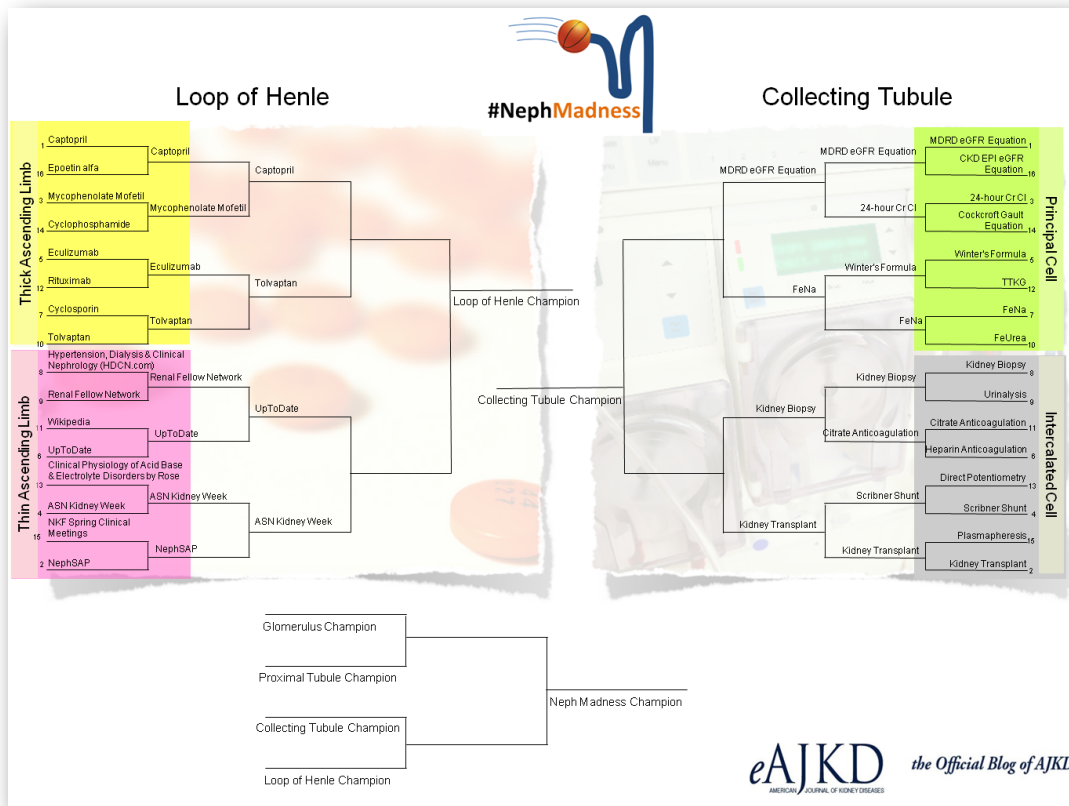# NephMadness 2.0

PROPOSAL FOR FUNDING

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What's New

In December we sent a proposal to the editors of AJKD with a vision for a second year of NephMadness and a request for financial backing. The editors had some questions. This is the reply to those questions.

The major development was the discovery of Tourneytopia (http://www.tourneytopia.com) by Liz Bury. This is a company that runs internet-based tournaments for companies. Most of their business is providing contests for the NCAA basketball tournament but they have done creative contests similar to NephMadness in the past. For example AeroSmith used them to run a contest to determine the greatest Aerosmith song (we can only thank G-d that Dream On won, http://bit.ly/1aa9Gyc)
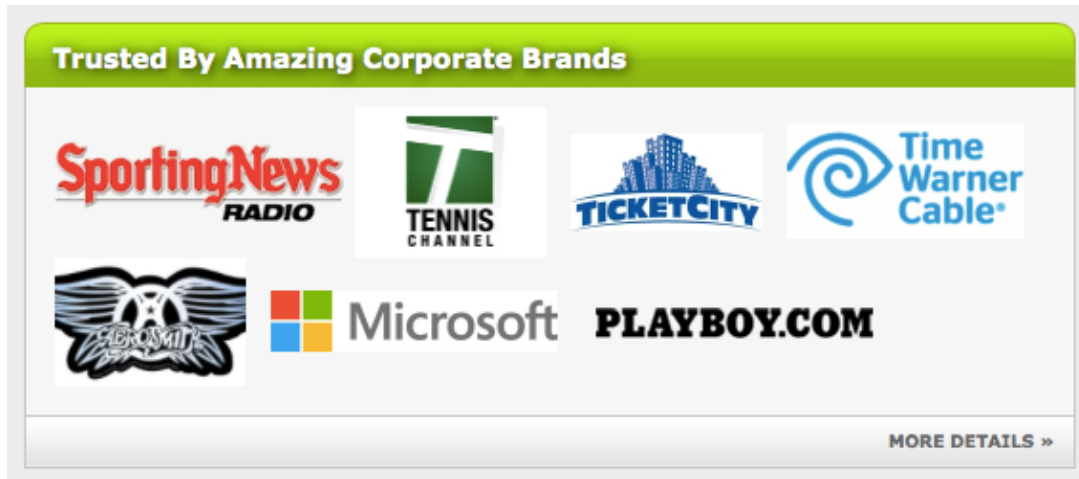
Their list of clients is here.

I spoke to Brian Anderson at Tourneytopia and described NephMadness. He said that our goals and their software are natural fits. Here is what how the tournament would run on their software.

- We could create a custom template of 64 nephrology concepts and divide them into regions and seed them as we wished.

- The software allows each team to be a link. On a PC when you rolled over the name of the team a box would pop-up with a few hundred characters of information and a picture. If people clicked on the team it works like any internet link, so we could take people to the blog post about the achievement.

- Participants register prior to putting in their picks for the tournament. Registration requires:

  - First and last name

  - Email

  - User name and password

  - Additionally we could add any questions to the registration process we want (ASN member? Fellow/resident/student/attending? Nephrologist? Reader of AJKD? Reader of eAJKD? Gender?)

- After registering, participants are presented with a really slick interface for picking their teams. While on the conference call he provided a demo and their site looked as professional and as well done as the MarchMadness interfaces I've used at Yahoo and CBSsports.

- Users can share their brackets via social media (Twitter, Facebook, e-mail, etc.) and they include an invitation template so organizers and participants can reach out and invite people to participate.

- During the contest people score points for correctly predicting the results and those scores are continuously updated on a score board. We can customize the scoring system.

- They sound very responsive and told me that within a few days of receiving the purchase order they would have the template ready for us to populate.

- We could deputize as many administrators as we would like. There is only one tier of administration, so everyone we give access to would have complete control over the entire tournament.

- Pricing. They have $3,000 template fee. This is essentially a permanent license and we would not need to re-buy the template in future years.

  - Additionally we need to pay for participants. The smallest bundle is 500 for $278. This would allow 500 people to play NephMadness. If more than 500 people signed up we would need to pay an additional $278 for another 500 licenses. Any registrations we pay for that are not used could be used the following year. So $3,280 gets us a fully functional sophisticated website.

  - If the tournament caught fire and started getting thousands of participants, AJKD would be insulated from uncontrolled, and unanticipated costs. After we run out of paid registrations, additional players can register and fill out brackets, however their brackets are not scored until AJKD paid for those registrations. In case of an avalanche of registrations we could just walk away and not be on the hook for the cost.

Additional Questions

Are you are planning to do nephmadness every year?

We would like to wait and see how this year's contest goes before making a multi-year commitment but if this contest meets our expectations, which means that average nephrologists heard of it, we plan on continuing it on a yearly basis. However, if the contest stumbles we would re-evaluate that plan and either make appropriate changes to improve it or abandon the concept for other opportunities.

How do you plan to keep it fresh and maintain interest?

We are confident we can keep the concepts fresh and interesting from year to year. We see this as analogous to the problem NKF has in running the Spring Clinical Meeting every year and the ASN has running Kidney Week every year. With a dozens of nephrology journals publishing every month we think we will be able to find fresh content on a yearly basis.

The example you gave was for the ESPN brackets and we are concerned that the constrained budget may not allow for this kind of sophistication. It may be useful to have a prioritized list of features in your recast proposal.

We feel that Tourneytopia provides all the sophistication we need for this project and currently do not have any items on our wish list that they do not cover.

How will the outcomes be determined?

One difference from last year is how the winners would be decided. We will abandon democracy and voting in order to switch to a mapped out winner from the beginning to the end. This is important because too often the more popular, well known concepts acquired more votes rather than more worthy winners. See MDRD beating out CKDepi. Additionally, this will allow true Cinderella's to advance. We will ask our content editors for suggested teams to ad-

vance and likely bracket scenarios, but Matt and Joel will make the final decision on how the teams advance. One down side of this is that it will make the contest appear rigged, which it actually is.

Will the bracket content be configurable/updated from our end?

The tournament is hosted on Tourneytopia's site but the content is completely under our control. We will be able to populate and configure it however we like.

How will the brackets will be rendered/displayed?

The Tourneytopia website is built with a "[modern responsive design that provides great support for all mobile devices including iOS, Android and Windows Phone](#)." We will also create a PDF of the brackets like we did last year for use on the eAJKD site and in NephMadness unplugged ([link](#) if you are not familiar).

Will you be refining the old logo, or creating an entirely new one?

We believe that engaging the help of a professional designer will improve the project. If we engaged a designer I would give her free reign to build any logo she wanted as long as it incorporated a renal theme. I don't feel that the basketball is essential.

Registration may limit participation and require more of a backend.

It is impossible to have online brackets without registration. This can be onerous and dissuade users. We plan to be considerate of our users time and privacy and minimize registration friction. While registration can dissuade some users, overall registration is common in web-based activities and we don't think sophisticated web-users will be bothered.

The back-end is taken care of by Tourneytopia.

For the web app notifying progress, we're not sure how it would notify through Facebook & Twitter. Would users login through Twitter/Facebook? Or is this various ways a user could share their bracket?

The Tourneytopia web app does not support pushing updates to people so we will abandon this functionality. Sharing brackets is possible through social media and e-mail with Tourneytopia.

We understand that you've contacted some developers for bids. Could you also please share any feedback you've gotten so far?

We contacted a web-contractor in Ann Arbor who felt that building this from scratch would cost approximately $20,000. When I mentioned Tourneytopia to another group in Austin they told me that they could not touch that price.

Introduction

After ASN Kidney Week 2013 in Atlanta, GA it was obvious that the inaugural NephMadness was a great success. It was also clear that not everyone had heard of NephMadness, Kidney Week was an opportunity to change that. During Kidney Week, NephMadness had principle four publicity moments:

1. We were highlighted at the AJKD editorial board meeting to a geographically diverse, packed room. Dr. Levey asked how many people participated in the first NephMadness and almost no one raised their hand.

2. A day later we demonstrated NephMadness to a room of cutting-edge educators. I got the feeling, besides the usual suspects (Edgar Lerma, Pascale Lane, Tejas Desai, etc.) no one in the room had heard of the campaign. The crazy bit was, I don't think many had heard of PBFluids.com or NephronPower.com. This really reinforced to me how limited our exposure was. We had reached out to a lot of people and had dramatically boosted the traffic to the blog but to a large extent we were preaching to the choir. Screencast of the presentation.

3. Forbes did a two page blog post about Kenar and NephMadness. The post had 3,030 views, and was spread widely on Twitter (22,000 impressions). As of today the post is highly ranked in the Google search for "Neph-Madness."

4. NephMadness got a great mention in the Day 2 ASN Kidney News Podcast with Dr. Molitoris (mention at 21:30).

Though we did not plan to repeat the contest right away, we came back from ASN Kidney Week with the feeling that the first year was an open beta and we were ready to do it right and see how big we can make this with a formal 1.0 release. Could we break out of the social media shtetl and get a program that nephrologists and medical professionals everywhere knew about, talked about and interacted with?

Vision for the next NephMadness

The only reason we would want to re-run NephMadness in 2014 is if we can make a professional, best-in-class campaign. To optimize NephMadness, the skeleton of the program would remain, we think we got more things right than wrong. However, two major areas need an overhaul in order for NephMadness to be successful in our mission to educate a wide variety of learners about nephrology concepts and cement AJKD as the leader in nephrology social media.

We are proposing two major changes

1. The first and most important change is to incorporate a fully automated web app that participants will interact with. Details on the proposed application is elaborated below. Having a full featured, automated experience is what people expect in an internet-based game. Anything short of fully automated bracket selection, score notification and updates pushed to participant in real time is amateurish and ignorable.

2. Rework bracket and team selection. We will move from last year's model of a couple of editorial meetings to an organized outreach program. We plan to engage 8-10 individual content experts to assist in crafting the brackets.

Possible content subjects and possible experts.

There are 8 teams to a group and 8 groups to the tournament. Each of the 8 groups would have a content editor.

Preliminary ideas for content groups include:
- AKI
- CKD
- Poisons/toxins
- Greatest nephrologists
- Cystic disease
- Hemodialysis
- Home therapies
- Hypertension

- Electrolytes
- Proposed content editors
  - Burton Rose for Electrolytes. We have contacted him and he is interested
    - 8 concepts, focussing on new advances and tricky concepts
      - ZS-9 v Kayexalate
      - How to measure renal K handling with new TTKG issues
  - David Goldfarb. Stones. We have contacted him and he is interested
    - 4-8 concepts
  - Ray Townsend. Hypertension. We have contacted him and he is interested.
    - 8 concepts
      - guideline on guideline violence (KDIGO v JNC 2014)
      - the truth about over treatment (ACCORD BP)
      - renal artery stenting vs renal sympathetic nerve ablation
  - Warren Kupin. Poisons/toxins. Edgar is his Facebook friend and feels that he will be receptive.
    - 8 concepts
  - Michael Kraus. Home therapies, he is speaker for NX-Stage.
    - 4-8 concepts
      - PD Dead or just dying?
      - implications of NIH FHN trials
      - button hole v rope ladder
  - Himmelfarb or Chertow for Hemodialysis?
  - Eknoyan for Greatest nephrologists?
    - 8 people
    - We may want to specify a time period to leave this field open for future years. Maybe change it to the most important nephrologists of the last 30 years.
  - Sarah Faubel for AKI. She is a friend of Joel Topf. She was delighted with NephMadness '13. Suspect she will be receptive to be a content advisor.
  - Bennett or Torres for Cystic disease. Edgar has worked with both.
  - Levey or Kalantar-Zedah for CKD?

Editorial style for the description of the teams

We would play to the strengths of this type of structured content and present the groups as listicles. Though disparaged as cheap content it, is probably the content presentation most native to the web and is conducive to social media interaction. Additionally, we want to explore turning these content development sessions into podcasts, Google Hangouts or some other multimedia content to add another dimension. Our contributors have gotten savvy at interviewing content experts, let's leverage that experience.

Possible ideas to stimulate interest during the tournament

Featured brackets might be an interesting thing to highlight.

- Do you know more nephrology than Glen Chertow. Beat the expert

- Beat Brenner's Brackets

- See if Schrier is worth his salt (remember he is in the Indiana State Basketball Hall of Fame)

The app would track and display the teams with the most votes, fewest votes, most anticipated upsets, etc.

The web app would notify participants of the progress of their entry. This could be by:

- e-mail

- Facebook

- Twitter

- or not at all, based on the user's selection

Integration of bracket web application with each team's abstract.

- Name

- Meta-information: bracket, author, content expert, seed

- Day 1 information: These usually are 200-800 words each

- Links to related content in the blogosphere

- Links to related content in the medical literature (specific call out to AJKD content)

- Images

A number of areas will be improved as we apply our experience and re-run the campaign, but I'd like to call out a few.

A New logo. Though impossible to quantify, we feel that the logo was an outsized contributor to NephMadness's success last year. It branded the campaign and tied outside content placed on other websites to the campaign. This is a huge multiplier. Seeing the eAJKD twitter feed have the icon from the contest was great. An effective logo makes a small operation feel polished and allows it to punch above its weight. I would like to engage the designer to help with a number of areas of the contest including the brackets, structuring the content and building icons for each content area.

Improved publicity. Last year we were racing hard to finish the brackets by Selection Sunday and we had little time to hustle for for publicity. Additionally the print, scan and upload stone-age mechanics gave off clear amateurish pheromones that may have squelched some publicity. In anticipation of NephMadness '14, we have already secured time on Dr. Mike Sevilla's (15,000 followers on Twitter) leading medical podcast for February 2014. Given the excitement around NephMadness at Kidney Week we are optimistic that we will be able to secure high profile coverage in the publications of ASN, Renal Urology News and KevinMD. In summary with advanced planning and more sophisticated content and distribution I think we have a much better chance of getting picked up by general interest medical and health publications.

Budget-

1. Tourneytopia, turnkey tournament: $3,280, with the possibility of additional cost $280/500 participants if the contest really catches fire.

2. Logo design ~$200. Additional design consultation ~$500.