



United States Academic Decathlon® Welcome Letter
2019 USAD Nationals
April 25–27, 2019

To: Academic Decathlon State, Division IV, International and Online Teams
From: United States Academic Decathlon

Congratulations on achieving the honor of representing your state or country at the 2019 USAD Nationals in Bloomington, Minnesota or online. Plans for Nationals are underway and the USAD staff and volunteers in Minnesota 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) – 2019 USAD Nationals webpage.

Abbreviated Nationals schedule (all times listed in Central Daylight Time)

Thursday, April 4 (all teams – online and face-to-face)

- Online essay and art events followed by the MVTM selection 12:30 p.m.

Thursday, April 25 (face-to-face participants only)

- Registration and team identification 8–10 a.m.
- Welcome ceremony 10:30–11:30 a.m.
- Mandatory all coaches and international staff meeting 12:15–1:15 p.m.
- Mandatory student clicker training 1:30–3 p.m. (three 30-minute sessions)
- Speech and interview competitions 3–7 p.m.

Friday, April 26 (face-to-face and online teams where indicated)

- Online objective testing schedule TBD
- Objective testing 8 a.m. –12:15 p.m.
- Super Quiz™ 2:30–5 p.m.
- Team social event 7–10 p.m.

Saturday, April 27 (face-to-face participants only)

- Awards ceremony 8 a.m. –12 p.m.
- Champions Reception 12:30–1:30 p.m.
- International Reception/Meeting 12:30–2 p.m.

Nationals registration information

All forms **MUST** be emailed (nationals@usad.org) and/or postmarked by **March 25**. Please make sure all forms are typed (preferred) or printed legibly. **Names of students and teams will appear on all documentation as they appear on the online team roster form.** No name corrections will be made after March 27.

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

Coaches, teams and state directors: please comply with the deadline dates specified for submission of your team registration(s) and roster(s). If your competition is too close to the March 25 deadline for

forms to be received on time, please email your forms to nationals@usad.org and indicate the originals have been placed in the mail.

Competition site and hotel accommodations

This year's competition site and host hotel is the **DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel Bloomington-Minneapolis South**, 7800 Normandale Boulevard, Minneapolis, MN 55439. All teams are required to stay at the host hotel or they will not be allowed to compete.

To make a reservation, **click on this link** for the Bloomington DoubleTree which is also located on the 2019 USAD Nationals Helpful Information webpage. This link will take you to a landing page with instructions and a direct reservation link for your state. **The registration deadline is Monday, April 1.** Reservations will be confirmed directly by the hotel. USAD discounted room rate is \$152 per day plus applicable taxes of \$22.08 (14.525%) for single, double, triple or quad rooms for a total cost of \$174.08. Please make your reservations as soon as possible. Team reservations will take precedence over guest reservations.

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 hotel requires 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 hotel is a non-smoking hotel.

Guest reservations will be processed March 25–April 1 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 make a separate reservation using the **link for the Bloomington DoubleTree** and will click on the “Friends and Family” reservation link to complete the process. Guests should not click on a state reservation link. The guest reservation link is also available on the 2019 USAD Nationals Volunteers and Guests webpage. Guest room reservations will be filled on a first-come, first-served basis.

Transportation

Transportation is on your own and hotel parking is free.

- The DoubleTree provides complimentary airport shuttle service. A detailed schedule is located on the 2019 USAD Nationals Helpful Information webpage.
- USAD has arranged for a 10% group discount with SuperShuttle and reservation information is located on the 2019 USAD Nationals Helpful Information webpage.
- Rental cars or vans, taxi, Uber and Lyft options are also available.

Meals

USAD will provide the following meals:

Friday and Saturday hot breakfast buffet in the Garden Court area. Breakfast will be served in two shifts prior to 7:30 a.m. Shift tickets will be provided at registration. Friday taco lunch buffet in the Garden Court area immediately following the objective testing and prior to the Super Quiz event.

Teams will receive one complimentary coach ticket in addition to participant tickets corresponding with the number of students on the official roster for each meal. Additional coaches and/or students will need to purchase meal tickets using the Extras Form on the 2019 USAD Nationals Helpful Information webpage.

Teams are responsible for the balance of their meals and snack items for team break time.

New this year–Team Twins

Get to know more about your Academic Decathlon peers before Nationals start! Team Twins will be announced after all the face-to-face Nationals team participants have been determined. A team will be paired with another team and emailed contact information so they can connect prior to Nationals.

Team Twins can foster new friendships and knowledge about the states and countries represented at Nationals. When you arrive in Minnesota, you will already have new friends waiting for you! Activities will be available for teams to connect, further develop their friendships, and share their hometown knowledge and culture.

Detailed Nationals information (all times listed in Central Daylight Time)

Thursday, April 4 (all teams – online and face-to-face)

Essay and art events

The USAD essay and art events will be held online prior to the competition in Bloomington, Minnesota and the 2019 USAD Nationals online testing. These events will be held April 4 at 12:30 p.m. with essay first and followed immediately by art. It is necessary for your team to participate in a practice session between March 28, 12:30 p.m. and April 3, 5 p.m. This practice will help USAD confirm all teams/students are able to access the testing site on competition day.

Even if your team has participated in a USAD national competition in the past, 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 4. Student(s) who do not participate in the essay and art testing will not be eligible to participate in the 2019 USAD Nationals competition.** Please refer to the Nationals Online Technical Information, located on the 2019 USAD Nationals Helpful Information webpage, for details prior to practice or testing.

Most valuable team member (MVTM)

In a prior USAD survey, students indicated they would like to recognize their most valuable team member. This year, after students have completed the online essay and art tests, they will immediately be asked to complete 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. Votes will remain anonymous. Rubrics will be scored by the computer. A sample of the rubric will be posted to the 2019 USAD Nationals Helpful Information webpage. A word of caution: MVTM candidates should NOT be awarded points based on popularity.

Thursday, April 25 (face-to-face participants only)

Registration and team identification – 8–10 a.m. Grand Ballroom Foyer (2nd Floor)

You MUST register your team at this time. Teams arriving before Thursday, April 25 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 USAD 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 – 10:30–11:30 a.m. Grand Ballroom (2nd Floor)

All teams, coaches and USAID representatives are invited to the welcome event. Connect with your Team Twin and greet teams from all over the United States, the United Kingdom and China. Experience a Minnesota welcome and jump-start a memorable national competition!

Mandatory coach and international staff meeting – 12:15–1:15 p.m. Atrium 4 (2nd Floor)

There will be a mandatory meeting for all coaches and international staff at this time. Coaches and international staff should review the competition outline from the registration packet prior to the meeting. Any final information or changes about the competition will be provided at the meeting.

Mandatory decathlete clicker training – 1:30–3 p.m. Edina (2nd Floor)

There will be a mandatory 30-minute decathlete clicker training at this location. Three sessions will be provided. **Decathletes please note, if your speech or interview times begin at 3 p.m., you should attend the first session at 1:30 p.m. to give yourself adequate time to get to your speech or interview location.**

Speech and interview competitions – 3–7 p.m. (Refer to student ID tag for exact time and location.)

Teams will be assigned speech and interview times by lottery. All team members will have times assigned randomly. 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 – 3–7 p.m. Grand Ballroom West (2nd Floor)

Interviews will be conducted arena-style. In preparation for the interview event, decathletes may review the Interview Training PowerPoint presentation posted on the 2019 USAID Nationals Helpful Information webpage.

Speech – 3–7 p.m. (Refer to student ID for exact time and location.)

USAID will use the speech format instituted at the 2017 Nationals. As in past years, all participants will present their speeches before a panel of two or three speech judges. At the 2019 USAID Nationals, approximately six decathletes will be present in the speech room during the speech competition. All decathletes enter and leave the room at the same time. This format benefits decathletes by allowing them to listen to their peers' speeches. Decathletes will only receive scores from the official speech judges. The peer audience will not score the speeches.

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

Speech showcase

The highest scoring decathlete in the prepared speech component for the Honors, Scholastic and Varsity categories will present their speech during the awards ceremony on April 27. Coaches and decathletes

will be notified prior to the ceremony so they are prepared when their name is called. Coaches will be asked to provide USAD with a short synopsis of their decathlete's speech for placement purposes.

Friday, April 26 (face-to-face and online teams where indicated)

Online objective testing schedule – TBD

Objective testing – 8 a.m. –12:15 p.m. Grand Ballroom (2nd Floor)

Doors will open at 7:45 a.m. and ID badges must be worn and will be checked when entering the testing area. Cell phones and other electronic devices are not permitted. Testing starts promptly at 8 a.m. Decathletes will NOT be excused from the testing room for any reason before the scheduled break. View the 2019 USAD Nationals Helpful Information webpage for the complete testing schedule and detailed information.

Super Quiz™ – 2:30–5 p.m. Grand Ballroom (2nd Floor)

The Super Quiz will use an automated response system (clicker). Students will come to the testing area as a group according to their GPA category. Students are expected to record one answer per team by pressing the appropriate button on the team assigned clicker. Questions and subjects are randomized. Super Quiz is a standalone event and scores will NOT be added to team scores. Details can be found on the 2019 USAD Nationals Helpful Information webpage.

Team event – 7–10 p.m. Garden Court (Poolside 1st Floor)

H. W. Sidewise will provide D.J. entertainment for dancing, contests and 60s fun! Everyone is welcome.

Saturday, April 27 (face-to-face participants only)

Awards ceremony – 8 a.m. –12 p.m. Grand Ballroom (2nd Floor)

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 on the 2019 USAD Nationals Helpful Information webpage. The cost for the ceremony is \$15 per person. Tickets purchased at registration will be placed where space is available.

Score results

Scores will NOT be posted during the competition. Coaches and state directors should come to the stage area at the conclusion of the award ceremony to receive their team results. 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 nationals@usad.org to provide contact information. Your score report will be emailed at the end of the awards ceremony.

Champions Reception – 12:30–1:30 p.m. Edina (2nd Floor)

Champion teams from all divisions will gather for a celebratory reception following the award ceremony.

International Reception/Meeting – 12:30–2 p.m. Plaza 5 & 6 (1st Floor)

All international teams will gather for a reception and meeting.

Miscellaneous Information

April postings

Team ID numbers will be assigned and posted on the 2019 USAD Nationals Helpful Information webpage 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 Conduct, Competition Schedule, etc., can also be downloaded from the 2019 USAD Nationals Helpful Information webpage. Once you download forms and other materials, please read them carefully. NOTE: Some documents must be opened with Adobe Acrobat or Reader.

Decathlete 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 decathletes 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 decathlete's participation and/or the entire team and the decathlete 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 dietary restrictions) requiring special arrangements at the hotel, competition site or online, please notify USAD of this by including this information on the Special Needs Form located on the team registration page and on the 2019 USAD Nationals Helpful Information webpage. Decathletes with allergies are responsible for attending to proper care for their allergies.

Dress and weather

Publicity pictures, news coverage and video productions are commonplace at USAD events. Decathletes and coaches are expected to dress in good taste and in accordance with the Code of Conduct. A copy is located on the 2019 USAD Nationals Helpful Information webpage.

Humidity and temperatures combine to make spring in Bloomington feel moderately cold. Temperatures range from 64°F (17.78°C) to 32°F (0°C). The least humid month is April (45.1% relative humidity), however rain is somewhat common with four to seven days of significant precipitation per month. Wind in Bloomington is usually moderate, with the average wind speed of around 10.6 MPH (17 KPH) which is considered "a gentle breeze." Please dress accordingly. Bloomington, Minnesota is in the Central Time Zone and will be in Daylight Savings Time during Nationals.

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 Minnesota and/or curricular theme backdrop as well as photos of the award winners at the Awards Ceremony. Additional details will be provided at registration.

Nationals T-shirts and apparel

2019 USAD Nationals and Academic Decathlon T-shirts and apparel will be available for sale at the competition and online prior to Nationals. Details can be found on the 2019 USAD Nationals Helpful Information webpage.