

All Rush To The Rescue

Miners Compete In Life, Death Contest

By KENNETH LOOMIS

The five men made a last, nervous check of their equipment—oxygen packs, stretchers and devices to test for deadly carbon monoxide or methane gas.

Then they cautiously headed into the simulated mine, "Exposition No. 1."

All they had was the sketchiest of information. They knew there had been an explosion during the day shift and that five men — alive or dead—were still inside.

They were also sure there were other things in the mine, probably fires, sagging walls or roofs, hip-deep water and pockets of gas awaiting a spark or flame to trigger another explosion.

"Exposition No. 1" was one of three "mines" in Louisville that were "racked by explosions" yesterday morning—16 of them, one for each of the rescue teams from four states that took part in the annual National Mine Rescue Contest.

The explosions were only simulated, as were three mines, on the floor of the Exposition Center's East Wing.

For the rescue teams involved, however, it was all deadly serious, a replay of what some of them have already been through many times and a rehearsal for what they must go through again.

Miners themselves make up the rescue teams, spending part of their work week in training, explained A. D. Sisk, a former chief of the Kentucky Department of Mines. Sisk, a native of Madisonville, is now a technical assistant for the U.S. Bureau of Mines, one of the sponsors of the contest.

The men, who work at mines in Kentucky, Virginia, West Virginia and Pennsylvania, had to fight time during the contest. For every minute longer than the 35 allotted, they were penalized.

And time is crucial in a real mine

disaster, too, Sisk pointed out. Rescue teams carry only enough oxygen for two hours. After that time they must return to a fresh air supply and let a second team take over.

The course laid out at the three simu-

lated mines yesterday was a labyrinth of shafts marked by piping. Barricades marked impassable areas, and simulated gas leaks — with real gas — had to be tested to determine if the gas was carbon monoxide or inflammable methane.

Judges lined the pipe barriers as the team inside the mine area edged along, directed by the team captain's commands from a hand-held bull horn.

The men, wearing oxygen masks, marked each turn carefully on both the floor and a map and were linked together by rope, just as they would be in the smoke and darkness of a real mine disaster. When they passed a card denoting "dense smoke," they donned glasses.

Each Rescued One Victim

Each team found one live victim, played by a relief member of their squad, and had to carry him to safety. The other four men in the problem were dead, and they were represented by mannequins.

Along the way, the teams were expected to take advantage of simulated wreckage to build drop-curtain barricades to maintain safe airlocks and prevent the spread of pockets of lethal or flammable gases.

And, alongside the last body, only several feet from a "fire," was a pack of cigarettes and a lighter — supposedly the cause of the explosion — to provide an additional lesson in safety for the participants.

Today and tomorrow many of the rescue teams will take part in another phase of the contest—first-aid competition. Winners of the two competitions will be announced tomorrow.



Staff Photo

READY FOR RESCUE . . . One of the five men on the Armco Steel Corp. mine rescue team from Mount Coal, W. Va., adjusts his permissible flame safety lamp before entering a simulated mine at the Fairgrounds Exposition Center. The lamp indicates the proportion of oxygen and methane in the atmosphere. The team was one of 16 entered in the National Mine Rescue Contest yesterday.

1965 National Mine Rescue Contest News

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Oct 6, 2025

Kentucky Teams 1st, 2nd

Kentucky teams took first and second places in the National Mine Rescue Contest held Monday at the Exposition Center. The competition was part of the three-day National First Aid and Mine Rescue Contest which ended yesterday. The winners were announced last night at the closing banquet.

A team from the Wheelwright Mine of the Inland Steel Co., headed by Ver-

non Bailey, won the mine rescue contest. Second place went to a Benham team representing Wisconsin Steel Coal Mines, International Harvester Co.

The Ireland Mine, Hanna Coal Co. team from Moundsville, W. Va., won the first aid contest, and the Island Creek Coal Co. team from Holden, W. Va., won the combination contest. Forty teams from five states competed.

1965 National Mine Rescue Contest News

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3 Rescue Teams Take Honors In Mining Contest

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (UPI) — The national first aid and mine rescue contest ended here Thursday, with two West Virginia teams and one from Ken-

WHOK—AM—1320 Kc
FM—95.5 MC
Saturday

Morning (News reported on the hour)	12:20-Sportscope 12:25-Weather Outlook
6:05-Morning Show	1:05-High School Bandstand
10:05-Country Music	6:00-Evening Music
11:05-Hit Parade	
Afternoon 12:15-Bowling Highlights	

WHOK—AM—1320 Kc
FM—95.5 MC
Sunday

Morning (News Reported on the Hour)	10:05-Sunday Music
5:58-Sign On	10:30-Church Service
5:59-Religious Message	11:30-Sunday Music
6:05-Sunday Music	11:55-Congressional Report
7:05-Friendship Calling	Afternoon 12:05-Sunday Music
7:15-Church News	1:00-People's Choice

tucky taking top honors.
A team from the Wheelwright mine of the Inland Steel Co., Wheelwright, Ky., won first place in the mine rescue contest.
An Ireland mine team captured the top award in the first aid contest. The mine is owned by the Hanna Coal Co., and located at Moundsville, W. Va.

The combination contest was won by a Holden, W. Va., team, representing the Island Creek Coal Co. The team received the fewest discounts of teams entered in both the mine rescue and first aid contests.

First place teams were honored with Congressional medallions at the final session of the three day contest. They were also awarded trophies donated by the Joseph A. Holmes safety association, United Mine Workers of America, the National Coal Association, and the Mine Safety Appliances Co.

W. VIRGINIA TEAMS WIN RESCUE TEST

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — West Virginia teams have taken two of three first place awards in the National First Aid and Mine Rescue Contest. A Kentucky team, representing a mine of the Inland Steel Co. at Wheelwright, took the other award, the mine rescue contest. The teams matched their skills in simulated disasters during the three-day contest that ended Wednesday.