

## Official Rules for the National History Bowl

### I. Competition Structure

#### a. State Level

##### i. Preliminary Rounds

1. The Preliminary Round section of a State event in the National History Bowl will consist of at least five games with two teams of at most four active players playing against each other.
2. Teams will advance from the Preliminary Rounds to the Playoff Rounds on the basis of their won-lost record.
  - a. Ties in preliminary games stand.
  - b. The tiebreaking procedure for teams tied on won-lost record will be explained, in detail, in the Tournament Structure portion of these rules.

##### ii. Playoff Rounds

1. Teams that qualify to the Playoff Rounds will be seeded first on their won-lost record, then on total points scored, into a single-elimination bracket.
  - a. For tournaments of fewer than forty-eight teams, eight teams will qualify for the Playoff Rounds. However, the Preliminary Round section will be extended to six games.
  - b. For tournaments of between thirty-three and forty-eight teams, twelve teams will advance to the playoffs, and those teams seeded first through fourth will have a bye.
  - c. For tournaments of forty-nine teams or greater, sixteen teams will qualify to the Playoff Rounds.
2. Since there must be a result at the end of the game for one team to advance, ties will be broken.
  - a. The procedure for these tiebreakers will be explained, in detail, in the Tournament Structure portion of these rules.
3. Teams will qualify for the National Bowl Championship according to the procedure outlined in the Tournament Structure portion of these rules.

#### b. National Level

##### i. Championship Preliminaries

1. Teams will play ten games over two, five-game blocks. Three five-game blocks will be scheduled.
2. After the fifteen rounds are completed, either sixteen or thirty-two teams will advance to the Championship Finals according to the procedures outlined in the Tournament Structure portion of these rules.

##### ii. Championship Playoffs

1. Sixteen or thirty-two teams will play over five rounds in a single-elimination competition to determine the National History Bowl Champion.
2. The National History Bowl Champion will be presented their awards at an awards ceremony that will follow the National Final. Any prizes to be awarded to the Champion will be made officially known at this time, along with any prizes for other Championship Playoff teams.

## II. Tournament Structure

### a. State Level

#### i. Preliminary Rounds

1. The schedule for the Preliminary Rounds will be made shortly after the close of registration for the tournament. Registration closing dates are listed on the website [www.historybowl.com](http://www.historybowl.com) and any exemptions to the close of registration must be requested to the Executive Director.
2. Every effort will be made by the Tournament Director, in cooperation with the tournament host, to avoid schedules that pair stronger teams against other stronger teams immediately during the Preliminary Rounds.
3. There is no set method of scheduling, whether round robin, Swiss Pair, random, or otherwise. Schedules will follow local customs from other academic competitions in the area.
4. After five preliminary games are completed, teams with the best won-lost records will advance to the Playoff Rounds.
  - a. In tournaments with fewer than 32 teams, six preliminary games shall be played.
  - b. Games that are tied will stand as ties, and count as one-half of a win and one-half of a loss for the purposes of standings and seedings.
  - c. If two teams are tied on won-lost record after the Preliminary Rounds, the below procedures are used to break the tie.
    - i. Highest total points scored
    - ii. Head-to-head result, if applicable
    - iii. Strength of schedule, as defined by the won-lost record of the tied teams' opponents and total points scored, if necessary.
    - iv. At the buzzer, tied teams play sudden death tossups until one is answered correctly.
  - d. If three or more teams are tied on won-lost record after the Preliminary Rounds, the above procedures are used until one or more teams are eliminated from the tie. This process repeats until two teams remain, then return to step c.i of the two team tiebreaker.

ii. Playoff Rounds

1. A number of teams, as described by the Competition Structure portion of these rules, will advance to a single-elimination tournament to determine the State History Bowl Champion for a particular event.
2. Teams will be seeded from 1 to N, with N being the number of teams qualified to the Playoff Rounds, based on their ranking from the Preliminary Rounds.
  - a. In an eight-team playoff, the quarterfinal matches will be 1 v 8, 2 v 7, 3 v 6, and 4 v 5. The first semifinal will be 1-8 v 4-5 while the second will be 2-7 v 3-6.
  - b. In a twelve-team playoff, the top four seeds will receive a bye to the quarterfinals. First Round games will be 8 v 9, 5 v 12, 6 v 11, and 7 v 10. Quarterfinals will be 1 v 8-9, 4 v 5-12, 3 v 6-11, and 2 v 7-10. The first semifinal will be 1-8-9 v 4-5-12 while the second will be 3-6-11 v 2-7-10.
  - c. In a sixteen-team playoff, the First Round will be 1 v 16, 8 v 9, 4 v 13, 5 v 12, 3 v 14, 6 v 11, 7 v 10, and 2 v 15. The quarterfinals will be 1-16 v 8-9, 4-13 v 5-12, 3-14 v 6-11, and 7-10 v 2-15. The first semifinal will be 1-16-8-9 v 4-13-5-12 while the second semifinal will be 3-14-6-11 v 7-10-2-15.
3. All teams that qualify for the Playoff Rounds will also qualify for the National Championship Preliminary Rounds.
4. The Executive Director reserves the right to extend wildcard invitations to teams that did not qualify for the Playoff Rounds.
5. Games that reach their conclusion with a tie score will continue with sudden-death tossups until one team wins.

b. National Level

i. Championship Preliminaries

1. Teams will play ten games over the scheduled fifteen rounds.
2. The Executive Director will communicate the order of play for the Championship Preliminaries to all teams prior to their arrival at the site of the National Championship.
3. Procedures regarding tied games and ties for standing and seeding are the same as they are for the State Preliminary Rounds.

ii. Championship Playoffs

1. Either sixteen or thirty-two teams will advance to the Championship Playoffs from the Championship Preliminaries.
2. If sixteen, then the bracketing will follow the procedure for a sixteen-team playoff outlined above.
3. If thirty-two, the Round of 32 will be 1 v 32, 16 v 17, 9 v 24, 8 v 25, 4 v 29, 13 v 20, 12 v 21, 5 v 28, 2 v 31, 15 v 18, 10 v 23, 7 v 26, 3 v 30, 14 v

19, 11 v 22, and 6 v 27. From there, the bracket follows the sixteen team model outlined previously.

4. Procedures for breaking tied games in the Championship Playoffs are the same as those in the State Playoff Rounds.

### III. Game Structure

- a. At no point at any level of the competition will a wrong answer incur a loss of points.
- b. On tossup questions, only the player who has buzzed in will be permitted to answer. The light on the buzzer system, or the main console corresponding to the player who signaled, will be sufficient recognition for the player to give his or her answer.
- c. Each game will consist of four quarters.
- d. Players may be substituted between quarters, but not during a quarter.
- e. There are no timeouts. The moderator may stop play at any time for any reason he or she believes warrants a stoppage.
- f. Each quarter will contain a mix of questions from different historical periods.
  - i. American history until 1865
  - ii. World history until 1648
  - iii. American history from 1866 until 1959
  - iv. World history from 1648 until 1959
  - v. American history from 1960 to the present
  - vi. World history from 1960 to the present
- g. The first quarter will consist of ten short tossups worth ten points each.
  - i. At the National Championships, this round will be eight tossups.
- h. The second quarter will consist of ten slightly longer tossups worth ten points. After each correctly answered tossup, only the team that answered the tossup correctly is entitled to an opportunity to answer a bonus question worth ten points.
  - i. At the National Championships, this round will be eight multimedia-based tossups with accompanying bonuses.
  - ii. Teams may confer on a bonus question. The moderator will allow four seconds, then say "captain?" on the fifth second, after which an answer must come immediately.
  - iii. The captain should answer for the team, but the moderator will take the first answer directed towards him or her as the team's response. The moderator's judgment as to whether or not an answer was directed towards him or her is not protestable.
- i. The third quarter will be a sixty second "lightning round" consisting of eight very short questions.
  - i. Three categories will be presented to the teams at the start of this round. The team trailing will play first and choose their category.
    1. If the teams are tied, the last team to answer a tossup correctly will go first.
  - ii. Teams may pass if they do not know the answer to a question, but they will not be allowed to answer questions that are passed.

1. Teams may confer during the sixty second round, but the moderator will not move on to the next question until an answer has been directed at him or her and ruled correct or incorrect.
- iii. If a team gives its answer as the time is expiring, it will be counted. The moderator's judgment as to whether or not the answer was begun before, at, or after the end of the sixty seconds is not protestable.
- iv. After the team has had its sixty seconds to answer their eight questions, the moderator will turn over any missed or passed questions to the opposition. Answers must come immediately as they will have had time already to think of their answers while the first team was playing the round.
- v. After this is completed, the process is repeated for the other team, starting with their choosing from the two remaining categories.
- j. The fourth quarter consists of ten longer tossups worth twenty points each.
  - i. At the National Championships, this round will be eight tossups.
- k. Preliminary games that are tied after the fourth quarter will stand as ties. Playoff games will require a sudden-death tiebreaker using fourth quarter length tossups. The first team to answer a tossup correctly wins and advances.

#### IV. Game Protocols

##### a. Pre-game

##### i. Moderator Responsibilities

1. The moderator will, prior to the start of the game, conduct a buzzer check to insure the buzzer system is fully functional. If the buzzer system is not fully functional, the team may decide whether or not to continue with that system in its current state, or ask for a replacement.
  - a. If a replacement is asked for, the moderator will request one from the Tournament Director.
  - b. If no replacement is available, the moderator will disable as many buzzers on the other team's side as to make even the number of working buzzers for each team. The moderator will also indicate what the players without working buzzers will need to do to signal. The moderator's judgment as to whether a non-buzzer signal was before or after a buzzer signal is not protestable.
2. The moderator will ask the players to introduce themselves so that the scorekeeper may write down the players' names on the scoresheet. The moderator should also check at this time to make sure the correct teams are in the room for that particular game.
  - a. The moderator may, in cases where there are not enough volunteers to provide a scorekeeper to every moderator, also function as the scorekeeper.

3. The moderator will relay any pertinent information to the players that may have been communicated between rounds by the tournament staff.
- ii. Team Responsibilities
    1. The team will introduce itself as their school name as well as any designation such as A, B, C, etc. if their school has brought more than one team to the event. The scorekeeper or the moderator may delay the start of the match until this designation is made.
    2. When the players introduce themselves to the moderator during the buzzer check, they must use their real names as provided by the school when registering for the tournament.
      - a. A player who attempts to play under an alias is subject to exclusion during the first quarter without substitution. The player may re-enter the game between the first and second quarter provided he or she provides his or her real name at that point. Any further attempts to play under an alias will result in exclusion from the match without substitution.
      - b. A player who attempts to play under the name of another competitor will be excluded from the current game and is subject to disqualification from all further matches pending the decision of the Tournament Director.
    3. One player must be designated as the team captain. The captain should be the player giving the answers during second quarter bonuses and the third quarter, but is not required to do so.
      - a. The captain is the only player on the team that will be permitted to file protests.
  - b. During the Game
    - i. Moderator Responsibilities
      1. The moderator will read each of the questions in a manner that allows both teams, and each player on those teams, to hear the question clearly.
        - a. Moderators may be asked by the captain to either speed up or slow down. While requests from captains may be taken into consideration, the ultimate pacing of each game is at the moderator's discretion. If the Tournament Director is unsatisfied with the pace of the room in finishing games, he or she will advise the moderator or replace the moderator.
        - b. Moderators are not expected to pronounce every word in the game packet without error. Moderators may take reasonable steps to indicate what the word they are attempting to pronounce actually is, such as spelling the word, if they feel such efforts are necessary.

2. The moderator will make his or her best effort to stop reading the question when he or she hears a player signal to answer.
3. The moderator will indicate when a question is either a tossup or bonus.
4. The moderator will indicate which of the eight questions he or she is reading in the sixty second round.
5. The moderator will indicate verbally whether or not the question has been answered correctly or incorrectly.
6. The moderator will ask coaches, if present, if they will be making substitutions between quarters. If a coach is not present for one or both sides, the captain will assume the responsibility of confirming whether or not there will be substitutions.
7. The moderator will ask for an announcement of the final score at the end of the game if there is a scorekeeper present; otherwise, he or she will make that announcement to the room.
8. The moderator will only comment on the correctness of an answer, the score, whether a question is a tossup or a bonus, or to keep order in the room. It is not the place of the moderator to make editorial comments about the content or style of the questions in front of the players. Such comments should be directed to the Tournament Director, preferably after the tournament.

ii. Team Responsibilities

1. Once a player from a team has given an incorrect answer, that team must not signal to answer that same question again.
2. During tossup questions, players may not talk amongst each other or communicate in writing while the question is being read.
  - a. To discourage illegal conferral, scrap paper should only be supplied if a team specifically requests it.
  - b. A student who confers illegally will be indicated by the moderator and the conferral will be treated as an incorrect answer.
3. Teams will refrain from conversing during their opposition's bonus question.
4. Teams may confer during the opposition's sixty second round, but the moderator reserves the right to pause the round and caution or sanction a team if he or she feels the conferral is interfering with the active team's ability to hear and/or answer the question being read.
5. Teams must respond to moderator prompts honestly and quickly.
  - a. A player may not attempt to gain an advantage in the case where the moderator did not hear the initial answer by changing said answer from what was said, or deferring to a teammate in the case of a bonus or third quarter question.

- b. If a moderator prompts a player for more specific information regarding the answer, the player does not receive additional time to consider such information before providing it. The moderator reserves the right to call time on a player who he or she believes is stalling.

c. After the game

i. Moderator Responsibilities

1. The moderator will double-check the scoresheet, making sure all appropriate information regarding player names, scores, and questions answered or unanswered is filled in on the paper.
2. The moderator will reiterate any announcements made before the game relayed by the tournament staff.
3. If the game in question is a playoff game, the moderator should tell the winning side which room they should report to next.
4. The moderator will secure the questions and return them, along with the scoresheet, to the tournament headquarters.

ii. Team Responsibilities

1. The players will comply with announcements made by the moderator regarding the tournament.
2. The players will leave the room in as good a condition as they found it, disposing of any trash by appropriate means.

V. Protests

a. What is protestable?

i. Correctness of an answer

1. An answer is given that is believed to be correct, and the answer in the question packet is not correct.
2. An answer is given that is believed to be correct and equivalent to the answer in the question packet.
  - a. A special case of this is pronunciation. While protestable, since the material of the protest depends on what was heard by the moderator, these protests are more likely to be denied.
3. An answer that is given is ruled incorrect, but should have been prompted for more specific information.
4. An answer that is given was ruled incorrect due to the question packet asking for more information than was required to uniquely identify the answer.

ii. Factual content of a question

1. The question contained a factual error that led a player to give an incorrect answer.
2. The question contained a factual error that led to the question being unanswerable.

iii. Execution of game protocols

1. The moderator did not follow a protocol in Section IV which led to a direct, quantifiable affect on the score.
  2. The moderator and/or scorekeeper did not award the correct number of points for a correct answer.
  3. The moderator did not permit the inactive team their opportunity to answer the active team's missed or passed question(s) during the third quarter.
    - a. If this occurs, the moderator should proceed with the remainder of the third quarter, if applicable. In the very unlikely event that both teams are denied their opportunity in this fashion, the moderator should report to the Tournament Director for a resolution. Otherwise, the moderator will read the remaining category to the aggrieved team, but that team can only score as many points as they were entitled to from the questions missed when the error occurred.
  4. The moderator revealed the answer to a tossup question before allowing the other side, if eligible to answer, an opportunity to do so.
    - a. If this occurs, the moderator should refer to the backup questions provided by the tournament headquarters and read one only to the aggrieved team.
  5. During the first question only, the buzzer malfunctioned in such a manner that a player was unable to answer a question, and such error was not caught because the moderator failed to perform a buzzer check.
- b. When can a protest be filed?
- i. A player who is not the captain should indicate to the captain that he or she wishes to protest. The captain will then indicate his team's wish to protest immediately. The moderator will respond to the verbal protest of the captain by saying "protest noted".
  - ii. The captain must file a protest form, available from the moderator, at the conclusion of the game.
  - iii. If the protest would change the result (meaning win, loss, or tie) of the game, then both teams must remain in the room and wait for the protest to be resolved.
    1. During the Preliminary Rounds, if a protest would not change the result of the game, it will be taken to tournament headquarters and held until the end of the Preliminaries. If that protest would change a team's status as to whether or not they have qualified for the playoffs or their seeding within those playoffs, the protest will be resolved at that point.
    2. During the Playoff Rounds, if a protest would not change the result of the game, it will be dismissed by the moderator at the end of the game.

- iv. If a player or coach from the protesting team leaves the room before the protest is resolved, the protest is forfeited.
- v. If a player or coach from the non-protesting team leaves the room before the protest is resolved, the protest is automatically granted.
- c. Who will resolve a protest?
  - i. In the event of a minor error, such as scoring, the moderator and scorekeeper may attempt to resolve the protest if they feel it would not cause undue delay to the game.
  - ii. In the event that a minor error cannot be resolved quickly, or on any protest regarding the factual correctness of a question or an answer, the protest will be brought to the Tournament Director, who may or may not convene a protest committee of tournament staff to adjudicate the protest.
- d. How will a protest be resolved?
  - i. If the protest can be resolved by the moderator in the room, then he or she will do so and announce the resolution to the players.
  - ii. If the protest is taken to the Tournament Director and resolved at that level, the Tournament Director or his or her designate will go to the game room and announce the resolution to all players.
  - iii. The Tournament Director may call upon any and all resources available at the tournament site to resolve a protest, including but not limited to: internet research, library research, consulting with tournament staff, consulting with coaches who have teaching experience relevant to the material being protested, and consulting with people outside the tournament who have experience relevant to the material being protested. Any sources used to resolve the protest will be disclosed when the resolution of the protest is announced.
- e. What is NOT protestable?
  - i. Timing decisions are not protestable, including but not limited to the time allowed after buzzing in, the time allowed after a tossup is finished, and the time allowed for a prompt for more specific information to clarify an answer.
  - ii. Judgment calls of the moderator are not protestable, including but not limited to which player was allowed to answer, what the moderator hears as directed towards him or her, and which player signaled first in the case of players playing a non-fully functional buzzer set.
  - iii. All decisions of the Tournament Director are final with regard to all protests and, more generally, any interpretation of the above rules.

## VI. Additional Sanctions

- a. Lateness
  - i. If a team does not check in with the registration desk fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled start of the first Preliminary Round game, it risks being dropped from the tournament unless that team has contacted the Tournament Director and he or she is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the delay.

1. The host school should organize one extra team, held in reserve, to take the place of a missing team if the spot vacated by that team would result in an odd number of teams overall.
  2. If no reserve teams are available from the host school, extra players from the other participating schools will be called on to form a mixed team. This mixed team is ineligible for national qualification.
- ii. If a team is present but one, two, or three of its players are missing at the start of a round, the match will proceed as scheduled. The player(s) may enter the match during a time when substitutes are allowed.
  - iii. If a team is late reporting back from a scheduled break in the tournament, the match will begin without them after a five minute grace period. If that team should then appear after the start of the match, they may enter the match during a time when substitutes are allowed.
- b. Misconduct
- i. Acts constituting misconduct will be interpreted **broadly** by the tournament staff and should include, but are not limited to, excessive use of profanity during games, incessant talking between tossups, and refusal to comply with the instructions of the moderator and/or tournament staff. Students may be charged with misconduct by any member of the tournament staff; sanction will be determined by the Tournament Director, including but not limited to disqualification and forfeiture of national qualification, games won, prizes, and the like.
- c. Intentional Damage
- i. Any intentional action to damage or destroy the physical property used to stage the tournament, including but not limited to buzzer systems, desks, monitors, computer equipment, film equipment, tables, chairs, game rooms, or the personal property of other players, will be grounds for immediate disqualification and subject to additional sanction by the Executive Director up to and including a life ban for individuals and a program ban for the school. The tournament host may, at its discretion, bill the offending team's school for the damages.
- d. Intentional Cheating
- i. Any student who attempts, by physical or electronic means, to gain access to the questions in an attempt to gain a competitive advantage for himself/herself or others who may play the questions in the future before, during, or after the tournament will be subject to a life ban.
  - ii. Any moderator who attempts to keep copies of the questions before they are cleared by The National History Bee and Bowl, LLC for distribution are subject to a life ban and, potentially, litigation.
  - iii. Any coach who attempts to keep copies of the questions before they are cleared by The National History Bee and Bowl, LLC for distribution are subject to a life ban, a program ban for their current and future institutions, and,

potentially, litigation. The same applies if any coach is found to have encouraged a student found to have violated Part I of this section of the rules.

- iv. At the sole discretion of the Executive Director, any student or coach currently serving a suspension or ban by any state or national academic competition organization may also be suspended or banned from participating in the events run by The National History Bee and Bowl, LLC.