high schools across Los Angeles, Orange, Riverside, San Bernardino and San Diego counties competing in the three-day solar-powered boat race, the largest such competition in the country. After today's qualifying events, teams on Saturday will start racing the solar-powered boats they built, with the final winner determined by this weekend's action.

Downey's early lead is based on preliminary scores earned in the months leading up to this weekend, with the team notching 349 points out of a possible 355. Much of the early success is based on the team earning the highest possible score, 250 points, for its public service message, a key component of the competition in which teams produce a short video or social media campaign encouraging people to conserve water. Downey also earned 55 points out of a possible 55 for meeting various completion deadlines and 44 points out of 50 for the team's two technical progress reports.

Huntington Beach's Coast High School is in second place based on preliminary scores, with 340 total points. And Kaiser High School in Fontana is the top-rated rookie school so far, with 294 points, besting two other teams also participating in Solar Cup for the first time this year.

"We've been working with these schools all year to help students maximize their boats' speed and endurance and introduce them to practical applications of engineering, math and science," said Julie Miller, a state-certified teacher with Metropolitan's education programs and Solar Cup coordinator. "A few teams have risen to the top so far, but the final test will be this weekend. No matter who wins, we hope all the students walk away with a greater appreciation for environmental sciences and engineering."

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The teams will first be put through a series of qualifying events today (May 13) to ensure their boats meet rules and are safe and seaworthy. The competition heats up Saturday (May 14) when the single-seat, 16-foot boats outfitted with solar-collection panels compete in endurance races around a 1.6-kilometer course in the morning and afternoon.

Sunday (May 15) the boats' solar panels are removed and their energy-storing capabilities are put to the test as they compete in 200-meter sprint races powered by solar energy stored in batteries.

The races will be followed by an awards ceremony, with trophies awarded in veteran and rookie divisions for teams with the highest points, as well as to teams honored for "Hottest-Looking Boat," teamwork and sportsmanship.

The races are easily visible from the shore, and the event is open to the public from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. with free admission and parking. Lake Skinner is at 37701 Warren Road, Winchester, in the Temecula Valley of southwest Riverside County—about 10 miles northeast of the Rancho California Road exit off Interstate 15.

About 10,000 students have participated in Solar Cup since the inaugural event featured just eight boats in 2002. The program is a team-based educational competition that allows students to apply their skills in math, physics, engineering and communications, while learning about Southern California's water sources, resource management, conservation and alternative energy development.

Teams are divided into four regions—the Foothill, Central & Bay, Inland Empire and South Counties regions. And Solar Cup includes a rookie division for first-time teams.

Additional information and event videos and photos from past Solar Cup events can be found at mwdh2o.com/inthecommunity and longer videos are also available for use [here](#). Photos and video of this year's event will be available upon request.

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