

# International Academic Competitions

## IAC Varsity & Junior Varsity National Championships

### **Bee Competition Rules and Scoring Summary for Playoff Rounds**

*Updated for the 2026 National Championships & All Subsequent Years*

This document is intended as a supplement to the preliminary rules and an outline of the playoff scoring system used at the IAC Varsity and Junior Varsity National Championships. Unless specifically stated otherwise, the preliminary rules contained in the document (online at [www.iacompetitions.com/rules-scoresheets-question-distribution/](http://www.iacompetitions.com/rules-scoresheets-question-distribution/) under the title: [IAC National Championships: Bee Preliminary Rounds Scoring System and Rules Summary](#) still apply in full.

If you have specific questions regarding more detailed aspects of the rules, please ask a tournament official.

The following scoring rules apply for the playoff rounds of the Varsity and Junior Varsity National Political Science Bee, US History Bee, National Geography Bee, National Academic Bee, National Science Bee, and National History Bee, US Geography Bee, National Biology Bee, and National Humanities Bee.

If you answer a question during the early part of the question correctly (at the point on the page that contains **bold and underlined text**), you will receive 6 points.

If you answer a question during the middle part of the question correctly (at the point on the page that contains **bold but not underlined text**), you will receive 5 points.

If you answer a question towards the end of the question (at the point on the page that contains plain text), you will receive 4 points.

If you answer a question correctly after it has finished being read, you will receive 3 points.

If you answer incorrectly during the question, you will lose 2 points.

If you answer incorrectly after the question is done, you will lose 1 point.

**Note: Beginning in 2026, for in-person National Championship Bee competitions, there is no limit to the number of students who can buzz, as long as buzzes keep happening within 3 seconds of the reader ruling the prior student incorrect.** In other words, 3 incorrect answers do not automatically kill the question. However, in online National Championship Bee competitions (including the US Geography Bee, National Biology Bee, and the National Humanities Bee for 2026), 3 incorrect answers still kills the question in the playoffs.

Protests are adjudicated immediately. If a student protests during the question, the question is halted until the protest is resolved. During this time, competing students must remain silent and in place, and not consult their cell phones, notes, or any other resources. A student may continue to protest the question until the moderator gets more than a few words into the next question.

In the playoffs, if a protest is upheld, then point changes (whether positive or negative) that took place after the protesting student buzzed on that question are disregarded.

Please consult the online schedules or tournament staff to inquire as to how many points are required to go out in a round. Usually it will be 40 points, with the exception of the National History Bee and National Geography Bee Semifinals and Finals (where it will usually be 50 points), but this may change, and this rules document should not be used as definitive for that.