

## Scott Hardison's Livermore Elementary School Now Uses Slam-In



I teach Arts & Humanities at a small elementary school in Kentucky. (That's me – talking to my team.) Our area is rural, and our poverty rate is high, so we don't have a very large budget when it comes to academic competition systems. We have to make every penny count. Despite our demographics, though, and due to our dedicated students and parents, we've been District Champions 3 years in a row. So, why did I purchase a Slam-In system? Because it's the best buzzer system I'd ever seen.

I've been involved in Quick Recall since I was in 4<sup>th</sup> grade, so I've used a variety of buzzer systems over the years. With the older systems our school used, you constantly had to hassle with either replacing batteries, replacing bulbs, or replacing the flimsy rubber-band like parts that held the buzzers together internally. Slam-In systems, on the other hand, are extremely durable, have required no maintenance at all, and work very, very well. My students really like Slam-In's buzzers (which are called slammers). They pound on their slammers, but that's no problem for this system. One day in practice, a child inadvertently slung his buzzer across the table and onto the floor. The slammer kept on ticking and has shown no signs whatsoever of weakness. Our old wireless system buzzer would have totally fallen apart with such treatment, but not Slam-In! Moreover, the kids like seeing their names "up in lights".

Slam-In is also extremely easy to set up. It takes almost no time at all because it's wireless. It's really portable, too. My 10-player system fits in a small tackle box, so it's easy to move around. We used to have problems with wireless interference, but not any more. In fact, I was so confident in Slam-In's wireless capability that we used 4 Slam-In systems at once at the Regional tournament held in our small school, yet we had no problems with signal interference whatsoever.

In addition to being durable and portable, Slam-In does what nothing else we've ever used can do. After a match or practice, I get a spreadsheet of results that shows me which students rang in on which questions and whether they were right or wrong. Slam-In keeps up with all of this for me; I do not have to keep old-fashioned pencil and paper records anymore. The kids can't wait for me to pull up the spreadsheet so they can see their percentages. I can barely get it on the screen fast enough! If they only knew how remarkable this technology is – and how much more progressive it is than the old strobe-light buzzers I used to use in school! These results are a valuable tool to me as a coach because they provide me with concrete evidence of who should be my “starters” that play the most. They also serve as a reliable tool to show students who want to play more (but don't really merit doing so) or those pesky parents who say, “Why didn't my baby get to start that game or play more than he/she did?” All I have to do is just print out the results and show them – “Look, your child only buzzed in 4 times and got 0 correct.” The system takes out all the guess work!

I also like Slam-In's sound effects. The sounds are customizable, and you can even totally mute the sounds that you don't feel fit your format. I use all the sounds when I use it in my classroom. (Yes, it's a great classroom tool, too – not just for academic tournaments – and my students really enjoy it). It is so simple to set the buzzers up; I lose absolutely no instruction or planning time to get them ready for a quick review activity in class. Even the “regular” (non-academic team) kids are motivated to use the buzzers and want to frequently. Just like before, I can print out records at the end, so it could be used as an alternative form of assessment – and just like magic, all the grading is done for me.

Speaking of students, one of my students – a 12-year-old – was the buzzer system operator in one of the 4 competition rooms at the regional tournament we hosted. He ran Slam-In flawlessly in the 2 rounds he ran it. I trained him, but on his own he figured out how to make the system do things that even the vendor didn't know it could do. I think that speaks novels about the ease of Slam-In's Scoreboard software! If a 12-year-old can run it with total ease, then surely ANY trained coach's learning curve would be a snap. Few other buzzer software programs can compete with this, in my opinion.

Here's something I didn't know upfront but have come to rely on – unmatched, remarkably excellent customer service. The vendor gave me free online training to get me started, then gave me a refresher just before my district tournament. My representative even gave me his cell phone number so that I could call him on a Saturday in case I had problems. (I didn't have any problems at all, though.) Then, when I pointed out a couple of things that I thought the software needed to be able to do, those features were implemented right away and completely free of charge. In the past, I have been unable to reach other buzzer companies I have dealt with by phone or e-mail for days and days. With Slam-In, I almost feel like I have ownership in the company because they CARE. It's that simple. They make me feel like my little rural school in Middle-of-Nowhere, KY is the most important client in the world to them. My needs are met – and WAY beyond that!

I highly recommend Slam-In because it's the best buzzer system I have ever used, and it best meets the needs of our students and our events of any I've ever seen. And the vendor is wonderful, in every way imaginable. It's been a huge relief to know that I now have a reliable system, and that my vendor is “right there” to help me, if I need it. I assure you. Anyone who purchases the Slam-In will be so much more than just “happy,” so saying I am satisfied with my school's purchase is a gigantic understatement!

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