

International Academic Competitions

IAC Varsity & JV National Championships Bee Competition Rules Summary for Preliminary Rounds

Thank you for participating in the IAC National Championships! This rules document explains the gameplay rules for the preliminary rounds of this weekend's buzzer-based individual events: the National Political Science Bee, National Science Bee, US History Bee, International Geography Bee, & National History Bee. Other documents and websites describe the tournament structure of each event and the playoff rules. If you have specific questions regarding more detailed aspects of the rules, please ask a tournament official. Please note that while this document does contain official rules, there is a more extensive Official Rules file maintained online at www.historybowl.com/resources/official-rules/ for rarer contingencies.

Gameplay

Bee events at Nationals are played in two phases – Preliminaries and Playoffs. During the Preliminary Rounds, you will be playing against other students in a buzzer-based competition in a race to 8 points. Once you reach 8 points, you will earn bonus points based on how quickly you reach the 8th point. Note that some competitions may only feature 30 questions, not 35 in a round. The following schematic is used:

If a student goes out on this question number:	They receive this many bonus points:	For a score for the round of:
8	7	15
9-10	6	14
11-12	5	13
13-15	4	12
16-20	3	11
20-25	2	10
25-30	1	9
31-35	0	8

Each correct tossup answer will earn you 1 point. To prevent matches from going on too long, three incorrect answers will end the opportunity to answer that tossup for all students. If the moderator is still reading the question and you give the third incorrect answer, you will be deducted one point. If the reader has finished reading the question, there is no penalty. There is no penalty for giving either the 1st or 2nd incorrect answer. You may be prompted by the moderator to provide a more complete answer if need be.

Timing

The reader will wait three seconds after finishing reading the question before calling it dead and moving on to the next tossup. If a player buzzes in during this time and is incorrect, then the three second count begins again. After a player buzzes in, the reader will allow three seconds to give your answer. You need not be recognized before you start giving your answer, although it is advisable to wait. Timing decisions are not protestable.

Protests and Disrupted Tossups

If you wish to protest a question, you must bring it to the reader's attention immediately (i.e. say "protest" before the reader starts the next question) then fill out a protest form at the end of the round. You can only protest answers you have given, not the moderator's judgment on another student's answer. (The sole exception to this: protesting that the rules were not applied correctly.) If the reader botches a question, there are makeup questions included with each round that can be used. If you speak out of turn, you do not lose a point, but you are disqualified for the question, and the question is still alive for everyone else.

If the moderator inadvertently reveals the answer when a student speaks out of turn, then a makeup question is played approximating the conditions of the botched tossup question as much as possible. For example, if two players buzz incorrectly, and then a 3rd player speaks out of turn (i.e. their buzzer light did not come on), then the blurting student is not penalized a point, but is out on the makeup question, as are the two students who had buzzed incorrectly. The makeup question is played from the start as if two students had already answered incorrectly. Thus even one incorrect buzz on the makeup question would incur a -1 point penalty.

If the protest is made on the basis of "I should have been prompted and I wasn't" then if the protest is upheld, the protesting student is granted a point in the preliminary rounds (**because throwing out the question and trying to find all the students who were in the room to do a makeup question would be very difficult logistically**). In the playoff rounds in this situation, the question is thrown out, and a makeup question is read for any students who were still playing at that point when the protesting student buzzed. Incorrect buzzes and negative points incurred prior to this buzz still stand, but a correct buzz after the student who should have been prompted does not stand and the points do not accrue, because the player who should have been prompted may well have answered with the correct answer.

Note that if a protest in Bee preliminary rounds results in a student being given a point, but another student was initially given credit for a correct answer, then BOTH students are credited with the point (since otherwise, this could wreak havoc with trying to determine bonus points for a student who is initially given credit for a correct response, and then that student sits out the remainder of the round if that buzz results in them going out, either at that point, or a later juncture in the round.

Advancement

A player's total score in all preliminary rounds is used to determine advancement to the playoffs; full details on how many players advance to the playoffs are available in documents specific to the event. Tiebreaker tossups, if necessary, are sudden victory; an incorrect buzz on a tiebreaker tossup does not automatically eliminate you. In tiebreaks, the minus one rule from the preliminary rounds (whereby the third student buzzing incorrectly before the question has been read to completion receives a score of minus one) is never in effect, even if there are three or more students playing.