
User Manual—West Point Bridge Designer Administrator

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Contents

1	Overview and Changes	4
2	Key concepts	6
2.1	Administrators	6
2.2	Team categories	6
2.3	Team status	7
2.4	Local contests	7
2.5	Team groups	8
2.6	Data likenesses	8
3	Login and pattern of use	8
4	Options	9
4.1	Review and standings cutoff	9
4.2	Visible attributes	9
5	Maintenance functions	9
5.1	New password	9
5.2	Servers	9
5.3	Schedule	10
5.3.1	Add schedule/Update schedule	10
5.3.2	Get new or selected schedule	10

5.3.3	Delete selected schedules	11
5.3.4	The active schedule	11
5.4	Logout	11
6	Team review	11
6.1	Index	12
6.2	Processing	12
6.3	Review box	12
6.3.1	Standing bar	12
6.3.2	Heading	12
6.3.3	Attributes	14
7	Standings preview	14
7.1	Standings options	15
7.2	Difference marks	15
7.3	Post button	15
8	Current standings	16
9	Finding any team	16
10	Administering local contests	16
10.1	Add record/Update record	16
10.2	Get new or selected record	17
10.3	Delete selected records	17
10.4	Query by example	17
11	Administering groups	17
12	Finding local contest teams	17
13	Document management	18

14 Bulk notices	18
14.1 Sending	18
14.2 Reminder requests	19
15 Other CAI details	19
15.1 Abandoned registrations	19
15.2 Rejected team name changes	19
15.3 Password resets	20
15.4 Contest standings scoreboards	20
16 Future possibilities	20
16.1 More Document-based email	20

1 Overview and Changes

This document describes how to use the West Point Bridge Design Contest Administrator Interface or CAI. It is intended for people who already know how the contest works. The CAI is a web browser-based “window” into the contest database that allows a small team to administer the contest.

Here is a brief overview of CAI functions:

- Create and activate automatic schedules for annual cycles of qualifying and semi-final rounds.
- Review and accept top teams.
- Post official standings.
- Set up local contests and view their current standings.
- Establish team groups.
- Inspect and analyze designs and download them.
- Designate teams for the semi-final round and post contestant instructions.
- Query the contest database in various ways.
- Send bulk emails.
- Manually disable the contest, with an explanatory message banner displayed at what is the login page.

There are many changes here with respect to the original 1999 CAI design. Some are obvious. Others are subtle but still important. A brief overview follows. Those who have never used the CAI before may safely skip to the next section.

Automatic schedules are new. In the old CAI, the start and end times of contest rounds could be established only at the server console. Now they can be set in the CAI.

Team groups are a new feature to support the “one winner per school” rule.

Manual disabling of logins is another new facility that has moved from the console to the CAI web interface, available to any Administrator at any location.

The new CAI has *persistent configuration*. Various options and search criteria are automatically remembered between uses. To allow each administrator’s configuration to be remembered separately, the system provides any number of uniquely named and passworded administrator accounts.

The new CAI does not require setting up new, different accounts for semi-final teams. Instead, semi-finalists are merely marked in the Team Review portion of the CAI.

In the new system, any team can participate in up to four local contests at any time, either 4-character (all-scenario) or 6-character (scenario-specific) contest without regard for the current contest round. The old system was restricted to allow only 4-character contests during the Qualifying Round. That restriction is gone. Another quirk of the old system was that 6-character codes could not change after registration. This quirk is also gone. Teams can add and delete local contests at any time.

This added flexibility results from added internal complexity. The new system tracks the best design for each scenario for each team rather than only a single best per team in the old one. Formerly, a bridge submission was accepted by the system only if it improved on team's current best (lowest cost) bridge overall. The definition of *improvement* has changed in the new system: a bridge is an improvement, and therefore accepted in the new system, if it has cost lower than all previous submissions by the team *for the same scenario*. This more liberal policy will probably cause more bridges to be accepted per team.

Bulk email is now performed by the contest server. This is necessary to gain the benefit of a registered bulk mail service that has much less chance of being blocked by spam detectors. A new "rich text" editor in the CAI allows messages with any kind of standard text formatting. The rich text editor also allows documents with images. At present, however, these will not work for bulk email.

Other changes are for usability.

- Team names that contain contestant last names are highlighted.
- Design review, analysis, and download have been integrated with the review screen.
- Differences between currently posted and new standings can be displayed with strikeouts and color coding in a manner similar to Microsoft Word revision marks.
- The local contest manager now protects against inadvertently choosing a local contest code that is already in use.

The CAI remains a work in progress. If you're an Administrator and see something that the CAI could do to make your life easier, tell the CAI software team.

2 Key concepts

Several key concepts are important for efficiently using the Administrator and avoiding mistakes.

2.1 Administrators

An Administrator is a person entrusted with contest administration and decision authority. Each Administrator has a user id and password for validating his or her identity. These are initialized with easy-to-guess values when the system is created. Therefore each Administrator must immediately log in to change his or her password to a personal, difficult-to-guess value. The main purpose of Administrator accounts is to store configuration information about the Administrator user interface.

Additionally, the separate logins allow individual activity to be tracked in the server logs. With the old Administrator, determining who performed a given Administrator function—useful now and then—was difficult.

There is nothing to prevent more than one Administrator from logging in and making changes during the same period. This has always been true. External communication among Administrators is needed to prevent confusion when one Administrator's view changes due to work done by another at a different location.

Where the old CAI expected the user to close his or her browser to log out, the new one has a log out feature. Its use is highly recommended for the obvious security reasons.

2.2 Team categories

Teams competing in the contest fall into only two categories in the new CAI.

US/PR Students : PR is for Puerto Rico. This includes all age 13 to grade 12 kids who are either attending US schools (regardless of national origin) or are US citizens (regardless of location or school choice including home-schooling).

Open Competition : All people who are not US/PR students.

US/PR Students are eligible for recognition, advancing through successive contest rounds, and receiving prizes. Open competitors are in it for fun only.

Long-time contest participants will remember that categories once included the four ASCE zones. Also, the old CAI presented Semi-finalists as a category. Neither is currently true.

2.3 Team status

The status of a contest Team consists of four values. Each has an associated color to denote it in the CAI.

- Unreviewed (gray) : The team has successfully registered and uploaded at least one design, but no Administrator has yet reviewed or advanced it to one of the three reviewed states that follow.
- Rejected (red) : The team has been disqualified by an Administrator. Logins are permitted, but the Team Home Page contains only a message and Log Out link. No further uploads are possible.
- Accepted (green) : The team has been reviewed and deemed suitable to continue in the competition. It can appear in official standings if its best design has a high standing.
- Semi-final (purple) : An Administrator has designated the team as a semi-final competitor. The status of such a team is identical to an Accepted team except that during the Semifinal period, its home page is augmented with Semi-final instructions and a chance to select between a Semi-Final-specific home page and the team's normal qualifying round page. In the old system, the Team could do the same by using either its normal or semi-finals-specific user id. Here, the normal user id is used for all.

Semi-final status should be viewed as "Accepted with benefits." A Semi-final team can continue to participate in local contests, and its standings are unaffected.

2.4 Local contests

Local contests are just collections of teams that have entered the same 4- or 6-character local contest identifier in the registration pages. Every team can enter up to four local contests of either type or delete them at any time. The system generates standings of all contestants for all local contests. These are updated every half-hour or so. Rejected teams do not appear.

Local contests have been run by teachers, home-school parent groups, principals, superintendents, college professors, states, and foreign countries. The person who wishes to run the local contest emails an Administrator to obtain a code. He or she is responsible to communicate this code to the local contest competitors, who enter it in their team registration information pages. Soon after successfully submitting a design (of the correct scenario for a 6-character contest), the team will appear in the local contest standings.

Table 1: Characters in likenesses.

Likeness character		Matches...
Percent sign	(%)	any string of zero or more characters
Underscore	(_)	any single character
Any other character	x	the same character x , ignoring case.

2.5 Team groups

In the new CAI, teams can be placed in named groups of arbitrary size. When official standings are generated, only one team per group will appear—the one with the highest standing among group members.

2.6 Data likenesses

For several functions of the CAI, the user can enter a pattern known as a *likeness* to search for contest database records. A likeness is just text. When the likeness *matches* other text in the database, the data record (for a team, local contest, group, etc.) containing the text is reported as a search result. Otherwise it is not. Likenesses are powerful because they assign special meaning to two characters: percent (%) and underscore (_). These obey the rules shown in Table 1.

For example, %s%hwa_%z will match Jerry Schwartz, Jansy Ohwaraz, and many other data.

3 Login and pattern of use

The CAI login is available at the server address followed by

/admin/session/new

Enter your Administrator login and password and press the Log In button.

Maximize your browser window and note it is divided into two panes: the *menu pane* on the left and the *display pane* on the right. The general pattern of CAI use is to initiate a function by making a selection in the menu pane and then continue it by reading and interacting with the display pane. When the menu item includes a select box, merely changing the selection should invoke the selected function. When this doesn't happen, or you wish to re-display the current selection, perhaps after selecting new options, press the Go button for the function.

4 Options

Nearly all CAI functions respond to the **Options** selectors at the bottom of the menu.

4.1 Review and standings cutoff

Various CAI functions present lists of contest team records as review boxes and standings. The maximum number of records displayed is set in this option.

4.2 Visible attributes

Various CAI functions present *review boxes*, one per team. The boxes contain items of current team information called *attributes*. The visibility of each attribute may be switched on and off the **Visible attributes** selector. On Windows computers, hold the Control key down while selecting and de-selecting attributes. On Apple computers, hold down the Command key. Otherwise all attributes will be cleared except the last selection. Use the buttons next to the selector to select all, clear all, or reset the selector to its default values. The available attribute names are self explanatory and correspond to information provided by teams on their registration forms except for a few as described in the subsection on review boxes below.

For technical reasons, the review display will take considerably longer to compute (perhaps a full second on the server side) if the **Local contests** and/or **Best design** attributes are selected. Consider turning them off if the information they provide is not needed.

5 Maintenance functions

The top row of menu links consist of functions to check, control and maintain the Administrator's use of the CAI.

5.1 New password

This menu item presents, in the display pane, an opportunity for the the Administrator to change his or her CAI password.

5.2 Servers

This menu item causes the display pane to be filled with information about the current state of the contest server.

5.3 Schedule

This menu item causes the display pane to be filled with the *schedule manager*. The schedule manager controls what users see at the contest login page and, after they are logged in, what they are able to do. It does so indirectly by allowing the administrator to specify a set of key dates and other bits of information. Overall, the manager has three related purposes.

- Starting and stopping the various rounds of the contest.
- Re-enabling logins after they are automatically turned off as the qualifying round ends.
- Temporarily disabling and re-enabling all logins with a banner message.

These are obviously powerful functions, so the schedule manager must be used with great care.

A schedule consists of a list of sequential dates and other information shown in Table 2. This table depicts the flow of an annual contest cycle. Banners on the login page indicate the current status. For example, before qualifying round registration begins, the banner gives the start date and encourages people to return. After all rounds are complete, the banner exhorts teams to submit designs for fun and return for next year's qualifying round.

Any number of schedules may be prepared in advance using the *schedule workspace*. The workspace displays the values of one schedule—either a new one that is being created or an existing one that is being updated. Buttons at the bottom of the manager have functions described in the following paragraphs.

5.3.1 Add schedule/Update schedule

If the workspace contains a new schedule, fill it in with schedule information and press **Add** to save the schedule in the contest database. If the workspace contains an existing schedule, make changes and press **Update** to save them in the contest database.

5.3.2 Get new or selected schedule

To clear the workspace and fill it with a new schedule, ensure no review box is selected and press this button.

To retrieve an existing schedule into the workspace, select its review box and press this button. If more than one review box is checked, only the first will be retrieved.

Table 2: Contest schedule information.

Schedule item	Type	Description
Name	text	unique identifier for the schedule
Active	checkbox	checked for the currently active schedule
Start registration	date	users may register and log in but not submit designs
Start qualifying	date	users may register, log in, and submit designs
End qualifying	date	logins disabled until the Tally complete box is checked
Tally complete	checkbox	when checked, logins are re-enabled after qualifying round end
Start semifinals logins	date	semifinalists can log in to either home page but not submit semifinal designs
Semifinals instructions	document	instructions page presented at each semifinal login
Start semifinals	date	semifinalists can log in only to semifinal page and submit designs
End semifinals	date	semifinalists can log in only to their regular home page
Suspend logins	checkbox	all logins are temporarily suspended
Banner message	text	displayed at login page while logins are suspended

5.3.3 Delete selected schedules

To delete schedules, select all their review boxes and press this button once. You'll be asked if you're sure you wish to proceed. Deletions cannot be undone, so be sure. The active schedule cannot be deleted.

5.3.4 The active schedule

At most one schedule can be active. If no schedule is active, then logins are disabled. Activate any schedule by retrieving it into the workspace, checking the **Active** box, and pressing **update**. The change is immediately effective.

To change the active schedule in any manner—for example, to suspend team logins temporarily—retrieve it into the workspace, make the desired changes, and press **Update**. The change is immediately effective.

5.4 Logout

This menu item terminates the Administrator's session with the CAI.

6 Team review

This section describes the CAI's support for reviewing teams and advancing them from the Unreviewed status to one of the three reviewed ones: rejected, accepted, or semi-final. The status of a team

may change more than once as the contest proceeds including “backward” to the unreviewed status.

Review begins by selecting a category from the CAI menu using the box labeled **Review (Accept/Reject) top teams**. Press **Go** if necessary to fill the display pane with review boxes for the top N teams, where N is the number in the **Review cutoff** selector.

6.1 Index

The index at the top of the display is a table of marks, one per review box. The mark is a numeric *standing*, an x, or an o, depending on the status of the team. The mark is also a link. Clicking it scrolls down to the respective team review box. Each review box header contains a **[top]** link to scroll back to the index. The mark is an x if the teams status is unreviewed or rejected. Otherwise the team has a status of accepted or semi-final. In these cases, the mark will be the numerical standing of the team nationally in its category unless the team is in the same group as a higher-ranking team. In this case the mark is an o.

6.2 Processing

Immediately below the index is a button marked **Process**. After you’ve completed a review by changing status and group settings as described below, press this button to record them in the database.

Any number of changes will be recorded by a single press of the button. They take effect immediately. For example, teams that are rejected will no longer be able to submit designs, and their home pages will show a message explaining that they’ve been disqualified.

6.3 Review box

Each team is described by a review box. The box also includes controls to change the team’s status. Parts of the review box are explained in subsequent paragraphs.

6.3.1 Standing bar

The standing bar is the left border of the review box. Its color and mark match its Index entry as describe above.

6.3.2 Heading

The heading is the top border of the review box. It contains both information and controls that record your review of the team.

Name key This is the team name with all but letters and digits removed and letters converted to lower case. The system ensures that name keys (not just team names) are unique in any contest round. If the name key text is red, the Administrator should inspect it carefully, because this means the CAI has detected that at least one of the members' family names is embedded in the team name. Green highlighting shows the characters that must be inserted in the family name to obtain the team name. For example, if the team name is ****SxMxlxTxH****, and one of the members is named Smith, then the name key will be portrayed as **sxmxtxh**, with the xes highlighted in green.

Unofficial standing This shows the unofficial standing that will be reported to the team on its home page. Unofficial standings assign a standing to a team regardless of its status unless it is rejected. They also ignore team groups. Official standings for the national contest show only teams that are in the accepted or semi-final status, and the award a standing only to the top team in each group. Consequently, unofficial standings are often lower (that is, with higher ranking numbers) than official ones. The difference generally disappears when an Administrator has advanced all top teams from the unreviewed status.

Group selector This lists all team groups in the contest. The current list of groups is maintained by another CAI function. To add a team to a group, merely change its selector from **No group selected** to one of the other choices. You can reverse this at any time by re-choosing **No group selected**. In either case, don't forget to press **Process** to record your changes. Among all teams in a group, only the one with the best design will appear in official standings.

Status selector The current status of the team may be changed by selecting the appropriate radio button. Changes take effect immediately after the **Process** button is pressed. Email messages to teams are automatically generated under the following circumstances:

Disqualification : The team's status changes to rejected from some other status.

Qualification : The team's status changes to either accepted or semi-final from another status that's not either of these two.

These messages are personalized for the team, but their contents are currently "hard wired" into the CAI. Editing them requires coordination with the CAI author.

Top link This is just a link that causes the display pane to scroll all the way to the top. Normal uses are to reach the index in order to skip to a different team's record or the **Process** button to record status or group selector changes.

6.3.3 Attributes

The rest of the review box lists attributes of the team in tabular form. The visibility of attributes may be changed using the **Options** selector in the menu pane. These attributes are drawn directly from information provided by the team during registration with a few additions as follows:

- Status : The current status of the team, which is also visible in the color of the *standing bar*.
- Registration : The date and time team registration was completed.
- Best score : The cost of the least expensive bridge submitted by the team so far.
- Best design : A small sketch of the best bridge submitted by the team with links to a corresponding *structural analysis table* and *bridge file download*. The table format is identical to the West Point Bridge Designer's. Bridge file downloads may be opened by the Bridge Designer.

As mentioned above, for technical reasons, the review display will take considerably longer to compute (perhaps a full second on the server side) if the **Local contests** and/or **Best design** attributes are visible. Consider turning them off if not needed for the work at hand.

7 Standings preview

This section describes the CAI's support for previewing official standings and posting the latest so they are visible on the contest web site. There are four categories of standings.

- US/PR students : Teams eligible to win prizes according to the contest rules.
- Open competition : Teams competing for fun, ineligible to win prizes.
- Combined : Top teams from US/PR student standings and Open standings combined in a single set.
- Semi-finalists : Reflects all semi-finals teams (who have submitted a bridge) ranked by the semi-final entries only.

Standings preview begins by selecting a category from the CAI menu using the box labeled **Preview new standings from database**. Press **Go** if necessary to fill the display pane with new standings. Note that one

category choice is **Combined US/PR-Open**. This produces standings that combines open competitors and kids eligible for prizes in a single listing.

7.1 Standings options

The preview **Options** selector has the following items:

- Normal : Normal standings are produced.
- Include scores : Standings that include bridge contests are produced. The intent of this option is to discourage bridge submissions by making the scores of the leaders obvious. This is an emergency safety mechanism for reducing load on contest server. It has never been used in an official contest.
- Not available : An empty standings list stating that scores are not available is produced. The intent of this option is to temporarily make standings unavailable in cases of a scoring irregularity.

Additionally, the **Difference** check box controls whether the review version of standings includes “difference marks” showing changes with respect to the currently posted standings. These are explained in the paragraph below.

7.2 Difference marks

Difference marks are color codes and strikeouts that show parts of the review standings that are insertions or deletions with respect to the previous one. Insertions are highlighted in green. Deletions are highlighted in red and also “struck out” with a single horizontal rule. Thus the first standings of the contest will be entirely highlighted in green. Difference marks are *never* visible in posted standings. They are visible only in the CAI. When difference marks are turned off with the **Standings options** as described above, the standings appear exactly as they will when posted. Posting is the subject of the next paragraph.

7.3 Post button

The **Post now!** button at the top of the review standings publishes these standings, making them instantly visible to all users of the Bridge Contest site. There is no way to retract published standings. “Not available” standings, described above, may be published after erroneously published standings to hide them from view. After posting, the display pane contains the new standings with no difference marks.

8 Current standings

The View currently posted standings selector fills the display pane with the most recently posted standings, which are also visible to all users of the Bridge Contest site. The selector determines the category of standings shown.

9 Finding any team

This menu selection searches the contest database for any team name described by its *likeness*. Review boxes are displayed with a **Process** button. One important purpose of this function is disqualifying teams in local contests that otherwise would never appear in a top teams review. Disqualified teams do not appear in local contest standings.

The “any team” search may optionally be restricted to one desired category by selecting it in the **Category** box.

10 Administering local contests

This menu selection opens the *local contest manager* in the display pane. The top portion of the manager consists of a *workspace*. The workspace can either hold an existing record or a new record that is being created but has not yet been saved in the contest database. If the workspace currently holds an existing record, the heading of the workspace will be **Edit/query local contest**. For a new record it will be **New/query local contest**.

This organization of the workspace is new. Because its workspace state is always clear, the new CAI can avoid inadvertently writing over an existing local contest with a new one. An attempt to save a new local contest with the same code as an existing one will produce an error message. This overcomes a problem in the old CAI.

The bottom portion of the local contest manager display is a list of local contest review boxes sorted according to local contest code. Unlike team review boxes, there are no options to control visibility of local contest attributes. All are visible. Each review box includes a check box that *selects* the respective local contest.

At the bottom of the workspace are several buttons that control its functions. These are explained in the following paragraphs.

10.1 Add record/Update record

If the workspace contains a new record, fill it in and press **Add** to save it in the contest database.

If the workspace contains an existing record retrieved earlier, make any desired changes and press **Update** to save it in the contest database.

10.2 Get new or selected record

To clear the workspace and fill it with a new local contest record, ensure no review box is selected and press this button.

To retrieve an existing record into the workspace, select its review box and press this button. If more than one review box is checked, only the first will be retrieved.

10.3 Delete selected records

To delete local contests, select all their review boxes and press this button once. You'll be asked if you're sure you wish to proceed. Deletions cannot be undone, so be sure.

If a local contest is deleted, it automatically disappears from the local contest lists of all teams in the database. Even if it is recreated with exactly the same information, all participating teams must re-enter the local contest code in their registration pages.

10.4 Query by example

The list of review boxes can be restricted with the *query by example* feature of the workspace. In any desired workspace field, enter a likeness that matches the desired local contests and press the **Query by example** button. After this, only records that matched the query (along with any you add in the future and omitting any that you delete) will be shown.

To erase the query and once again see the full local contests list, just re-select the **Local contests** function in the menu pane.

11 Administering groups

Use the **Groups** menu item to display the *Group manager*. It works in a manner identical to the local contest manager with the minor exception that a group has only one data field—its name—therefore, review boxes are replaced with one line per group. Refer to the previous paragraphs for instructions on operating the group manager.

12 Finding local contest teams

Use this menu option to fill the display pane with review information for all the teams in a specific local contest. Enter a valid code in the **Local contest code** field of the menu and press **Go**. This field does not

accept a likeness. Review and change status in the usual manner and download spreadsheet data for the displayed information.

13 Document management

Select this menu item to fill the display screen with the *document manager*. This part of the CAI maintains any number of documents that the system can send as bulk email and use as Semi-final Round Instructions. Each document is stored by a Subject, which must be unique. The Subject is used as the subject line in bulk email.

The document manager works in a manner identical to the local contest manager except that the query by example facility works only on the document Subject, not on its text. Refer to the previous paragraphs for instructions on operating the group manager.

The current document manager allows pictures to be inserted in documents. This feature should be used only for Semi-final Round Instructions. It will not work correctly for bulk email. This issue could be resolved in the future.

14 Bulk notices

Use this menu option to fill the display pane with the *bulk notice manager*.

14.1 Sending

Sending bulk notices as email requires four steps:

- Prepare a message using the document manager.
- In the bulk notice manager, select the subject of the document to be sent.
- If necessary, enter supplementary information.
 - For test messages, enter a test email address.
 - For messages to local contests, select the correct description.
- Press the appropriate send button:
 - **Test email.** Sends the specified email to the address of your choice for appearance testing purposes. A “test team” with this email address is fabricated for the recipient.
 - **Reminder requestors.** Sends to all qualifying round reminder requestors.

- **Local contest.** Sends to all participants in the specified local contest.
- **Semi-finalists.** Sends to all teams designated as semi-finalists.
- **All teams.** Sends to all teams in the database.

Sending will begin almost automatically, but completing the job may take minutes or hours for tens of thousands of messages. There is no way to interrupt sending once it has begun.

Sending a test message to verify the appearance and content of every bulk message is highly recommended!

14.2 Reminder requests

The bulk notice manager displays the current content of *reminder request* boxes, which may be inserted in as many Internet web pages as desired, including the Bridge Contest web site itself. Instructions and the necessary HTML code is given below the exemplar. The purpose of the boxes is to offer potential contestants to request an email when the next contest qualifying round begins.

Reminder request box contents change automatically with the contest schedule. The email field and button are visible from the time a new AY schedule is made active until the qualifying round starts. During other periods, an appropriate message is displayed asking the user to return for next year's qualifying round.

14.3 Clearing reminders

The bulk notice manager includes a button to clear the database of reminder requests. Normally, this will be invoked as soon as the bulk email of reminders has been sent.

15 Other CAI details

Following are additional points that are likely to be useful for answering user questions.

15.1 Abandoned registrations

When a team begins registering but never completes, the partial registration remains in the contest database for approximately one hour, when it is automatically deleted. Until this occurs, the team name is unavailable. Attempts to use it will result in an "already in use" error and request to pick a different name. After a one-hour delay, the team name can be successfully registered.

Table 3: Standings scoreboard addresses.

Eligible for prizes	<code>/standings/uskids</code>
Open competitors	<code>/standings/open</code>
Combined scores	<code>/standings/combined</code>
Semi-finalists	<code>/standings/semifinal</code>
Local contest ABCD	<code>/standings/local/abcd</code>

15.2 Rejected team name changes

When a team is placed in the rejected status, its name becomes editable on the team contact information page. The disqualification email sent to the team includes this information. This allows teams disqualified for inappropriate team names to repair the mistake on their own without registering a different team. If the team is later moved to any other status, the team name is no longer editable.

15.3 Password resets

The new CAI, unlike the old one, stores passwords in an encrypted form only. Therefore it is impossible to tell a team its password. A standard password reset mechanism has been added. There is a “Forgot your team name or password?” link just below the contest login box. Selecting it produces a request for the team to the email it entered at registration. All teams associated with this address are included in a single password reset message with a “Log in” link for each. Since the team email is available in the CAI, an administrator can use it to request a reset message as described above on behalf of the team.

15.4 Contest standings scoreboards

These are available at the contest web site address with the additional path information shown in Table 3.

16 Future possibilities

This section of the document is a list of possible future features for the CAI. It is a work in progress.

16.1 More Document-based email

Message text for team disqualification, qualification, and password resets are currently “hard coded” into the system code. It would be possible to base these on editable documents if this is a desirable feature.