



**UNITED STATES ACADEMIC DECATHLON®  
NATIONALS  
APRIL 19–21, 2018**

To: Academic Decathlon® State, Division IV, International, Individual and Online Champions

From: United States Academic Decathlon®

Congratulations on achieving the honor of representing your state or country at the United States Academic Decathlon® 2018 Nationals in Frisco, TX. Plans for nationals are underway and USAD staff and volunteers in Texas 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](http://www.usad.org)) – 2018 Nationals page.

USAD Nationals schedule:

- Thursday, April 19: Registration is 8-10 a.m., followed by a welcome ceremony at 10:30-11:30 a.m. and the Speech and Interview competitions from 3-7 p.m.
- Friday, April 20: Objective testing is 8 a.m.-12:15 p.m., followed by two rounds of Super Quiz™ from 2-5:30 p.m. and team social events starting at 6 p.m.
- Saturday, April 21: Awards ceremony from 8 a.m.-12 p.m., followed by the Champions Reception from 12:30-1:30 p.m. and the International Reception/Meeting from 12:30-2 p.m. The highest scoring Varsity, Scholastic and Honors speech will be presented during the awards ceremony.

**NATIONALS REGISTRATION: All forms MUST be emailed and/or postmarked by March 26. Please make sure all forms have been typed (preferred) or written 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 28.

Please mail forms to:  
USAD Nationals  
PO Box 4351  
Mankato, MN 56002

Please note: the completion deadlines for the forms are listed on the USAD website – 2018 Nationals page under the appropriate competition 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 18 should email Daniele Grigsby at [Daniele@usad.org](mailto:Daniele@usad.org) for further details.

**COMPETITION SITE:** [Embassy Suites Dallas - Frisco/Hotel, Convention Center & Spa \(Convention Center\), 7600 John Q. Hammons Drive, Frisco, TX, 75034.](#)

**HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS:** This year's host hotels are the Embassy Suites Dallas - Frisco/Hotel, Convention Center & Spa (Embassy), 7600 John Q. Hammons Drive, Frisco, TX, 75034 and the Drury Inn & Suites Dallas Frisco (Drury), 2880 Dallas Parkway, Frisco, TX 75034. **All Nationals participants (teams and individuals) are required to stay at one of the host hotels or they will not be allowed to compete.**

Rooms are limited at each property and reservations will be processed on a first-come, first-serve basis. To make a reservation, click on the online registration link for the Embassy or the Drury, both found on the Nationals pages of the USAF website. **Registration deadline is Monday March 19.** Please make your reservations as soon as possible. Team reservations will take precedence over guest reservations.

All reservations will be made and confirmed directly by the hotels. USAF discounted room rates for the Embassy are \$184 per day plus applicable taxes of \$23.92 (13%) for single, double, triple or quad rooms for a total cost of \$207.92 and \$150 per day plus \$19.50 (13%) for single, double, triple or quad rooms for a total cost of \$169.50 for the Drury.

The hotel room rate includes complimentary hot breakfast, afternoon reception with free snacks and beverages daily at each hotel. The Embassy is a suites hotel, all rooms are two room suites. Drury rooms are standard double or single rooms.

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 or money orders are accepted. Each team will be responsible for payment of hotel rooms and other hotel incidentals. The hotels require guests to provide a valid credit card at the time of check-in. All team keys and room assignments will be given to the coach upon check-in. The Embassy and Drury are non-smoking hotels.

**Guest reservations will be processed March 20-25** during the open guest reservation period. Families, school administrators, teachers and other guests will be offered the same rates as the USAF participants; however, they will need to use the online registration links for the Embassy or the Drury found on the USAF website 2018 Nationals page. Due to limited room availability, we cannot guarantee rooms for guests. Guest room reservations will also be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

**TRANSPORTATION:** Transportation is on your own. Neither the Embassy nor the Drury have airport shuttle services available. Rental cars or vans, taxi, Uber and Lyft options are available. If renting a car/van at the airport and driving to the hotel, the Embassy offers valet parking for \$14 per day or self-parking for \$10 per day. A daily rate of \$3 will be charged for guests not staying at the hotel. Parking at the Drury is free.

**ON SITE REGISTRATION AND IDENTIFICATION: You MUST register your team on Thursday, April 19 from 8-10 a.m. at the Convention Center – Registration areas (Main level).** Teams arriving before Thursday, April 19 should plan to register early Thursday morning. Please leave the later times for teams arriving on Thursday. If flying in on Thursday morning, please try to arrive before 8 a.m. so you have adequate time to get to the hotel, 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, passport, etc.) to register for the competition. **The official USAF identification badge** (issued to students upon registration) **must be worn at all times during competition.** Students and coaches must also carry their personal photo ID with them 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 10:30-11:30 a.m. in the Convention Center – Frisco 6-9 (Level 1). Meet and greet teams from all over the U.S., Canada, the U.K. and China. Experience a taste of Texas and jump start a memorable national competition!

**MANDATORY COACH, INTERNATIONAL STAFF & INDIVIDUALS MEETING:** There will be a mandatory meeting for all coaches, international staff and individuals Thursday, April 19 12:15-1:15 p.m. in the Convention Center – Frisco 4-5. Coaches, international staff and individuals should review the competition outline from the registration packet prior to the meeting. Any final information about the competition will be provided at the meeting. This meeting is mandatory.

**MANDATORY STUDENT CLICKER TRAINING:** There will be a mandatory student clicker training Thursday, April 19 from 1:30-3 p.m. This 30-minute workshop will run in intervals in the Convention Center – Frisco 4-5. A total of three sessions will be provided. **Students please note, if your speech or interview times begin at 3 p.m., you should attend the first mandatory clicker session at 1:30 p.m. to give yourself adequate time to get to your speech or interview location.**

**MEALS:** The hotel room rate includes complimentary hot breakfast, an afternoon reception with free snacks and beverages daily at each hotel.

Teams must provide their own snack items for team break time.

Teams will receive tickets for Friday's baseball game/buffet and Saturday's awards ceremony at registration. Teams will receive one complimentary coach ticket in addition to participant tickets corresponding with the number of students on the official roster for the Friday baseball game/buffet and the Saturday awards ceremony. All team and guest baseball/buffet and award ceremony tickets **MUST** be picked up during registration on Thursday, April 19 by the team coach. The baseball/buffet charge for each additional coach/guest is \$30 and the award ceremony charge is \$15. Please use the "Extras" form to order additional tickets. The form is located on the Nationals page of the USAD website under the Helpful Information icon.

**NATIONALS T-SHIRTS:** 2018 Nationals and Academic Decathlon® 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative t-shirts will be available for sale. Details to follow.

**ESSAY & ART:** This year the Essay and Art events will take place online prior to the competition in Frisco, TX. These events will be held April 5 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 between March 28, 12:30 p.m. and April 3, 5 p.m. Central Daylight Time. This practice will help USAD confirm that all teams/students are able to get online and use the system as planned on 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 5. Student(s) that do not participate in the Essay and Art testing will not be eligible to participate in the Texas 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 will determine the selection of the MVTM of their team. Each member of the official team is eligible to vote and votes

remain anonymous. Rubrics will be scored by the computer. A sample of the rubric will be posted to the USAD website – 2018 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 the Convention Center – Frisco 7. In preparation for the Interview event, decathletes may review the Interview PowerPoint presentation posted on the 2018 Nationals webpage (Helpful Information icon).

**SPEECH:** USAD will use the same speech format as piloted at the 2017 Nationals. As in years past, all participants will present their speeches before a panel of two or three speech judges; however, at the 2018 Nationals, approximately six fellow participants will be present in the speech room during student speeches. All students enter and leave the room at the same time. This format benefits students by allowing them to listen to their peers' speeches. Participants will only receive scores from the official speech judges. The peer audience will not score the speeches.

Each group of approximately six students will be assigned a speech room and a session start time. Please be sure to have all students with speech times in the same one-hour block at their designated location and ready to enter the room at the top of the hour. The head judge in each room will welcome the group of students and show them their seats prior to calling the first student speaker forward. Once a student has presented both of his/her speeches, he/she will join the peer audience and the next student will be called by the head judge. The group of six students will be released from the speech room at the end of the session after all six students have presented their speeches.

**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 ceremony on April 21. Coaches and students will be notified prior to the ceremony 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.

**TEAM EVENTS:** The team registration fee includes complimentary tickets to the Frisco RoughRiders baseball game with an unlimited buffet dinner and viewing the Spider-Man Homecoming movie. The baseball game kicks off with a pre-game parade of students/teams at 6 p.m., followed by the honorary first pitch from one of the USAD decathletes (a lottery will determine the lucky decathlete – interested students can enter their name at registration) and concludes with fireworks in the Dr. Pepper Ballpark immediately following the game. After the baseball game, students are invited to return to the Embassy to view the Spider-Man Homecoming movie in Frisco 1-2 starting at 11 p.m.

Complimentary tickets to these events will be included in your team's registration packet. You will be provided one complimentary coach ticket in addition to participant tickets corresponding with the number on your official roster. Baseball game/buffet tickets for additional coaches, parents and other visitors may be purchased using the "Extras" Form. The cost for the baseball game/buffet is \$30 per person. Tickets can be purchased at registration. There is no fee for additional coaches, parents or visitors to view the movie.

**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 ceremony. Score report packets will be available to email to the press at the conclusion of the awards ceremony. All other reports will be emailed to each head coach as soon as possible. If your team has an early departure, please contact Jessica Cole ([jessicac@usad.org](mailto:jessicac@usad.org)) to provide contact information. Your score report will be emailed at the end of the awards ceremony.

**AWARDS CEREMONY:** The Convention Center – Frisco 6-9 will be the site of the awards ceremony. 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 one complimentary coach ticket in addition to participant tickets corresponding with the number on your official roster. Award ceremony tickets for additional coaches, parents and other visitors may be purchased using the “Extras” Form. The cost for the ceremony is \$15 per person. Tickets purchased at registration will be placed where space is available.

**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 2018 Nationals page of the USAD website. The average weather in Texas in April is mild with temperatures ranging between 56-77°F. April days average 65% humidity, with winds around 11.6 mph (their windiest month) and a chance for thunderstones, but very little rain. You’ll experience about 13 hours of sun daily, please dress accordingly. Frisco, TX is in the Central Time Zone.

**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 competition site, please notify USAD of this by including this information on the Special Needs Form located on the 2018 Nationals page of the USAD website. Decathletes with allergies are responsible for attending to proper care for their allergies.

**PHOTOS:** Formal team pictures will not be taken this year, however USAD will provide a location for team photos should each team decide to take their own. USAD will take “fun” photos using a Texas backdrop as well as photos of the award winners on Saturday. Additional details will be provided at registration.

**APRIL POSTINGS:** Team ID numbers will be assigned and posted on the USAD website, [www.usad.org](http://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.

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 2018 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](http://www.adobe.com). Once on the website, click on the “Acrobat Reader DC” link at the bottom right of the page. This will take you to the page where you can click on “Install now” and follow instructions from there.