

Academic Decathlon National Finals in The Last Frontier

The Academic Decathlon season comes to a thrilling conclusion in a breathtaking location. The finals take place April 28-30, 2016, in Anchorage, Alaska.

About Anchorage

Flanked on one side by the Chugach Mountains and on the other by the waters of Cook Inlet, Alaska's most populous city is also one of the best for exploring the state. With 1,500 resident moose, one of the largest state parks in the nation, countless miles of hiking and biking trails and many glaciers nearby, Anchorage has incredible access to iconic Alaska experiences.

Activities During the Finals

With so many great things to see and do in spring, it's a good thing Alaska has the midnight sun. Huge Alaska animals, amazing glacier views and the tallest mountains on the continent are in view. Cultures thousands of years old wait to be explored. Local trails mean plenty of exercise for the body and the mind at this year's finals.

Grey whales return to Alaska waters just as the competition gets underway. Sightseeing tours depart the port town of Seward a few hours south of Anchorage. Resurrection Bay also teems with sea lions, seals, puffins and other seabirds. Of

course, there are many ways to get close to wildlife in Alaska. Head to the Alaska Wildlife Conservation Center or Alaska Zoo for great views of bears, moose,

musk oxen, wood bison and other amazing Alaska species in a safe, structured program. Even in the city itself, wildlife is a regular sight. Moose, eagles, beluga whales, Dall sheep, foxes and bears each live in the city or surrounding areas.

Home to the world's busiest sea-plane base, Anchorage is the starting point for sightseeing flights that circle Mount McKinley, the tallest peak in North America, or head to Prince William Sound for aerial views of tidewater glaciers. See firsthand the work of unfathomable geologic forces shaping the Alaska

landscape, and even touch down in the wilderness before returning to the city.

The Smithsonian Arctic Studies Center at the Anchorage Museum brings more than 600 rare Alaska Native heritage artifacts back home to Alaska. The museum also houses Alaska most comprehensive collection of historical artifacts, Alaska art and science exhibits.

With more than 135 miles of paved trails inside the city, Anchorage almost begs to be explored by bike. Downtown, rentals are ubiquitous and inexpensive. The crown jewel of

the trail network, the Tony Knowles Coastal Trail begins downtown and stretches along the coast of Cook Inlet 11 miles to Kincaid Park. It's not unusual to spot moose, eagles or other wildlife along the way. Chugach State Park, a half million acre space, is an excellent choice for day hikes. The closest trailheads are less than 20 minutes away from the downtown hotels. Flattop Mountain, the most frequently climbed mountain in Alaska, offers several routes and something for all abilities. Show off everything you remember at a competition you'll never forget. The National Finals are headed to Anchorage, Alaska.



