

Scripps National Spelling Bee returns this summer

Finals to be held July 8 at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex near Orlando

CINCINNATI - The Scripps National Spelling Bee returns this year with top spellers from across the U.S. and the globe gathering near Orlando, Florida, on July 8 to compete in the nationally televised event.

The final rounds of this year's Bee will be hosted in person at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Walt Disney World Resort. The finals, featuring 10-12 accomplished spellers, will be broadcast live in primetime on ESPN2.

The 10 to 12 finalists who will travel to the Orlando area will have earned the right to compete in the finals by advancing through three levels of competition: the preliminary, quarterfinal and semifinal segments. In past years, those three rounds were held over one week - Bee Week. This year, due to the global pandemic, the preliminaries, quarterfinals and semifinals will be held virtually in the weeks leading up to the July 8 finals and will be broadcast live on ESPN platforms. The semifinals are slated for June 27, and dates for the earlier virtual rounds of the competition will be announced this spring.

"Since its beginnings nearly 100 years ago, the Scripps National Spelling Bee and its spellers have inspired audiences across the globe with a compelling combination of academic excellence and engaging entertainment," said Adam Symson, president and chief executive officer of The E.W. Scripps Company. "Now, as the world continues to adapt to an ongoing pandemic, Scripps is committed to reimagining the beloved competition in a way that safely allows our exceptional spellers to continue this iconic tradition on the national stage."

The decision to limit the in-person portion of the competition to no more than 12 spellers was made in consideration of the health and safety of participants, their families and everyone involved in the event's production as the country continues to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The in-person portion of the competition at ESPN Wide World of Sports Complex at Disney will follow protocols based on guidance from health authorities, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, for social distancing and masking.

Scripps also is reviewing its COVID-19-related health and safety protocol with medical experts at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center to help facilitate a safe experience for all. Leading up to the virtual and in-person final rounds of this year's bee, spellers are competing in school, community, regional and statewide spelling bees that will qualify them to participate in the national competition. Across the country, local bee sponsors are partnering with the Scripps National Spelling Bee to crown local spelling champions who will be

eligible to advance to the national level.

Qualifying school and local bees, which are administered by independent sponsors in partnership with the Scripps National Spelling Bee, are underway now and will be completed by early April. Due to the ongoing public health crisis and resulting mix of home learning and in-person school environments, administrators of local and school bees are hosting competitions in a variety of ways. In-person bees are being held as appropriate based on local public health guidelines. Many local bee programs have chosen to hold virtual competitions. In addition, the Scripps National Spelling Bee has developed and distributed an online testing tool that partner schools and local sponsors can use to declare school and local champions if they determine that it's not viable to host in-person or virtual bee events.

The Bee's RSVBee invitational program that was available for spellers in highly competitive or unsponsored local markets during the 2018 and 2019 bees will again be on hiatus for 2021 due to the programming adaptations of this year's bee.

About the Scripps National Spelling Bee:

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation's largest and longest-running educational program. The purpose of the Scripps National Spelling Bee is to help students improve their spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts and develop correct English usage that will help them all their lives. Visit spellingbee.com for more information about the Scripps National Spelling Bee, which is administered on a not-for-profit basis by The E.W. Scripps Company.

About Scripps

[The E.W. Scripps Company](https://www.espn.com/story/2021/03/25/espn-wide-world-of-sports) (NASDAQ: SSP) is a diversified media company focused on creating a better-informed world. As the nation's fourth-largest local TV broadcaster, Scripps serves communities with quality, objective local journalism and operates a portfolio of 61 stations in 41 markets. Scripps' national networks reach nearly every American through the news outlets Court TV and Newsy and popular entertainment brands ION, Bounce, Grit, Laff and Court TV Mystery. Scripps is the nation's largest holder of broadcast spectrum. Scripps runs an award-winning investigative reporting newsroom in Washington, D.C., and is the longtime steward of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Founded in 1878, Scripps has held for decades to the motto, "Give light and the people will find their own way."

About ESPN Wide World of Sports

ESPN Wide World of Sports, located at Walt Disney World Resort in Florida, is one of the premier sites for amateur sports in the nation. The complex hosts more than 100 entertainment and sporting events each year and has accommodated 70 different sports featuring athletes from 70 different countries. Designed to provide professional, amateur and youth athletes with experiences synonymous with the names Disney and ESPN, the 220-acre facility features multiple competition venues, including 16 baseball/softball fields; a 9,500-seat ballpark; 18 multi-purpose outdoor fields for soccer, football and field hockey; three field houses for basketball, volleyball, other indoor sports; a track & field facility; and a cross country course. The sports complex also contains a professional production center which produces content for the Disney family of networks and distributes programming globally through its extensive fiber network in HD, 4K and immersive 8K. For more information, visit www.disneysportsnews.com for news releases, photos and videos. Follow us on Twitter at @ESPNWWOS and at Facebook at ESPNWWOS.

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