Inside Competitions
The Key to Winning

championships changing lives for the better
what contestants need to know
WorldSkills winners
a father-son team that’s leaving a legacy

SkillsUSA
campions
WINTER 2013
CHAMPIONS AT WORK
LEADERS IN FUNDRAISING

Official Fundraising Partner of SkillsUSA

Set your sales in motion and earn big today by contacting Norma at fundraising@ibsa.com or 800.830.9011
SkillsUSA Championships
Insider’s Guide
The new year brings a new set of rules for competitors. Everyone in '13 will be in luck when following these tips from the experts.
BY CRAIG E. MOORE

Keys to Winning:
What Competitors Have Learned
Some students, like Nicole Horan (right), are able to return to the SkillsUSA Championships year after year. Find out how they keep qualifying for the national event, what’s most important when competing, and how the experience has changed their lives in unexpected ways.
BY ANN P. SCHREIBER
AND E. THOMAS HALL

Gold Standard:
Father and Son
Bob Abitz was a legend in SkillsUSA Championships circles when he announced his retirement as an instructor. Who could possibly fill his shoes? His son Jay, who’s continuing the family legacy by taking it to the next level.
BY TOM KERCHEVAL

On the Cover:
SkillsUSA Champion Samantha Cain of Cleveland, Ga. Photo by Lloyd Wolf.
A Job Skills Prediction

Executive Director Tim Lawrence has known SkillsUSA as a student member, instructor, industry partner and state director. Got a question? He can help.

Q: What skills will employers want by the time I graduate? Things are always changing in the workforce.

Tim: The workforce is more competitive than ever. The best career opportunities will always go to those who are prepared with excellent technical, professional and academic skills. SkillsUSA helps students develop all three.

Our competitive events can give you an extra edge. Whether you enter a technical or leadership event, it’s a great way to hone your personal discipline and the skills so important to success. While some skills may change in a year or two, other abilities are always in demand: maintaining composure under pressure, absorbing information quickly and solving problems.

Industry experts develop standards for every SkillsUSA competition, testing the skills they need in new hires. In this issue of SkillsUSA Champions, you’ll find their tips for many events. These experts have worked hard throughout their lives to become the best at what they do, and now they’re looking to pass on what they’ve learned to a new generation.

Also in this issue, past competitors tell you how to excel in the championships and how these events can help later in your career. Yukari Anada says to prepare well, even after you arrive at the contest site. Zoe Pettit reminds others that only a few points separate medalists from the rest, and often those points are deducted for something that could easily have been prevented. Carl Bailey tells how a contest experience helped him decide on an entirely different career from what he’d planned. You can apply all their advice immediately in your own life.

You’ll also read about our international team members, who just returned from the WorldSkills Americas event in Brazil with seven medals. They’re at the top of their game but still preparing for the larger competition in Germany this July. As the philosopher Aristotle said a long time ago, “We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, then, is not an act, but a habit.”

This is one of the most exciting times of the SkillsUSA year as students prepare for contests at the local, district and state levels. By now, many of you are halfway through your training program and getting close to graduation. In time, you’ll find that life is a continuous competition, and I hope your SkillsUSA experience will help mold and prepare you for the challenges and opportunities you’ll face along the way.

Got questions about SkillsUSA or other topics? Email anyinfo@skillsusa.org or send a letter to the address on the facing page. Put “Ask Tim” in the subject line or mail address.
An Industry Leader
Champions
Our Champions

For its third annual Champion of the Year award dinner in Washington, D.C., SkillsUSA honored Nicholas T. Pinchuk, but the chairman and CEO of Snap-on Inc. was quick to reflect that honor back onto SkillsUSA students. “If you see these young people, you cannot fail to admire them,” Pinchuk said. “If you hear them, you cannot fail to be in awe, and if you actually meet them, you cannot fail to be confident in our future.”

The Champion of the Year award is given annually to a corporate executive for exemplary work in supporting the development of a highly skilled American workforce. Snap-on has been one of SkillsUSA’s most valued partners for more than 30 years, and Pinchuk has provided leadership in the development of new initiatives to link industry and education.

For video and more, visit: www.skillsusa.org/supporters/champion.shtml.

Snap-on’s Pinchuk gladly accepts a new addition to his wardrobe while receiving the Champion of the Year award at the Ritz-Carlton hotel in Washington.

WorldTeam Scores Big in Brazil

Seven of SkillsUSA WorldTeam’s 20 members — the most ever — hauled in the hardware at the recent WorldSkills Americas competition in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

Grabbing gold were Daniel Berrios (in Cabinetmaking), George Mason (Auto Body) and Kieron Kohlmann (Auto Mechanics). Scoring silver were Josh Bedell (CNC Milling) and Nicholas Michalenko (Plumbing). Brandishing bronze were Matthew Lorman (Cooking) and Ronald Olkowski (CNC Turning). For full information and photos, visit: www.skillsusa.org/compete/worldskillsamerica.shtml. In July, the full team heads to Leipzig, Germany, for the WorldSkills Competition.
STUDENTS LEAVE POLICYMAKERS SEEING RED

At SkillsUSA’s most recent Washington Leadership Training Institute, a record 314 students and advisors from 27 states and Puerto Rico descended on D.C. for a week of awe-inspiring opportunities.

During WLTI, students receive intensive leadership training, tour the sights and historical landmarks of our nation’s capital, and learn to advocate locally and nationally for SkillsUSA and career and technical education.

The highlight of the event was easy to recognize. Swathes of red blazers, well, blazed a trail through Capitol Hill, their proud owners bringing the SkillsUSA message to the doorsteps of their representatives. In the eyes of the visiting students and through their words, policymakers witnessed firsthand the positive effect SkillsUSA and CTE can have on a young life and, by extension, America’s future.

For photo and video highlights from the event, visit: www.skillsusa.org/events/wlti.shtml.

Forging a High Voltage Partnership

SkillsUSA is charged up about its new fundraising partnership with a battery company. Through the partnership, local chapters who sell Interstate Batteries products will receive 50 percent of the sales. The state association that sells the most by June 1 will receive a cash prize. For more information, visit: www.interstatebatteries.com/fundraising/skillsusa.

Gear Up For Spring At The SkillsUSA Store!

Visit us at www.SkillsUSAStore.org today!

As part of WLTI, national college/postsecondary president Ben Morris participates in the wreath-laying ceremony at Arlington Cemetery’s Tomb of the Unknowns.
2013 brings new rules for SkillsUSA’s competition program. In what areas do contestants need to focus? How can they better prepare for championships at every level?

**SkillsUSA Championships**

**ELECTRICAL CONSTRUCTION WIRING** Focus on the 2012 national electricians’ code book and EMT conduit bending. **GREG RACHAL, POPS ELECTRIC LLC**

**WELDING** Read and understand the drawings. **EUGENE HORNBERGER, EUGENE G. HORNBERGER LLC**

**CULINARY ARTS** Have a well planned timeline for the day. **GREG BEACHEY, NATIONAL RESTAURANT ASSOCIATION EDUCATIONAL FOUNDATION**

**PHOTOGRAPHY** Really study the history of photography, iconic photographers and images. **BILL CHENAILLE, ACADEMY FOR MEDIA PRODUCTION, PENNSYLVANIA**
The answers from our national technical committee chairs — as well as experienced competitors — will help everyone get a jump start in the new year.

The SkillsUSA Championships is a key part of a chapter’s program of work. Whether locally, at the state level or nationally, competing helps students develop more fully as members and as future employees.

To be successful, it’s important to know what’s expected in the competition. The first, most basic step is to read the rules. Those are in the SkillsUSA Championships Technical Standards manual, which has been updated for 2013-14 and is available at: www.skillsusa.org/store/contests.html.

Dave Worden, program director for the SkillsUSA Championships, explains, “Fifty-two contests have had some sort of change. Some are small changes, some are extensive.” Since winners are sometimes determined by narrow point margins, every competitor needs the latest guide.

One change that affects every contest has to do with score sheets, which have been removed from both the CD and book versions of the technical standards. Instead, score sheets can be downloaded from: www.skillsusa.org/compete/updates.shtml. On the same page, updates can be found throughout the year for the national competitions.

“We start getting updates as early as September and sometimes have them all the way through May,” Worden says.

Be sure to bookmark this Contest Updates page and check it regularly. Keep in mind that even if there’s already been an update, there may be additional ones to come. The date of the latest update is always posted beside the contest name.

The rules for individual competitions (and in some cases, actual projects from the previous year) can also be downloaded at: www.skillsusa.org/store/singles.html. For this insider’s guide, some events are not listed due to space limitations but are online at: http://bit.ly/UrR2Fn.

By Craig E. Moore
Her dream was to live in America; a SkillsUSA contest landed her a job

From the time she was a little girl, Yukari Anada wanted to come to the United States. After following her dream here, she excelled in a SkillsUSA speech competition, even though English isn’t her first language.

The Fukui, Japan, native set out for America at age 23, after years of waiting and pursuing various education and career avenues. At NIC International College in Tokyo, which offers exchange programs with U.S. colleges, Anada was recruited to attend the University of Arkansas at Fort Smith (UAFS).

That was three years ago. While at UAFS, she attended a career fair, visited a SkillsUSA booth and got involved in the local chapter. In 2012, Anada placed seventh nationally in Prepared Speech at the college/postsecondary level.

She has this advice for competitors: “Take your time and prepare well. There is no easy way to win if you are not prepared. I prepared well, especially in Kansas City.”

For example, after arriving at the conference city, Anada got up early and practiced in a hotel conference room. An employee saw her and offered a microphone.

While she may not have earned a national medal, Anada, who recently graduated with a bachelor’s degree in accounting, listed her experiences with SkillsUSA on a job application and was asked about it during the interview.

“This competition absolutely helped me to find a job,” she says. “Being a noncitizen in the States, we are often treated as foreigners and have a lot of regulations to apply for job openings. I was fortunate enough to find a job with one of the well-known Japanese car companies as a cost accountant as well as a translator.

“Here in America, there are so many sponsors who support schools and students to achieve their dreams,” Anada adds. “That’s something that we’re missing in Japan. I really wish my country would have a program like SkillsUSA.”

— By Ann P. Schreiber
Soon after becoming a SkillsUSA member, Zoe Pettit was recruited to compete in Prepared Speech. The culinary arts student made it to the national competition and earned a gold medal. The following year, she was back at the nationals again — but this time in Commercial Baking, even though her school didn’t have that kind of program.

A student at Somerset County Vocational Technical High School in Bridgewater, N.J., Pettit had worked as a sous chef at a restaurant for a few weeks but didn’t like it. What she loved was baking, from the science of it to creating treats for people with food allergies.

There was only one commercial baking textbook in the lab, but with the guidance of her culinary arts instructor, John Vingara, Pettit earned gold at her state competition and placed 17th at nationals.

“You just have to prepare. I think that’s the key to my success with SkillsUSA. You have to read the rules,” Pettit says. “SkillsUSA outlines everything that you need. You know exactly what you’re being scored on and how many points each thing is worth. Even with the guidelines, there are still people who show up with their uniforms not correct, which means points that you’re throwing out the window.”

She cites a particular example from her state event. “I tell this story now to all the younger kids who are going into these competitions. The girl who got fourth place was five points behind me, and I got gold. She got a five-point [safety] deduction because her bangs were not pulled back out of her face. She would have been tied with me for a gold medal. Those are silly things that shouldn’t cost you a gold medal if you’re that talented.” — APS ●

The last graduation cap
they’ll ever need.

Give your students the advantage by introducing the same learning series our John Deere technicians use in their first year on the job. John Deere Publishing offers five comprehensive series of educational curricula covering agribusiness management practices, agricultural machinery operation, and equipment maintenance. Written in simple language instruction with detailed and easy-to-follow illustrations, these books give students clear demonstrations for greater understanding and retention. Our textbooks will help students to think and analyze, enabling them to become better technicians or machine operators of large and small equipment. For more information visit us at www.JohnDeere.com/publications.
‘You’ve got to enjoy life’

Preparing for a contest changed his career goal

With a course load heavy in academics, Carl Bailey was headed to college to study forensic psychology. But preparing for SkillsUSA’s Customer Service competition changed his career path entirely.

There were many directions he could have gone. At Adirondack High School in Boonville, N.Y., Bailey had been the lead in school musicals, the manager of sports teams and a band member. At a golf course, he worked in retail as well as in food and beverage. Bailey was also involved in leadership organizations such as the National Honor Society, so when instructor Katrina Fiorenza organized a SkillsUSA chapter, he signed up.

Bailey competed in Job Interview and reached the state level. The next year, he decided to try Customer Service. Bailey loved what he was learning so much, he changed majors to hospitality. “The hospitality field really was screaming my name. That’s what I really want to do,” he says. “I love to be around people, and I figure that maybe in forensic psychology I wouldn’t be able to be as social with people as I could in the hospitality field.”

Bailey’s passion carried him to the national competition, and while he didn’t make it to the finals, “that’s OK,” he adds. “It was different than states, so I wasn’t sure what to expect. It was a learning experience. It was fun. I’m glad I participated.”

For future Customer Service competitors, Bailey offers, “Make sure you study your scenario really well. My flight came in late, so I missed my meeting, and I didn’t have a chance to study up as much as some. Definitely memorize as much as you can about the company in the contest scenario.”

Now at Niagara University, he’s studying hotel and restaurant management with a concentration in luxury operations. “You’ve got to enjoy life,” he says. “I want to do something that I love for the rest of my life, so that’s what I’ve chosen to do. Whatever someone’s true passion is, they should follow it.” — APS

IT’S YOUR FUTURE IN THE MAKING

MAKE IT A SUCCESS AT JOHNSON & WALES UNIVERSITY!

Last year, JWU awarded more than 1,000 SkillsUSA scholarships, up to full tuition, totaling more than $12 million.

For more information, visit www.jwu.edu/NSO

Johnson & Wales University admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin, among other categories.
Taking a nontraditional path helps a student stay grounded

Nicole Horan is in perpetual motion. She’s also into perpetual motion, having been one of many who’ve tried (so far unsuccessfully) to create a machine that will run forever under its own power.

The student chased that elusive goal for her senior project at Warwick (R.I.) Area Career and Technical Center, using a generator that runs with magnets. She “captivated the judges with her knowledge of the subject and presentation,” says electrical instructor Stephen Brady.

Horan applied the same kind of drive to her SkillsUSA state competition in Industrial Motor Control. She won it for three consecutive years and went on to the nationals in Kansas City, Mo.

“I’ve learned that the first year you go out there is definitely overwhelming,” she says. Horan advises competitors to “stay calm, try not to get anxious, and if you happen to make a mistake, stay relaxed. You can still fix it. Everybody loses points somewhere.”

While the only female competing in her electrical class, Horan realized there are more women in the construction industry than she first thought. The experience also helped her focus on what she did best: troubleshooting circuits.

Residential wiring “is more physical and muscle-bound,” Horan explains, but “when working with motors and controls, your brain is your strongest muscle. [It requires] being creative, patient and intelligent.”

Now, at the New England Institute of Technology, Horan will pursue a degree in electrical technology and, later, electrical engineering. She wants to become a teacher after working in industry for a few years.

“Lessons learned at the career center helped me become a better academic student,” she says. “The dynamics used in electricity transcended my academic subjects. Math and science had meaning and relation to the real world.”

— By E. Thomas Hall
TARA SHIVER of Columbus, Ga., is a two-time national medalist in Promotional Bulletin Board. She says the key is to stay calm and practice, but don’t over practice: “You can practice too much and it could actually turn out worse than if you just wing it.”

Start Here... To Get There.

As a student leader, you have a passion for food that runs deep. At the CIA, you’ll join people just like you with a hunger for learning. A CIA degree helped Chef Achatz and so many other great chefs—and it can turn your passion into an amazing profession for life.

Come to the CIA, the college that prepares you for the world of food like no other.

Grant Achatz ’94

The world’s premier culinary college

Apply now! 1-800-CULINARY

www.ciachef.edu/admissions

Associate & Bachelor’s Degrees
New York, California, Texas

Masonry A high level of quality in the physical side of the competition, the actual laying of masonry units, is important. Bryan Light, Brick Industry Association Southeast Region

Opening and closing ceremonies Focus on pronunciation and enunciation of the script, enthusiasm and making the script believable. Lisa Romeiser, Eastern Monroe Career Center, New York

Aviation Maintenance Technology Weight and balance problems, federal aviation regulations, maintenance of propellers and cable fabrication. Wayne King, Kentucky Department of Education

Computer Maintenance Technology Pay attention to instructions. Not being able to get to additional parts of each module costs points. Christopher Sessa, Cardiovascular Consultants Ltd.

Heating, Ventilation, Air Conditioning and Refrigeration Focus on electrical troubleshooting basics and air conditioning airflow. Bob Mikkell, UTC Climate, Controls & Security/CARRIER Corp.
A Proud, Enduring Legacy Keeps Freedom Ringing

By Tom Kercheval

Educational coordinator Bill Ratzburg was persistent. So was Bob Abitz, who taught collision repair at Freedom (Wis.) High School.

“I don’t have time,” Abitz repeated.

“Make time,” his colleague retorted.

“I don’t … have … time,” Abitz said firmly.

Then Ratzburg pulled out the big guns: “Do it for the kids.” With that, Abitz waved the white flag and agreed to go to his first SkillsUSA state competition.

“I was a judge for the automotive contest. It was amazing,” he now says.

After that day in 1978, Abitz embraced SkillsUSA with the same gusto he’d used to turn a struggling automotive program into one of the state’s best. Wisconsin didn’t have a Collision Repair contest, so Abitz led the effort to design one. A year later, one of his students claimed gold.

By the time Abitz retired in 2007, he’d produced 18 state champions and a national bronze medalist. He served on the Collision Repair national education team for 18 years. In 2012, SkillsUSA presented him with its highest recognition, honorary life membership.

However, his most cherished accomplishments are found closer to home.

“You drive through Freedom any given day in the summer, and you’ll see a former student working on a car. A lot of them own their own shops. That’s what we do.”

These words come from Abitz’s successor, a man who shares much with him, including his DNA.

Jay Abitz was one of his father’s best students — and the only SkillsUSA competitor in Wisconsin to win a gold medal at the high school and college/post-secondary levels. Bob influenced him to pursue teaching, but when Jay interviewed for Bob’s position in 2007, he was asked bluntly, “How are you going to get out of your dad’s shadow?”

Bob remembers his son’s response fondly. “He looked them in the eye and said, ‘I’m gonna take it to the next level.’”

The younger Abitz has since produced a SkillsUSA state champion every year. His program has been featured in national magazines including Hot Rod, and he’s brought new technologies to an already top-tier program.

“There’s a lot of my dad in me, but there are a lot of ways that I’m different,” Jay points out. “But I’m constantly checking myself, ‘Would Dad do it like this?’ That’s the biggest part of him that I take with me: just being conscious of how I treat people, why I’m teaching what I’m teaching and why I value it.”

“He’s definitely taken it to the next level,” Bob says, beaming. “He’s done an awesome job.” As people of Freedom will happily confirm, they both have.
Painting the town

SkillsUSA Ohio members helped improve a town’s appearance and gained major media exposure in the process. During their summer leadership camp at Hocking College, about 260 students agreed to assist Jim Cotter, 81, who’s working to give the nearby town of Glouster a fresh coat of paint. Cotter started the project to keep busy and honor his late wife.

Cotter’s project caught so much attention that a crew from CBS News did a story on it and the Columbus Dispatch showed up to cover SkillsUSA Ohio in action. See footage of SkillsUSA at: www.dispatch.com/content/stories/local/2012/07/19/a-fresh-coat-of-energy.html. View the CBS story here: www.cbsnews.com/video/watch/?id=7407522n.

How to turn pie into dough

In an annual holiday fundraiser, students at Broadmoor Technical Center in Overland Park, Kan., form committees to tackle pie production, baking, promotions and pickup/distribution. Students produce an average of 300 pies, 1,200 dinner rolls and 600 cinnamon rolls, as well as sage stuffing and fruit breads. They sell a variety of pies for $13 each, except for the pecan, which is $15 due to the extra expense for the nuts.

The school’s Web page for ordering pies includes a button for those who’d rather simply make a donation. Total sales have ranged from $2,200 to $6,000, depending on the committees’ ability to execute and follow a marketing plan as well as the community’s current economic status, says instructor Chef Robert Brassard.
Before *Telling Your Story, Consider Every Angle*

SkillsUSA Week is Feb. 10-16, a time to show your community why SkillsUSA deserves its support. Start preparing now to make sure you deliver a powerful message that can’t be ignored.

As a class, split into two groups. In the first, pretend you’re a collection of people who’ve never heard of SkillsUSA and talk about things a student member could say that would impress you.

In the second group, share some personal stories on what being a member means to you, how it’s helped you grow, how it’s helped you serve the community, and the overall value of SkillsUSA membership.

Get back together as a full group. Did some of the stories shared in the second group satisfy questions from the first group? How can you shape your SkillsUSA Week efforts to make sure you deliver the strongest message? For more tips and info, visit: www.skillsusa.org/educators/skillsusaweek.shtml.

Those who reach the top are the ones who are not content with doing only what is required of them.

— Og Mandino

Find the photo, win a prize

No, the picture on the left isn’t abstract art. It’s actually a distorted part of another photo in this issue. Find the original photo and send us the page number where it appears to win a SkillsUSA sport duffel bag (first prize) or travel mug (second prize). To enter, email your answer, name, address and phone number to: anyinfo@skillsusa.org (include “Photo Contest” in the subject line). Or, send to: SkillsUSA Photo Contest, 14001 SkillsUSA Way, Leesburg, VA 20176. One first- and one second-prize winner will be drawn at random from the correct entries. Entries must be received by Jan. 25.

Congratulations to last issue’s winners: Cassondra Fontenot of Iota, La., and Kayla Devono of Huntington, Mass.
SkillsUSA Champions features our members’ photography. We’re looking for images of SkillsUSA chapters in action, or ones that show individual members’ concentration or perseverance. For details, email thall@skillsusa.org (put “Image Photo” in the subject header) or write SkillsUSA Champions, 14001 SkillsUSA Way, Leesburg, VA 20176. The photographer’s chapter is awarded $150.

I landed this job as a direct result of SkillsUSA and our college! A.J. Felts, a graduate of Wilkes Community College in Wilkesboro, N.C., who got the offer after impressing a judge from Cisco Systems at his state contest.

Zach Timm of Watertown (Wis.) High School proudly displays his team’s gold medal backstage at SkillsUSA’s 2012 awards ceremony. This photo was taken by fellow state officer Kelsie Smock and submitted by Timm’s advisor, Jesse Domer.

One of the most important things we can do to propel forward the American economy is invest in career and technical education, and SkillsUSA is probably one of the most effective outlets for doing that.

Nicholas T. Pinchuk, chairman and CEO, Snap-on Inc.
1080 steel makes it a strong plier. Laser-hardening makes it a tough plier. George Cornell makes it a Channellock® plier.

The 420® Tongue and Groove Plier. Its laser-hardened teeth are set at a direct 90° angle, so it grips tight in either direction. Our undercut channels adjust easily and don’t slip, so you can quickly and safely get on with it. And North American-made, high-carbon steel means it’s officially not messing around. It’s time you owned a CHANNELLOCK® tool.

RED, WHITE AND CHANNELLOCK BLUE® SWEEPSTAKES
Enter to win this 5-piece Channellock® Tool Roll at www.ChannellockSweepstakes.com
MEET JOSE, THE MAN BEHIND THE MACHINES BEHIND THIS RACETRACK

SHIFT INTO THE FAST LANE WITH A CAREER IN THE TRADES

Construction projects like this racetrack can’t happen without skilled workers like Jose. As a Cat® dealer technician, he enjoys the rewards that come with being a highly skilled professional in a demanding field. From competitive pay to ongoing training to advancement opportunities, becoming a Cat dealer technician puts your foot on the gas.

The skilled trades make civilization possible. For Jose, being a Cat dealer technician is more than a career choice, it’s a choice career. Learn more at caterpillar.com/dealerCareers.