

National mine rescue event set

The 26th National Mine REscue and First-Aid Contest will be held at the Kentucky Fair and Exposition Center, Louisville, on Sept. 22 and 23, Robert E. Barrett, Administrator of the Interior Department's Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration (MESA), announced today.

The national contest, held every other year under the sponsorship of MESA's Coal Mine Health and Safety ac-

tivity, will pit the top mine rescue teams and first-aid teams against each other to determine the finest teams in these fields in the nation. Although it is open to any mine rescue and first-aid team, the contest generally draws contestants from the coal mines. The metal onmetal (non-coal) activity of MESA holds its own mine rescue contest in alternate years.

Each mine rescue team is composed of seven persons,

with five working members. During the two-hour competition, the teams simulated problems they might encounter in mining high coal seams such as fire, gas or smoke. Teams must provide their own breathing apparatus, safety shoes, protective hat and cap lamp. The "mine" must be mapped as teams proceed through it. Victims must be moved to safety immediately and their positions noted on the map. If any team member encounters serious difficulty, the team must leave the mine site immediately because the safety of the team is the first consideration. A one-hour mine rescue contest also is held to simulate problems which might be encountered in low coal seams.

Teams in the first aid contest consist of six persons, including a captain and a patient. Team members will be tested for proficiency in artificial respiration, control of bleeding and use of tourniquets, physical shock and the use of stimulants, wounds, burns or scalds, fractures, dislocations, splints, bandaging, and transportation of victims. Each team will be given five or more problems to solve, with additional problems to break any ties.

Mine rescue participants also may double as first aid team members. Judging will be done by qualified personnel from MESA and from State mine inspection agencies.

Mine rescue teams are used not only to enter mines to rescue trapped miners and remove victims of accidents but also to reopen mines. In the Scotia mine disaster in Kentucky last year, mine rescue teams were used in one of the longest airlocking operations in the history of mining to reopen about three miles of mine passages from the mine entrance to the area where methane gas explosions had taken place.

