



**UNITED STATES ACADEMIC DECATHLON
NATIONAL FINALS
APRIL 28 – April 30, 2016**

To: ACADEMIC DECATHLON® STATE CHAMPIONS

From: United States Academic Decathlon®

Congratulations on achieving the honor of representing your state at the United States Academic Decathlon® 2016 National Finals in Anchorage, AK. Plans for the national finals are underway. USAD staff and many volunteers in Alaska are working hard to make this an enjoyable competition. All registration documents and competition information can be found on the USAD website (www.usad.org) - 2016 Nationals page.

All events begin Thursday April 28. Registration is 8-10 a.m., followed by a Welcome Ceremony at 10:30 a.m. and the Speech and Interview competition from 3-7 p.m. Objective testing is Friday, April 29 from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m., followed by the Super Quiz™ from 2-4:30 p.m. and an “all teams” activity from 5-9 p.m. Friday. The Awards Banquet and ceremony is Saturday, April 30 from 8 a.m.-12 p.m. The highest scoring Varsity, Scholastic and Honors speech will be presented during the Awards Banquet

NATIONALS REGISTRATION: All forms MUST be emailed and/or postmarked by March 21, 2016. ALL FORMS MUST BE TYPED OR PRINTED LEGIBLY. Names of students will appear on all documentation as they appear on the online team roster form. No name corrections will be made after March 25, 2016.

Please mail forms to: USAD Nationals Competition, PO Box 4351, Mankato, MN 56002. NOTE: the completion deadlines for the forms are listed on the USAD website - 2016 Nationals page (Nationals Registration Anchorage, AK Icon.)

Coaches, teams and state directors please comply with the deadline dates as specified for submission of your team registration and roster. States with competitions scheduled after March 20, 2016, please email Daniele Grigsby - Daniele@usad.org for further details.

COMPETITION SITE: All academic testing will be held at the William A. Egan Civic & Convention Center (Civic Center), 555 West Fifth Avenue, Anchorage, AK 99501.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS: This year's host hotel is the Hilton Anchorage (Hilton), 500 West Third Avenue Anchorage, AK 99501, USA. To register, simply fill out the online hotel reservation form and email or mail it direct to the Hilton. A credit card guarantee form must be completed to reserve your rooms. **Registration deadline is Sunday, March 20, 2016.** Please make your reservations as soon as possible. Team reservations will take precedence over guest reservations.

Guest reservations will be processed March 21-25, 2016, during the open guest reservation period. Families, school administrators, teachers and other guests will be offered the same rates as the USAD participants; however, they will need to fill out the hotel reservation form for guests (found on the USAD

website 2016 Nationals page) and send it directly to the Hilton. Due to limited room availability, we cannot guarantee rooms for guests. Guest room reservations will be filed on a first-come-first-served basis. All reservations will be made and confirmed by the Hilton. USAD discounted room rates for the Hilton are \$139.00 plus applicable taxes of \$16.68 (12%) for single, double, triple, or quad rooms for a total cost of \$155.68. A major credit card is necessary to guarantee a reservation. Payment must be made at the time of arrival with a credit card or check - no purchase orders are accepted. Each team will be responsible for payment of hotel rooms and other hotel incidentals. All team keys and room assignments will be given to the coach upon check-in. The Hilton requires guests to provide a valid credit card at the time of check-in. The Hilton Anchorage is a non-smoking hotel.

TRANSPORTATION: Transportation is on your own. The Hilton is approximately 7 miles (or 10 minutes) from the airport. Taxi is approximately \$17.00. Rental cars and vans are also an option. If renting a car/van at the airport and driving to the hotel, the Hilton offers discounted valet parking for \$18.00 per day. Public parking lots are available near the hotel 24/7 – rates vary from \$.75- \$1.00+ per hour (view the Parking Facilities Map.)

ON SIGHT REGISTRATION & IDENTIFICATION: You MUST register your team on Thursday, April 28 from 8-10 a.m. Civic Center – Lower lobby area Summit Hall. Teams arriving before Thursday, April 28th, SHOULD plan to register early Thursday morning to leave the later times for teams arriving on Thursday; teams that do not register early may be asked to wait until other teams have registered. If flying in on Thursday morning, please try to arrive before 8 a.m. so you have time to get to the hotel to register and prepare for the competition. All team members MUST accompany the coach to registration. Each team member MUST show a photo ID (e.g., school ID, driver's license, etc.) to be registered for the competition. The official USAD identification badge (issued to students upon registration) must be worn at all times during competition times. You must also carry your personal photo ID with you at all times. **COACHES MUST CARRY MEDICAL RELEASE FORMS FOR TEAM MEMBERS AT ALL TIMES.**

WELCOME EVENT: All teams, coaches and USAD representatives are invited to a Welcome Event from 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m. in the Civic Center – La Perouse/Explorers Hall. Meet and greet teams from all over the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and China. Experience a taste of Alaska and jump start a memorable national competition.

MANDATORY COACH MEETING: There will be a mandatory coaches meeting Thursday, April 28 at 1:00 p.m. in the Hilton – Alaska Ballroom (2nd Floor). Coaches will receive any final information about the competition and will be given an outline of the competition in their registration packet. Coaches should review this information prior to the meeting. This meeting is mandatory for all coaches.

MANDATORY STUDENT CLICKER TRAINING: There will be a mandatory student clicker training Thursday, April 28 from 1 – 2:30 p.m. The training is a 30 workshop that will run in intervals in the Hilton – Bristol Bay Ballroom – (2nd Floor). The ballroom will be divided in half and there will be two concurrent sessions. A total of six sessions will be provided.

MEALS: Breakfast will be provided on Friday before the objective testing for up to 9 team members and one coach at the Hilton – Alaska Ballroom (2nd Floor). Breakfast will be served in two one-hour shifts at 5:30-6:30 a.m. and 6:30-7:30 a.m. Students will assigned eating times from random selection. Shift information will be provided at registration. Teams tickets must be presented for breakfast, lost tickets will not be replaced. Additional meals for extra coaches, students or guests may be purchased for \$28. Please refer to the "Extras" form to order your additional breakfast tickets. The form is located on the Nationals page of the USAD website under the Nationals Team Registration icon.

Students will receive water bottles and an Alaskan themed gift basket at Registration on Thursday, April 28. Teams must provide their own snacks items for Team Break time.

Teams will also receive tickets for Saturday's Awards Banquet at Registration. You will receive one complimentary coach ticket in addition to participant tickets corresponding with the number on your official roster for the Saturday Awards Banquet Brunch. All team and guest banquet tickets **MUST** be picked up during registration on Thursday, April 28, 2016 by the team coach. The banquet charge for each additional coach/guest is \$45.00 - please use the "Extras" form to order. The form is located on the Nationals page of the USAD website under the Nationals Team Registration icon.

NATIONALS T-SHIRTS: T-shirts will be available for pre-sale and can be picked up at the Nationals registration Thursday, April 28. Orders may be placed using the "Extras" form – see the form for details. The form is located on the Nationals page of the USAD website under the Nationals Team Registration icon. T-shirts will also be available for sale during registration April 28. Order your Alaska Nationals keepsake today.

ESSAY & ART: This year the essay and art events will take place online prior to the competition in Anchorage, AK. These events will be held April 7, 2016, at 12:30 p.m. central daylight time with essay first, immediately followed by art. It will be necessary for your team to participate in a practice set-up from April 1 at 12:30 p.m. to April 5, 2016 at 12:30 p.m. central daylight time. Practice will help USAD confirm that all teams/students are able to get online and use the system as planned on the competition day.

Even if you have participated in a USAD National competition, we still require all students and proctors to test their usernames and passwords on these days. You will need to reserve a computer lab at your school, library or other venue. A proctor (not the team coach) will need to oversee the online competition. **All students MUST participate on April 7, 2016. Student(s) that do not participate in the Essay and Art testing will not be eligible to participate in the Alaska competition.** Please refer to the National Online Technical Information for details prior to practice or testing.

MOST VALUABLE TEAM MEMBER: In a 2011 USAD survey students indicated they would like to recognize the most valuable team member. This year after students have completed the Essay and Art tests online they will immediately be asked to fill out a Rubric Score Sheet. These Rubric Score Sheets will determine the selection of the MVTM of their team. Each member of the official team is eligible to vote and voters remain anonymous. Rubrics will be scored by the computer. A sample of the rubric will be posted to the USAD website - 2016 Nationals page. A word of caution: MVTM candidates Should Not Be Awarded Points Based on Popularity.

SPEECH AND INTERVIEW EVENTS: Teams will be assigned their speech and interview times by lottery. All team members will have their times assigned randomly. Teams will not present their speeches or interviews at the same time as in the past. Please remind your students that **NO** cell phones, electronic devices, computer watches, backpacks, purses, study materials, etc., are allowed during the Speech and Interview events.

INTERVIEW: Interview will be conducted in an arena-style setting in Civic & Convention Center - La Perouse – Explorers Hall. In preparation for the Interview event, decathletes should review the Interview Self-Intro document posted on the 2016 Nationals webpage (Helpful Information Icon). This information packet will help the decathletes prepare for the interview process. It provides sample questions and reviews the do's and don'ts of good interviewing procedures.

TOP SCORING SPEECH STUDENTS: The highest scoring student in the prepared speech component for the Honors, Scholastic, and Varsity categories will present their speech during the Awards Banquet on April 30, 2016. Coaches and students will be notified prior to the banquet so they may be prepared when their name is called. Coaches will be asked to provide USAD with a short synopsis of their student's speech for placement purposes.

SCORE RESULTS: Scores will NOT be posted during the competition. Coaches and state directors will be emailed their team results and the overall report at the conclusion of the Awards Banquet. Score report packets will be available to email to the press at the conclusion of the Awards Banquet. All other reports will be emailed to each head coach as soon as possible. If your team has an early departure, contact Daniele Grigsby for information regarding your score report.

AWARDS BANQUET: The Civic Center – Explorers Hall will be the site of the Awards Banquet. There will be assigned seating for all attendees. Up to nine team members and two coaches may be seated together at the team table. Complimentary tickets will be included in your team's registration packet. You will be provided with one complimentary coach ticket in addition to participant tickets corresponding with the number on your official roster. Banquet tickets for additional coaches may be purchased using the Extras Form. All parents and other visitors from your state who are planning to attend the banquet should make their reservations using this Extras Form. The cost for the banquet is \$45 per person. The banquet is a breakfast buffet with options for vegetarians.

DRESS: Publicity pictures, news coverage, and video productions are commonplace at USAD events. Participants and coaches are expected to dress in good taste and in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

(A copy is located on the 2016 Nationals page of the USAD website.) The average weather in Alaska in April is cool with temperatures ranging between 41 - 48°F. April is typically the driest month for Anchorage, but there could be snow on the ground. Please dress accordingly. You will experience approximately 16 hours of sunlight from sunrise to sunset during your stay.

STUDENT BEHAVIOR: All participants are expected to demonstrate behavior that is appropriate for USAD events and in keeping with the USAD Code of Conduct. Coaches are the official chaperones for the team members at all activities and are directly responsible for supervision of the behavior of their team members at all times. All students are expected to read and understand the Code of Conduct and take responsibility for their own behavior to help avoid any unpleasant incidents that may mar the success of the event or negatively affect the representation of your school and community. Teams and Decathletes should be aware that the failure of any member of the team to adhere to the policies and procedures listed in the Code of Conduct may result in the disqualification of the delinquent student's participation and/or the entire team and the student and/or team runs the risk of being sent home at the decathlete's or team's expense.

SPECIAL NEEDS: If there are team members who have special needs (including alternative diets) requiring special arrangements either at the hotel or other competition sites, please notify USAD of this by including this information on the Special Needs Form located on the 2016 Nationals page of the USAD website. Decathletes with allergies are responsible for attending to proper care for their allergies.

PHOTOS: Formal team pictures will be taken this year. Logistical details will be provided at registration.

APRIL POSTINGS:

Team ID numbers will be assigned and posted on the USAD website www.usad.org in early April after all state competitions have been completed. The Interview and Speech Schedule will also be posted at that time.

The checklist below is provided to assist you with managing forms as they are completed.

Documents regarding: General Rules, Appeals Procedures, Calculator Policy, Dress Code, Code of Student Conduct, Competition Schedule, etc., can also be downloaded from the USAD website 2016 Nationals page. Once you download forms and other materials, please read them carefully. NOTE: Some documents must be opened with Adobe Acrobat Reader. This program can be downloaded for free from the Adobe website: www.adobe.com. Once on the website, click on the “Acrobat Reader” graphic. This will take you to the page where you can click on the “Download Manager” and follow instructions from there.