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News photo by Ben French

Ridgeview Middle School students competed in the first preparatory competition for the 2006 Science Olympiad in Centerville Saturday.

## Students gear up for Science Olympiads

■ Ridgeview's two teams finished 23rd and 26th Saturday.

By JACK SOWERS

Northwest Columbus News Reporter

The two teams representing Ridgeview Middle School didn't fare so well Saturday in their first preparatory competition for the 2006 Science Olympiad, but coach Tim Bradrick says they're just warming up.

Out of the 31 teams that participated in the invitational science competition at Magsig Middle School in Centerville, Ridgeview's two teams of 15 participants finished 23rd and 26th.

"That's pretty typical of the past several years," Bradrick said. "It's kind of a wake-up call. The (teams) know what the challenge is, and in the past they've risen to that challenge and done pretty well."

History has proven Bradrick right — a team from Ridgeview in 2001 won the overall

Olympiad for its region, which includes 16 middle schools in Central and Southern Ohio. The following year, Ridgeview finished among the top 10 middle schools in the state.

Last year, Ridgeview finished second in the region, 23rd in the state. Last year, 260 teams representing more than 4,000 Ohio K-12 students and teachers participated in the competition.

See STUDENTS, Page 2A



## STUDENTS

*Continued from Page 1A*

The Olympiad involves teams of 15 students competing in 23 events in three broad categories – applied science, scientific processes and test taking/problem solving – over the course of a day.

“It’s a crazy schedule, with people running around all

over the place,” Bradrick said.

Teams score points in reverse order of their finish.

For example, if a team finishes first in a 31-team event, the winning team earns 31 points, and the last-place team gets one point.

The first national Science Olympiad was in 1985 at East Lansing, Mich., patterned

after statewide models in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Delaware and Michigan.

And while students who compete do not use bunsen burners to light Olympic torches at opening ceremonies, the Olympiad does earn a gold medal for reinforcing classroom science principles while fostering cooperation and teamwork.

Bradrick has coached the Olympiad teams at Ridgeview for the past seven years, and team founder and former Ridgeview teacher Dennis Beeis advises students in the bottle-rocket competition.

At Magsig, a team from Ridgeview took third place out of the 31 teams that com-

peted.

A Ridgeview team also finished third at Magsig in “Junkyard Challenge,” a new event for 2006. In this event, students use provided materials to keep a marble in motion for 30 seconds while moving from one container to another.

Ridgeview earned sixth-place finishes Saturday in the academic test “Disease Detective” and “Storm the Castle,” which involves trebuchier (think “catapult”) accuracy.

Ridgeview has two more competitions – an invitational at Solon on Feb. 4, and the school’s own invitational on Feb. 11 – before the regionals March 4 at Grandview Heights Middle School.

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