



# **CyberPatriot 17 (2024-2025)**

## **National Youth Cyber Defense Competition**

### **Rules Book**

Available at [www.uscyberpatriot.org](http://www.uscyberpatriot.org)

**A STEM program of the Air & Space Forces Association**  
1201 Joyce St., Arlington, VA 22202 | 877-885-5716 | [www.afa.org](http://www.afa.org)

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## A letter from the National Commissioner

June 7, 2024

Welcome to the CyberPatriot 17 competition season and thank you for taking the time to review the *CyberPatriot 17 Rules Book*.

In this document, you will find the NEW competition design that has different competition windows and a FOUR-DAY competition rounds before the Semifinals. The changes to the competition windows were based on data collected from the previous season. All registered CyberPatriot participants, including coaches, technical mentors, team assistants, and competitors, are bound by the rules and procedures published in this document. This document is in force until the release of the next signed change or edition.

As always, special thanks to the coaches, technical mentors, and CyberPatriot staff who contributed to the rules book. Their team-level insights and recommendations were fundamental to this document's development.

If the rules of the school or organization to which a team belongs are more restrictive than the CyberPatriot rules, then the school's or organization's rules will take precedence.

Changes to this document will be posted on the CyberPatriot website and distributed via email to CyberPatriot coaches.

Please submit recommendations for updates or changes to this document by email to the CyberPatriot Program Office. Address the email to [cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org) with the subject "Rules Book Recommendation."

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rachel Zimmerman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Rachel Zimmerman  
National Commissioner, CyberPatriot

# Introduction

The mission of CyberPatriot is to inspire students toward careers in cybersecurity or other science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines critical to our nation's future through fun and engaging programs designed for K-12 students. This document covers the rules and procedures that govern the National Youth Cyber Defense Competition for high school and middle school students.

The competition can only operate if all competitors, coaches, technical mentors, team assistants, and staff adhere to the highest ethical standard. All are expected to behave according to the guiding principles outlined in this Rules Book to ensure the competition's success:

- **Integrity** – The foundations of the competition are the honesty and ethics of all those involved in the program, especially in the absence of supervision.
- **Service** – All adults must put the well-being and education of the competitors ahead of their own concerns in preparation for and during the CyberPatriot competition.
- **Excellence** – The competition pushes students to achieve their best, during the competition and beyond.

Coaches, competitors, technical mentors, team assistants, and staff should all use the following operating principles during all aspects of the competition:

- **Competitor Safety and Protection** – Since most competitors are minors, this *MUST BE THE TOP PRIORITY* for all involved. It is the coach's responsibility to ensure the safety and protection of their team while involved in all CyberPatriot activities. They must create a safe environment that protects from unauthorized individuals, ensure appropriate online activity, and use suitably secure facilities. In the event that an incident occurs involving the protection or safety of a competitor, the coach has an obligation to follow correct procedures to report the incident to local authorities and to stop or mitigate the incident immediately.
- **Fairness** – No participant should attempt to gain or give an unfair competitive advantage to any individual or team. Any questions or concerns regarding fairness should be directed to the CyberPatriot Program Office immediately.
- **Adherence to the Rules** – Everyone should obey the rules and regulations outlined in this document. Coaches are charged with ensuring that teams do not behave otherwise.
- **Privacy** – Participants' personal information must be protected by those who have access to it. The CyberPatriot Program Office Staff may publish participant names and photographs when appropriate permission is obtained.
- **Transparency** – To ensure openness and honesty, staff and coaches shall engage in two-way communication on competition matters that do not infringe upon fairness.
- **Cyber Citizenship** – The CyberPatriot competition teaches Internet ethics and safety and defensive activities only. It is not a hacking competition, nor does it teach or tolerate hacking, or any activity related to the unauthorized entry, use, or modification of a computer, system, or network by a person, persons, or tools.

# Chapter 1 | Organization and Participants

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## 1001 | CyberPatriot Staff

### 1. CyberPatriot Program Office

The CyberPatriot Program Office is the department within the Air & Space Forces Association responsible for organizing and administering all aspects of the CyberPatriot Program under the National Commissioner.

**A. National Commissioner** – The CyberPatriot National Commissioner is responsible for the operation of the program and has final authority on all decisions relating to the competition.

**B. CyberPatriot Program Office Staff** – The CyberPatriot Program Office staff supports the National Commissioner and handles the day-to-day operations of the program and competition support. The office can be reached by telephone during normal Eastern Time Zone business hours at 877-885-5716. Technical questions should be directed to [cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org). General program, registration, or outreach questions should be directed to [info@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:info@uscyberpatriot.org).

### 2. CyberPatriot Operations Center (CPOC)

Located within the CyberPatriot Program Office, the CyberPatriot Operations Center provides Tier 1 technical support for CyberPatriot online competitions. It is only established during scheduled competition windows and may be reached via the WebEx Tech Support Chat or by phone at 877-885-5716. In addition to the CyberPatriot Program Office Staff, the CPOC is staffed by temporary staff during the peak hours of competition activity.

## 1002 | Competition Divisions

CyberPatriot teams are divided into three divisions, as defined below. Each of these divisions is independent of the others; teams in one division do not directly compete against teams in other divisions. Unless otherwise specified, rules and procedures apply equally to the teams in all divisions.

Teams shall remain in their assigned divisions once they have competed in a qualification Round (unless there was an administrative error in the registration process – i.e., a JROTC team registered as a regular high school team).

There is no limit to the number of teams an organization can host within a given division.

### 1. Open Division

All high school and senior high-level students may compete on an Open Division team, provided that team is fielded by one of the approved organization types below:

*Public school – Private school – Parochial school – Charter school – Magnet School – Home school – Scouting unit – State-chartered virtual school – Boys and Girls Club – YMCA or YWCA center – Other youth organizations (with approval from National Commissioner)*

### 2. All Service Division

All high school and senior high-level students may compete on an All Service Division team, provided that team is fielded by one of the approved organization types below, and that all competitors on the team are official members of the organization:

*Army JROTC – Navy JROTC and Coast Guard JROTC – Marine Corps JROTC – Air Force JROTC and Space Force JROTC – US Naval Sea Cadet Corps – Civil Air Patrol*

Each of the six organizations listed above is a “Category.” Categories factor into some awards and advancement during elimination rounds. Air Force JROTC and Space Force JROTC are combined as one category. Navy JROTC and Coast Guard JROTC are combined into one category.

### 3. Middle School Division

All middle school and junior high-level students may compete on a Middle School Division team, provided that team is fielded by one of the approved organization types below:

*Public school – Private school – Parochial school – Charter school – Magnet School – Home school – Scouting unit – State-chartered virtual school – Boys and Girls Club – YMCA or YWCA center – Civil Air Patrol – US Navy League Cadet Corps – Other youth organizations (with approval from National Commissioner)*

### 4. Other Organizations and Special Requests for Competition Divisions

The following special requests apply to teams in the Open, All Service, and Middle School divisions:

**A. Other Organizations** – At the discretion of the National Commissioner, other organizations may field a team in the Open Division or Middle School Division. Requirements for participation are:

1. *Charter and Youth Program* – The organization shall have a charter that includes a youth program for high school and/or middle school-level students.
2. *Mission and Purpose* – The organization’s mission and purpose shall be consistent with the principles and values of the CyberPatriot Program and AFA.
3. *Designated Official Leader* – The organization shall have a leader who is accountable for the organization and is authorized to designate adults to have unsupervised access to minors in the organization.
4. *Minor Protection Policy and Training* – The organization shall have an official policy for the protection and safety of minors.
5. *Minor Protection Training Requirement* – Mandatory and formal training shall be required for adults who have unsupervised access to minors.

**B. Composite Teams** – The preference is for students to participate through the school or home school through which they receive the majority of their education. However, the National Commissioner may consider the creation of a composite Open Division team from more than one fielding organization if:

1. The organizations’ sizes do not support a full CyberPatriot team.
2. The organizations are not fielding other CyberPatriot teams.
3. The competitors belong to a common legally recognized entity, such as a school district, non-profit organization, or municipality.
4. U.S. Naval Sea Cadet Corps and Civil Air Patrol teams use the same procedures as All Service Division teams to include concurrence from their organizations’ National Headquarters CyberPatriot Representative.

Also, the National Commissioner may consider the creation of a composite Open Division, Civil Air Patrol, or Naval Sea Cadet Corps team comprised of both middle school and high school competitors if:

1. In the estimation of the coach, the organization’s size does not support the formation of a viable Middle School Division team on its own.






2. No more than two middle school students will be registered to the team.
3. The competitors belong to a common legally recognized entity
4. The verification official for the team consents to the formation of a composite team.
5. It is the only age-based composite team for that organization.

These requirements must be met to request approval for a composite team, and do not guarantee the National Commissioner will grant an exception.

## 1003 | Teams and Team Members



Teams are the basic groupings of CyberPatriot participants.

### 1. Team Composition (Members)

		
<b>Coach</b>	<b>Verification Official</b>	<b>Competitors</b>
<i>Teacher, parent, or other approved adult leader. Completed the team registration and supervises the team during competition. Sole point of contact for competition-related correspondence.</i>	<i>Organization administrator who verifies that the coach is approved by the organization to work unsupervised with minors and has completed required youth protection training.</i>	<i>Student participants. Must be 2-6 students on a team. There is no U.S. citizenship requirement for any CyberPatriot competition participant</i>

**A. Required Members** – Each team must consist of a coach, a one-time verification official, and at least two competitors. A team without these roles filled is ineligible to compete.

**B. Optional Members** – Technical mentors and team assistants may be part of team but are not required for participation. Technical mentors are recommended, as they can provide next-level teaching of cybersecurity principles.

	
<b>Technical Mentor</b>	<b>Team Assistant</b>
<i>Adult volunteer that possesses the technical knowledge to assist in teaching the competition training</i>	<i>Adult volunteer who assists the team coach with non-technical support (administrative tasks)</i>
<b><i>Technical mentors and team assistants must have social security number (or Canadian social insurance number) to undergo the required background check.</i></b>	

### 2. Team Member Roles Explained

**A. Coach** – CyberPatriot requires an adult to register as the official team coach before any students are permitted to compete.

A team must have one (and only one) adult coach of record for each team. This is a non-negotiable requirement. A single coach may coach up to five (5) teams and is responsible for the proper supervision of all their teams during all CyberPatriot-related activities. Teams registered to a coach may be from different organizations as long as the coach receives proper vetting from a verification official at each organization. Coaches may assist other teams, but only as a registered technical mentor or team assistant. Co- or assistant coach roles do not exist.

To be a coach, an individual must meet the following requirements:

**1. Eligibility Requirements**

- Adult over 18 years of age on or before the team registration deadline
- Not a competitor or high school-level student
- Not a member of the CyberPatriot Program Office
- Vetted and approved by a verification official
- Agrees to abide by the CyberPatriot Coaches' Agreement and Standards of Conduct. (See [Appendix I](#) and [Appendix II](#))

**2. Additional Requirements** – Adults must meet the following requirements in addition to those mentioned above if they fall into any of the cases below:

- a. **Employees of Sponsors, Development Partners, and AFA** – An employee of a CyberPatriot sponsor, development partner, or AFA shall receive consent from their organization's designated CyberPatriot representative before becoming a coach. Former AFA CyberPatriot Program Office employees are not eligible to participate in the competition for three years after the last day of their AFA employment.
- b. **Competition Volunteers and Temporary Staff** – National Finals Competition volunteers and Competition Administration Team members (e.g., Red, White, and Green Teams), CPOC staff, and other volunteers may not coach, technical mentor, or otherwise assist a CyberPatriot team during the season in which they are volunteering or for one year after the last day of their involvement as a volunteer.
- c. **CAP or USNSCC members** – These coaches must also meet the following requirements:
  - 1) Senior member or adult leader in good standing with CAP or USNSCC
  - 2) Completion of appropriate Cadet Protection Program Training (CPPT)
  - 3) Chain-of-command authorization of unsupervised access to cadets who are minors
- d. **Home School Team Coaches** – In areas where home schools are subject to a local school board or other governmental oversight, coaches of home school teams must be verified by a co-op official or a homeschool teacher who can be verified by a legally recognized agency that accredits or otherwise approves home school programs. Coaches of homeschool teams must also meet the following requirements:
  - 1) Authorization by their regulating agency and the students' parents to have unsupervised access to team members who are minors.
  - 2) Procurement and retaining of written and signed parental consent forms for competitors for the entire season (see [Appendix III](#)).
  - 3) Completion of a certified youth protection program such as the free Boy Scouts of America's Youth Protection Training at [www.my.scouting.org](http://www.my.scouting.org). A trainee does not have to be affiliated with Boy Scouts but must create an account to take the online training.

### 3. Responsibilities

- a. **Competitor Protection** – Coach responsibility includes controlling access to minors in a way that protects them, respects parental prerogatives, and follows legal requirements during all competition training, events, and rounds. Additionally, coaches are:
    - 1) Accountable for technical mentors and team assistant interactions with the competitors.
    - 2) Responsible for competitor safety and protection during all competition training, events, and rounds (see [Appendix IV](#)).
  - b. **Competition Integrity** – Fairness and integrity are key components of a successful CyberPatriot competition. Coaches are charged with upholding these principles at the team level during competition by ensuring that their competitors receive no outside assistance in any form, including help from technical mentors and team assistants (see Chapter 3). Coaches may continue to provide clarification of rules and permissible actions per this document while their teams compete.
  - c. **Official Point of Contact** – Official team and competition-related CyberPatriot correspondence is emailed only to coaches, who may disseminate it to their teams. It is therefore essential that coaches monitor their email for up-to-date information and ensure they can receive messages from the CyberPatriot Program Office through their chosen email domains. The role of the official point of contact may not be delegated to a technical mentor unless the technical mentor is appointed as a Coach Alternate (below). The coach is the only person who may request changes or corrections to the team or competitor information.
4. **No Compensation** – Coaches participate on a volunteer basis and do not receive compensation from AFA. AFA has no position with respect to gifts received by our volunteers.
  5. **Coach Changes** – If a coach is unavailable for a portion of the competition season, there are two choices. If the period of unavailability is temporary, the coach can designate a coach alternate to receive email and supervise during a round of competition. If the period of unavailability is prolonged, the coach or verification official can initiate a coach of record change.
    - a. **Coach Alternate** – The coach alternate is only to be used if the team’s coach of record has a one-off scheduling conflict or emergency that prevents them from managing the team during a specific round of competition. Coach Alternates are subject to CyberPatriot Program Office approval on a case-by-case basis. Coach Alternates should also be vetted and approved by the original coach’s verification official before CyberPatriot Program Office approval. Coach alternates may only act as a coach for the approved round of competition and not substitute for the coach during future competition rounds without going through the approval process again. (See [Appendix V](#) for information on requesting a coach alternate).
    - b. **Coach of Record Change** – If the coach of record is unable to supervise the team over several competition rounds, they must contact the CyberPatriot Program Office to transfer the team to another school or organization-approved adult for the remainder of the season. (See [Appendix V](#) for information on requesting a coach change).

**B. Verification Official** – All coaches are required to be vetted and approved to work with minors by a verification official.

- School-based teams, including JROTC teams, must be verified by a principal, assistant principal, supervisor, or department head.
- CAP teams must be verified by a unit commander or deputy commander.
- USNSCC teams must be verified by their Regional National Headquarters Representative or an officer higher in their chain of command.
- Scouting units and all other approved educational organizations must be verified by an organization head or supervisor.
- Coaches cannot act as their own verification official.

Though not active members of a team, verification officials perform the following critical functions:

- **Verify** that a coach is approved by the organization to work unsupervised with minors and has completed required youth protection training.
- **Validate** a coach's status as a school employee, school district-approved volunteer, or person with an approved relationship with the school or fielding organization.
- **Immediately notify** the CyberPatriot Program Office if facts or circumstances call into question the fitness of a coach to continue to supervise competitors.

**C. Competitors** – A CyberPatriot team consists of two to six competitors, up to five of whom may compete at a single time. Substitution of team members is at the coach's discretion during the online rounds of competition. A competitor may compete on only one team during a competition season. To be a competitor, students must meet the following requirements.

## 1. Eligibility Requirements

### a. Open Division

- Enrolled in a participating high school or senior high program (or equivalent if enrolled in a school that does not make this distinction) or granted an exception by the National Commissioner for a composite team of both Middle School and High School age competitors. For teams competing as non-school-based teams, the competitors must have an affiliation with the organization hosting the team.
- Registered to only one team, even if they belong to more than one organization fielding a team.
- JROTC, CAP, and USNSCC cadets may compete on an Open Division team if they are not a member of an All Service Division team. They will not be identified as a member of the unit/squadron if they are on an Open Division team.

### b. All Service Division

- Enrolled in a high school or senior high program (or equivalent if enrolled in a school that does not make this distinction) or granted an exception by the National Commissioner for a composite team of both Middle School and High School age competitors.
- Fully enrolled in the respective JROTC, CAP, or USNSCC program before participating in any competition round.
- Registered to only one team, even if they belong to more than one organization fielding a team.
- Part of same unit/squadron as their fellow teammates, except in cases when the National Commissioner grants an exception for the formation of a composite team.

- Remain enrolled in their respective JROTC, CAP, or USNSCC program for the full duration of the competition season.

**c. Middle School Division**

- Enrolled in a middle school or junior high program (or equivalent if enrolled in a school that does not make this distinction)
- Home school organizations, USNSCC units, CAP squadrons, and other organizations may field middle school teams if all team members are enrolled in the equivalent of a middle school or junior high school program.
- For teams competing as non-school-based teams, the competitors must have an affiliation with the organization hosting the team.

- 2. Responsibilities of ALL Competitors** – It is the responsibility of competitors to abide by the CyberPatriot Competitor Code of Conduct (see [Appendix VI](#)). Competitors will also agree to act ethically each time they log on to a competition image.

**D. Technical Mentors** – Technical mentors, also referred to as mentors, are optional (but recommended) technical advisors. One or more registered mentors may be chosen by a coach to assist with a CyberPatriot team. Mentors must register on the CyberPatriot website and must be officially paired/linked with any teams they are assisting (after meeting all their requirements). There is no limit to the number of teams a mentor may assist, and there is no limit to the number of mentors assisting a single team.

**1. Eligibility Requirements**

- Adult over 18 years of age.
- Not a competitor or high school-level student.
- Must pass a CyberPatriot Program Office background investigation, which requires possession of a social security number or Canadian social insurance number. CyberPatriot does not have access to any checks or clearances performed by other organizations, so all mentors must undergo background checks through AFA's contracted screening company, PeopleFacts, Inc. The CyberPatriot background check is not a substitute for a school's or organization's background checks or personnel screening processes.
- Agrees to abide by the CyberPatriot Standards of Conduct (see [Appendix II](#)) and must not teach hacking skills or offensive cyber tactics to competitors.
- Meets with a team or individual competitors only with the coach's approval.
- Must be officially linked through the competition dashboard to the team(s) they are assisting.

- 2. Suggested Responsibilities** – There is no minimum time commitment for mentors. For example, a mentor can volunteer on a guest lecture basis or commit to training a team throughout the competition season. Suggested responsibilities include the following:

- Advising the team's coach on skills status.
- Developing, with the coach's guidance, a plan to teach cyber defense skills and ethics.
- Teaching and assisting competitors with cyber defense skills and ethics.

- 3. Coaches as Technical Mentors** – A coach may be a technical mentor for other teams only if they are also registered as a technical mentor. Coaches not registered as a mentor are ineligible for mentor awards.

4. **No Compensation** – Technical mentor positions are voluntary and do not receive compensation. AFA has no position with respect to gifts received by volunteers.

**E. Team Assistants** – Team assistants are adult team members who provide non-technical support and encouragement to the team. Teams are not required to have team assistants. Team assistants must register on the CyberPatriot website and must be officially paired/linked with any teams they are assisting (after meeting all their requirements).

#### 1. **Eligibility Requirements**

- Adult over 18 years of age.
  - Not a competitor or high school-level student.
  - Must pass a CyberPatriot Program Office background investigation, which requires possession of a social security number or Canadian social insurance number. CyberPatriot does not have access to any checks or clearances performed by other organizations, so all team assistants must undergo background checks through AFA's contracted screening company, PeopleFacts, Inc. The CyberPatriot background check is not a substitute for a school's or organization's background checks or personnel screening processes.
  - Agrees to abide by the CyberPatriot Standards of Conduct (see [Appendix II](#))
  - Meets with a team and individual competitors only with the coach's approval.
  - Must be officially linked through the competition dashboard to the team(s) they are assisting.
2. **Suggested Responsibilities** – There is no minimum time commitment for team assistants. Team assistant responsibilities vary by team, but sample responsibilities include helping with competition setup, snacks, and transportation.
  3. **Coaches as Team Assistants** – A coach may be a team assistant for other teams only if they also registered as a team assistant.
  4. **No Compensation** – Team assistant positions are voluntary and do not receive compensation. AFA has no position with respect to gifts received by volunteers.

### 3. **Team Identification**

For official purposes, team identification is standardized to recognize teams, assign scores, maintain anonymity, and avoid misunderstandings in communication.

#### **A. Teams Identifiers (Credentials)**

1. **Team Numbers** – Team numbers are assigned during registration and are the primary means to identify a team for competition purposes, such as assigning scores. A team number starts with the competition season number and then four-digit number (Example: 15-0001). The team number will remain the same for the entire season.
2. **Unique Identifiers and Login Credentials**– After the team number is assigned, each team is assigned a Unique Identifier for their competition images. Before each round, coaches may locate their twelve-digit alphanumeric code used for validation with the CyberPatriot scoring server on the coaches dashboard on the CyberPatriot website. Examples of NetAcad

Challenge login credentials will also be on the NetAcad account creation instructions. Unique Identifiers and other login credentials will not be emailed to teams in competition emails.

3. **Organization Name** – The official name of teams belonging to a school, including JROTC units, is the school name. The official name of other teams, such as CAP and USNSCC units, is the organization name. Composite teams have an official name assigned by the authority that approved their composition
4. **Unofficial Names (Team Nickname)** – Teams can create unofficial team nicknames to identify themselves at any time. The names must be in good taste and are subject to veto by the CyberPatriot Program Office. Team names are optional and will not be used to identify teams officially. Coaches must ensure nicknames are appropriate and do not include pro-hacking or offensive language.

**B. Anonymity** – Teams will remain anonymous, except for their team number, and except for the following situations where information related to a team's performance (e.g., scores, rankings, advancement) is published.

1. **Exceptions during Online Rounds**

- The team names and team numbers of the top scoring teams in each round may be listed with their scores on the public scoreboard during a competition round.
- Teams that win an award or certificate during the State Round will have their official name, team nickname, and coach name published by the CyberPatriot Program Office. This information will not be associated with the team's scores.

2. **Exceptions during the National Finals Competition** – Teams that advance to the National Finals Competition have their official names, team nickname, coach name, and competitors' names published. This information will not be associated with the team's scores. This information may be published in the following places:

- *The CyberSentinel* – CyberPatriot's official newsletter
- CyberPatriot website ([www.uscyberpatriot.org](http://www.uscyberpatriot.org)) and social media
- The National Finals Competition program
- Press releases
- Communications to sponsors and government officials

Teams winning awards at National Finals will have their official names, competitor names, awards, and rankings published. Rankings for other National Finalists will not be published.

## 1004 | CyberPatriot Centers of Excellence (COEs)

CyberPatriot Centers of Excellence (COEs) are recognized as leading institutions and organizations in promoting STEM and cyber education.

## 1005 | CyberPatriot Rules Advisory Group (CRAG)

The CyberPatriot Rules Advisory Group (CRAG) advises the National Commissioner on competition rules and procedures. Coaches and technical mentors of all experience levels may join the group. The Senior Director of CyberPatriot Competition Operations chairs the CRAG. Contact

[cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org) for more information about joining.

# Chapter 2 | Registration Process and Requirements

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## 2001 | Volunteer Accounts

Volunteer accounts are required for any adult individual (18+) wishing to be a coach, technical mentor, or team assistant for the CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Defense Competition.

*NOTE: Student competitors SHOULD NOT create volunteer accounts. They do not need one to participate.*

## 2002 | Coach Registration and Team Creation

Coach registration begins the team creation process. The individual who creates the team from their volunteer account is automatically assigned as the coach of that team. This means only the individual who plans on being the coach should create the team.

**A. Creating Teams** – An adult volunteer/coach can register up to five teams using the “Create Team” option on their dashboard. Up to five (5) teams may be registered by one coach. These teams may be from the same or different schools, organization, or divisions under, provided that:

1. The coach completed the “Create Team” form once per team (this requires completion of the form up to five times for five separate teams).
2. The listed verification official is part of the organization the specific team is registered with
3. The verification official separately verifies the coach for each registered team, even when the teams are registered under the same organization. (This requires a response for up to five separate verification emails per coach)

**B. Team Verification and Approval** – When the team creation form is submitted, the listed verification official will receive an email asking to verify the information provided (coach name, organization name, etc.).

Once verified, the team enters a queue for final approval from the CyberPatriot Program Office. Once approval is granted, the coach will receive an email with a statement of approval and additional instructions about team fee payment and competitor registration.

Detailed team registration instructions and screenshots are available at <https://www.uscyberpatriot.org/Documents/Team%20Registration%20Instructions.pdf>

**C. Registration Deadline** – Registration for CyberPatriot 17 XVII (2024-25) opened on April 1, 2024. The deadline to register a team is October 2, 2024. That is the last date a coach can add a new team. Teams have until the first Qualification Round to be verified and approved and until November 6, 2024, to pay the registration fee.

## 2003 | Technical Mentor and Team Assistant Registration

Volunteers may register as a technical mentor or team assistant prior to knowing what team they will be working with (if any). They may support teams from a physical location or virtually. There is no deadline for technical mentor or team assistant registrations.

**A. Becoming a technical mentor or team assistant** – To become a technical mentor or team assistant, a volunteer must complete the two-step registration process.

1. **Mentor Application** – Complete the “Mentor Application” form on their dashboard.

2. **Background Check** – All technical mentors and team assistants are required to complete a background check conducted by the CyberPatriot Program Office. CyberPatriot does not have access to any checks or clearances performed by other organizations, so all technical mentors and team assistants must undergo background checks through AFA's contracted screening company, PeopleFacts, Inc. The CyberPatriot background check is not a substitute for a school's or organization's background checks or personnel screening processes.

**C. Linking with a Team** – Once the background check is processed and approved by the CyberPatriot Program Office, the approved technical mentor or team assistant appears on a list that is accessible by approved CyberPatriot teams. Coaches may contact or invite a volunteer to assist their teams (using a Find Mentor option available to them on their dashboards). Technical mentors and team assistants can also contact teams looking for assistance using the "Find Team" button on their Volunteer Dashboard

1. **Availability** – Technical mentors and team assistants can add or remove themselves from the viewable list by changing their availability status using the "Edit Profile" button on their dashboard.

Additional instructions for registering as a technical mentor or team assistant are available at <https://www.uscyberpatriot.org/Documents/Mentor%20Registration%20Instructions.pdf>.

## 2004 | Competitor Registration

Coaches must add their competitors to their online rosters no later than 11:59 PM ET on the schedule competitor registration deadline. For CyberPatriot 17 the registration deadline is October 23, 2024. A coach may only add competitors after the team is verified and approved.

**A. Registering a competitor** – From the "Options" drop-down menu on the dashboard, a coach selects "Register Competitor." The competitor's name, email address, and t-shirt size must be provided.

1. **Parental Approval** – Coaches must check the box indicating they have received oral, written, or tacit consent (through membership in a club, activity, or class) from the competitor's parent or guardian. The CyberPatriot Program Office does NOT need any record of this outside of the check box. Parental consent forms do NOT need to be submitted to the CyberPatriot Program Office. (See [Appendix III](#) if in need of a sample parental approval form)

**B. Competitor Questionnaire** – After a competitor is added to a roster, they are automatically emailed a link to a short questionnaire. Completion of this questionnaire is strongly encouraged, but not required. The questionnaire is designed to help the CyberPatriot Program collect demographic information about participants. This information is for internal use only.

## 2005 | Team Registration Fees

### 1. Registration Fees

Registration is considered complete when its applicable fee has been paid (or waived by the CyberPatriot Program Office). All teams are welcome to participate in the Exhibition, Training and Practice Round without paying the registration fee. The registration fee is due for a team once they compete in a competition Round (Round 1, Round 2, Introductory Round, State Round or Semifinals).

All fees must be paid by the published registration fee payment deadline. Fee amounts are listed in the table below:

Open Division Fees	All Service Division Fees	Middle School Division Fees
<b>\$225 / team</b>	<b>Waived</b>	<b>\$175 / team</b>
<i>Waivers available for Title I schools and all-girl teams</i>	<i>Waived as result of agreement with National Headquarters</i>	<i>Waived for Civil Air Patrol, and Navy League Cadet Corps teams. Waivers available for Title I schools and all-girl teams</i>

## 2. Fee Exemptions (Waivers)

Fees may be waived in the following circumstances.

- **Title I schools** (and schools with inadequate funding) – Coach must submit official fee waiver request from dashboard (after approval) and provide documentation of Title I status.
- **All-girl teams** – This waiver exists to attract more females to STEM fields. A coach may submit fee waiver request if a team is composed entirely of female competitors. The waiver should be requested only once competitors have been added to the roster.

# Chapter 3 | Online Competition Round Rules

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## 3001 | Overview

During the National Youth Cyber Defense Competition, each team competes in a series of online competition rounds by fixing vulnerabilities, hardening systems, and performing other tasks. Teams from the Open, All Service, and Middle School Divisions compete during the same scheduled competition weekends but are scored only against the other teams within their divisions.

CyberPatriot operates under the premise that all coaches, technical mentors, team assistants, and competitors conduct themselves with the highest ethical standard. The following rules have been instituted to prevent the perception of misconduct that would jeopardize the integrity of the competition and ensure a fair and equitable competition between all teams.

Coaches are encouraged to work with the CyberPatriot Program Office to resolve questions regarding these rules before the competition. The following rules apply throughout the CyberPatriot competition season, to include competitions and events outside of competition rounds that involve CyberPatriot images or tasks. Violation of any of the rules in this chapter may lead to penalties.

## 3002 | Official Competition Communication

Email is the official and primary channel of communication from the CyberPatriot Program Office to coaches. The official email addresses from which communications are sent from the CyberPatriot staff include [info@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:info@uscyberpatriot.org) and/or [cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org).

Email is not considered a substitute for helpdesk/technical support during a competition round. Official competition information will be posted in the CPOC tech support chat or on the CyberPatriot website ([www.uscyberpatriot.org](http://www.uscyberpatriot.org)) if there are technical issues with the official email.

### 1. Competition Emails before the Round

Teams receive two competition emails before each online competition round and two emails after the competition round. Coaches are the only individuals who receive these emails, and it is their responsibility to ensure that each of the emails listed below is received. Copies of these emails are also available on the coaches dashboard. Coaches should contact the CyberPatriot Program Office if emails are not received in the time frames listed below. Failure to receive emails is not grounds for an appeal.

**A. Download and Instructions Email** – On or before the Monday prior to the competition round, coaches receive an email with image download information, as well as the following:

- Competition Round Instructions
- Image download links
- Cisco NetAcad Challenge information
- Other Challenge information
- Technical support information

**B. StartEx Email** – At 9:00 AM ET on the first day of the scheduled competition round, an email will be sent to all coaches with the following information:

- Image decryption passwords
- Changes to instructions since the Download and Instructions Email

## 2. Competition Emails after the Round

**A. Preliminary Score Email** – This email is used for all rounds to ensure that scores are correct before scoring or advancement information is released. It notifies coaches of their preliminary scores from the recent round and issues a deadline for Preliminary Score Discrepancy Reports.

**B. Results Email** – Release of this email is contingent on a variety of factors including inquiries and appeals. The goal for release of the email is **eight** working days after the completion of the competition round. The Competition Round Results Email contains the following information:

1. A link to the scores from the just-completed competition round.
2. A link to a general list of vulnerability categories in the images. Specific vulnerabilities will not be published. The general list of vulnerabilities categories may include:

*Access control and settings – Insecure services – Policy violations: files and/or services – Antivirus – File sharing and permissions – Login Policy – Malware – Password Policy – Firewall – Updates – User Policy – Forensics Questions - Miscellaneous*

## 3. Technical Support

Technical support for online competition rounds is provided by the CPOC staff during each competition window during all competition rounds (all times Eastern).

**A. Official Means for Technical Support Requests during Competition Rounds.** Official requests for technical support will be accepted only through the following means.

1. **CPOC Tech Support Chat (WebEx)** – This is the preferred means of technical support during a competition round. Information for accessing the WebEx chat is included in the StartEx Email.
2. **Telephone** – The CyberPatriot staff can be reached during the competition windows at +1 (877) 885-5716

**B. Email.** Email is not an official means of technical support during a competition round. Therefore, technical support requests through email **will not** receive official consideration.

Teams should use email during a competition round to submit information only when requested by CyberPatriot tech support. Additionally, Score Correction Requests and appeals **will not** be accepted by email.

1. Technical and scoring information and questions should be sent to [cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org) (outside of competition rounds).

2. Registration and administrative (e.g., student registration, Volunteer Dashboard password resets, etc.) information and requests should be sent to [info@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:info@uscyberpatriot.org).

3. Emails from [cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org) or [info@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:info@uscyberpatriot.org) are intended to broadcast critical competition information.

**C. Collaboration Tools.** From time to time, the CyberPatriot staff will use Cisco WebEx, Microsoft Teams, or other collaboration tools to assist in resolving time-consuming or complicated technical issues. Teams may also request that their approved school or organization collaboration tool be used.

## 4. Other Information and Notifications

In addition to email, information may be posted on scoring reports within the image, the CyberPatriot website, WebEx tech support chat banner, social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram), or the public scoreboard.

## 3003 | Competition Time and Date Restrictions

**1. Official Time.** The official time standard for the competition is the Network Security Challenge (images) competition scoring server time.

### 2. Competition Rounds

**A. Competition Round** – A competition round is defined as the scheduled contiguous dates the competition is held, in which the competition challenges are exactly the same. The competition round is typically conducted around a weekend. A competition round is further divided into windows and periods.

**B. Competition Window** – A competition window is the specified time that the competition is conducted during a competition round. In general, it is the hours when support is available for teams to compete. Teams shall not compete outside of the competition windows designated for each round. The designated competition windows for each competition round are listed below. They are subject to change by the CyberPatriot Program Office. All times are Eastern Time.

**Thursday 9 AM - 10 PM ET**

**Friday 9 AM - 11:59 PM ET**

**Saturday 8 AM - 11:59 PM ET**

**Sunday 10 AM – 8:00 PM ET**

If another competition day is used outside of the originally scheduled round, then the competition window will be 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM ET unless otherwise specified.

**C. Competition Period.** The competition period is the single, **four consecutive hour** period in which a team completes all challenges and tasks assigned for the competition round. The coach may choose any four consecutive hour period within one of the competition windows. Coaches do not need to inform the CyberPatriot Program Office of when they plan to compete.

1) Start Time. The competition period begins when a team starts the first image (in the designated virtual machine player) within a round's competition window. It does not begin when the Unique identifier is entered into the image. Other images, tasks, and challenges (e.g., Cisco NetAcad Challenge, Boeing Cyber-Physical Systems Challenge) may be started only after the first image is opened.

2) End Time. The competition period ends no later than four consecutive hours after the team powers on their first image (in the virtual machine player) within a round's competition window, regardless of the image time or team running time indicated on the image Scoring Report page. All challenges and tasks must end.

The following rules govern the competition period for all teams, including teams with competitors competing separately from their homes or other locations.



### **C. Coach's Competition Period Responsibilities**

- 1) Youth protection is the primary responsibility of the coach. The coach will ensure that the students compete in a safe environment.
- 2) While the team is participating in the CyberPatriot competition or training the coach will be present in person or virtually for the competition period.
- 3) The coach shall ensure to the best of their abilities that the competitors do not participate in online activities (e.g., hacking, gambling, etc.) that are against the CyberPatriot Competitor's Code of Conduct in Appendix VI (e.g., hacking, gambling, etc.).
- 4) The coach is responsible for obtaining the team's Unique Identifier and other login credentials from the coaches dashboard.
- 5) The coach is responsible for registering their team in the Cisco Networking Academy and obtaining Cisco Competition Course login credentials via the procedures published on the coaches dashboard. It is recommended that coaches secure this information as part of preparing for the round.
- 6) If applicable, the coach is responsible for checking their team's tier (high school teams only) at the beginning of each round to ensure that their team is using the correct images and completing the appropriate competition tasks.

### **D. Competition Period Restrictions**

- 1) A team shall have only one competition period of four consecutive-hours to complete ALL challenges and tasks during an online competition round.
- 2) A team's competition period shall not begin before a competition window or competition round begins or ends.
- 3) Entering a Unique Identifier in the Set Unique Identifier utility shall be the team's first action when opening an image after clicking the CyberPatriot Competitor's Agreement. The Unique Identifier used must be the one provided to a team on the coaches dashboard and shall be validated with the scoring server.
- 4) Teams shall begin their other challenges only after opening the first image. Teams shall end all challenges and tasks before the end of the team's competition period.
- 5) Teams are not allowed to open an image or competition challenge for any reason before their competition period begins. In addition, no "sneak peeks," or tests of the competition software are allowed outside of downloading images, verifying their checksums, and using the provided connection test software.
- 6) The times on the Scoring Report page are for reference purposes only. It is the team's responsibility to ensure that ALL competition challenges and tasks, including the Cisco and Boeing challenges, are completed by the end of the competition period that begins when the FIRST image is opened.
- 7) Technical issues affecting a team's performance will not result in extra time unless the issue is competition wide.

## **2. Alternate Competition Dates**

**A. Competition Round Extension** – The National Commissioner may direct an extension to a scheduled competition round if extreme weather or other conditions prevent many teams from competing.



**B. Emergency Competition Date** – Only coaches or coach alternates may request an emergency competition date for a verified emergency with an online Appeals Form. Typically, the competition round Start-Ex email will contain a link to the Appeals Form. The approved Emergency Competition Date for a team is based on the resource availability of the CyberPatriot staff. A team's coach or coach alternate must request an Emergency Competition Date through the online Appeals Form. The form will go through the appeals process.

The CyberPatriot Program Office **will not consider schedule conflicts** for Emergency Competition Date appeals. Emergency competition dates are used only for the following:

1. Severe weather or other widespread emergencies that prevent teams from competing.
2. Unplanned hospitalization of a coach that causes a team not to compete.
3. Other requests due to extreme circumstances affecting the team's ability to compete will be considered by the CyberPatriot Program Office on a case-by-case basis.

The deadline to submit an Emergency Competition Date request is **4:00 PM ET** on the Tuesday following the first scheduled day of the original online round unless otherwise specified. Teams that do not meet the deadline for an Emergency Competition Date will not have one, even if there is a competition round extension.

**C. Competition-Wide Round Postponement** – In the event of a national or regional-level emergency or a competition-wide issue, the National Commissioner may postpone a competition round. The postponed competition round will occur on the weekend following the originally scheduled competition dates (Friday, Saturday, and Sunday) unless otherwise designated by the National Commissioner. Therefore, teams should plan for the backup date in case of a postponement.

## 3004 | Team Numbers, Unique Identifiers and Competition Login Credentials

Teams may not change the division in which they registered after Round 2.

Usage of the team number by anyone outside of the specific team it was assigned to is prohibited. This includes teams or team members participating under the same coach, mentor, organization or school under which the team number was registered.

Team Unique Identifiers (UIDs) and other credentials are located on the coaches dashboard. Coaches will not receive unique identifiers and login credentials in competition emails. Cisco NetAcad Challenge, the Boeing Cyber-Physical Systems Challenge, and other credentials are the responsibility of the coach to register and retain. Instructions for obtaining other login credentials will be contained in emails to coaches.

Coaches are encouraged to check their dashboard before the competition and make a copy of their UIDs and other login credentials. If the coach cannot access the dashboard, they must contact the CyberPatriot Operations Center to receive their UIDs and other credentials. Failure to access credentials or a delay in obtaining them is not grounds for an appeal or extra time.

## 3005 | Technical Hardware and Software Specifications

The most current technical specifications for the competition are available at <https://www.uscyberpatriot.org/competition/technical-specifications>.

For a successful competition, the technical specifications must be followed. Failure to meet technical specifications is not grounds for a score appeal or extra time.

## 3006 | Internet Connectivity to Competition Servers and Websites

Teams are responsible for their internet connectivity for the entire time they compete. An image or competition challenge may not be worked offline without ever connecting to the competition server. An image or competition challenge without a valid Unique Identifier or login credentials will have a score without a matching history, which is possible grounds for disqualification for the team using it.

### 1. Mandatory Website Access

**A. CyberPatriot Website** – Internet access to [www.uscyberpatriot.org](http://www.uscyberpatriot.org) and its web pages is mandatory for the competition. A list of websites required for the challenges is located at <https://www.uscyberpatriot.org/competition/technical-specifications>

**B. Coaches Dashboard** – Coaches should safeguard an up-to-date screen capture or printed copy of their team information on the coaches dashboard to mitigate a network or website outage.

### 2. Competing During a Network Outage

**A. Continuation of Competition Challenges and Tasks.** If a team experiences a network outage during their competition period, the competitors should continue competing on their images while waiting for network restoral. The scoring engine will track the team's progress and report it when the network is restored. It is the team's responsibility to have a backup plan for internet connectivity during a local network outage.

**B. Network Backup Plan** – Teams should have a backup plan to compete in the event of a network failure. The backup plan should include network access (e.g., cell phone hotspots) and an alternate competition space (e.g., pre-arranged use of a library or a private residence with sufficient adult supervision) if required. The alternate competition space must be deemed safe by the coach within the policies of the school or organization.

## 3007 | Coach Supervision and Oversight

**A. Coach Supervision of Team(s)** – Coaches shall supervise their teams for the entire competition period. The minimal required supervision is:

1. The coach is physically present when competitors are competing in person as a group.
2. If the coach cannot be present, then a Coach Alternate must be requested by the coach or verification official and approved by the CyberPatriot Program Office.
3. **CyberPatriot Distributed Team Supervision Requirements.** The coach or Coach Alternate is required to supervise their teams that compete from distributed locations. The required minimal supervision is:

- a. The team's coach must speak directly in a two-way conversation with each competitor at least once during the competition period to check on their well-being and competition status via video or voice at least once. Chat, voicemail, or texting does not meet this requirement. It must be real-time verbal communication.
- b. The coach is virtually present or available to teams distributed and homes and other facilities through digital, audio, or video means for the entire competition period.
- c. Competitor Post-Competition Round Statement
  - 1) The competitors must provide the coach with an electronic or hard copy of the Competitor Post-Competition Round Statement (see [Appendix VII](#)) for each competition round.
  - 2) The deadline for the statements is 11:59 pm Eastern Time on the last scheduled day of the competition round or the team's Emergency Competition Date.
  - 3) The team's coach shall maintain the season's Competitor Post-Competition Round Statements until February 15.

**B. Oversight Visits to Competition Areas and Spaces** – If the need arises, coaches shall allow the CyberPatriot competition staff and AFA officials to visit their competition areas and spaces so they may observe the conduct of the competition and fulfill their oversight role. However, an oversight visit does not relieve the coach of their authority and responsibilities for the team.

**C. CyberPatriot Competition Staff Entry into a Competition System** – During the competition, the CyberPatriot Program Office staff may request to view teams' systems for oversight, competition administration, and troubleshooting purposes. CyberPatriot staff will not change teams' systems. Teams shall allow the competition staff immediate access to their system(s) when requested.

## 3008 | Competition Areas, Spaces, and Interaction with Other Teams

**A. Competition Area** – A competition space is a location where one team competes within a competition area. The competition space can be physical or virtual.

1. **Control of the Competition Area** – The coach (or approved coach alternate) of a team must be present (i.e., onsite) to administer all competition rounds where teams are competing in person as a group. For CyberPatriot 17, coaches or approved coach alternates of teams that are distributed at homes or other facilities must be available for communication with their competitors for the entire competition period.
2. **Multiple Teams** – In cases where a competition area contains multiple team spaces, coaches or coach alternates shall take appropriate action to ensure that no purposeful or inadvertent communication or collaboration occurs between teams. Examples of appropriate action include keeping teams as far away from each other as possible or in separate rooms, keeping the volume of discussions to a minimum, and ensuring that any written notes are only visible to individual teams.
3. **Approved Virtual Teams** – Approved virtual teams shall follow the same rules relating to sharing and accessing of competition images, software, and information as physical teams, to include the single connection to an image. Virtual team competition areas and spaces must meet the requirements of supervision and the requirements of physical competition areas and spaces.

**B. Competition Space** – The competition space is the location where competitors of one or more teams compete (e.g., school, home, multipurpose room, computer lab).

**C. Interactions with other teams** – During their competition periods, team members of different teams competing in the same competition area shall not communicate with members of the other teams. Independent observers monitoring the competition must not communicate with or interrupt the competitors, or otherwise threaten the integrity of the competition or safety of the competitors.

1. Teams or their team members, Coaches, or Mentors not competing may not observe other teams competing in physical or virtual competition spaces. This rule applies to teams that have already competed, are competing, or will compete later. In the case of a safety issue, where teams not competing must be in the same area as a competing team, Coaches must take reasonable precautions to obscure from view and limit the hearing of discussions of the competing team.
2. Teams (competitors, coaches, and mentors) shall not attempt to learn another team's competition information from the other team's members, their communications, data, documents, or systems.
3. To give coaches flexibility due to safety and other concerns, teams may compete in the following locations.
  - Teams may compete in person as a group in the same competition period.
  - Team members may compete as a team distributed at homes or facilities in the same competition period.
  - Teams may compete as a hybrid of in-person or distributed at homes or facilities in the same competition period.

**Note:** In all cases, a team's competitors shall all compete in the same competition period.

## 3009 | Sharing of Competition Materials

Coaches are entrusted with competition round materials including images, software, documentation, websites, and information. Coaches should treat the competition round materials as examination material. Coaches must control images, passwords, and other competition information so that competitors and others may use them only in the team's competition space or competition area.

For CyberPatriot 17, Coaches may distribute competition images, software, documentation, and information to their teams if the competitors are competing from home or other facilities. Coaches are responsible for controlling the distribution of images, software, documentation, and information directly to their team and shall not delegate the responsibility to the competitors.

### 1. Rules against sharing information

To avoid giving a competitive advantage to other teams, competitors may only share images and other information with their team members. Furthermore, participants must:

- a. Structure a competition area or use procedures so that other teams' competitors may not gain useful information or a competitive advantage. In competition areas where competition spaces are in separate rooms, a team's competitors may not enter another team's room, except for competitor safety, health, or protection.

This rule applies when a team is distributed at a home or other facility. Coaches must ensure that their competitors' competition spaces meet this requirement if competitors from other teams compete in the same home or facilities.

- b. Teams are not required to have only a single connection to each image. Console logins, RDP, SSH, etc., may be used to connect to the image. However, teams having multiple instances of the same image open at the same time is not permitted.
- c. Strictly limit distribution of CyberPatriot competition and practice images and software to their teams. Coaches shall ensure that the images and other challenge information including the Cisco NetAcad Challenge materials (e.g., Packet Tracer submissions, copies of quizzes), and the Boeing Cyber-Physical Systems Challenge images and materials are deleted after each round per the competition email.

For CyberPatriot 17, Coaches may supervise the deletions of images and competition materials with the Competitor's Post-Competition Statement in [Appendix VII](#). The statements will be collected by the team's Coach. If the CyberPatriot Program Office requests the statements, the coach shall forward them to the CyberPatriot Program Office.

**Note:** *All images distributed by the CyberPatriot Program Office are the property of the Air & Space Forces Association, not CyberPatriot participants.*

- d. Not share information about the competition images or challenges with anyone outside of their team. This includes not sharing information with participants of other teams from the same school or organization.
- e. Not transfer copies of images to persons who are not currently registered CyberPatriot participants. Transfer of the images to non-CyberPatriot participants is a violation of the End User License Agreement.
- f. Work only on the images assigned to their team.
- g. Ensure that images and passwords are not transferred outside of their team.
- h. Not assist or provide an unfair advantage to teams that have not yet competed or are actively competing in a given round.
- i. Not post, teach, email, store, or share answered or unanswered quizzes, questions, challenges, exercises, vulnerabilities, information from within images or competition websites (e.g., [www.netacad.com](http://www.netacad.com)), from the competition. This includes scenarios, web pages, readme.txt files, and other documents associated with images and challenges. Screenshots of the images or the Scoring Report are strictly prohibited.
- j. Not seek, search, request, copy, or use competition answers or work from any source that was not created by their own team.
- k. When the round is complete, users shall delete the competition images, software (e.g., Packet Tracer) and ensure their competitors delete the competition images according to the guidance in competition emails.

## 2. Examples of information sharing violations

Examples of image or information sharing violations include:

- a. Passing vulnerabilities, information, or answers from a team that has competed or is competing to a team that has not yet competed in a given round.

- b. Posting or re-posting information on or from images, competition software, or answers on social media, blog, or other website or through text or email -- even after a round of competition.
- c. Using an image or software from the present or a prior competition round for training.
- d. Requesting answers or other competition assistance on a blog or social media.
- e. Teaching or briefing an image or task's vulnerabilities or answers to anyone who has not competed.
- f. Teaching or briefing an image or task's vulnerabilities to other teams that have competed even if they have the same coach or mentor.
- g. A team from one tier or division viewing or training on another's images or tasks.
- h. Assisting another team with their image or task.
- i. Posting a competition document or quiz with or without answers.
- j. Sharing screen captures of images or image contents.
- k. Discussing or sharing answers with other teams at the same school or organization.
- l. Conducting a "Hot Wash" for multiple teams during or after the competition round.
- m. Sharing audio, video, or photographic information from another team's competition periods.

## 3010 | Outside Assistance

Assistance to a team from outside the team's competitors is prohibited during competition rounds. This includes direct and indirect advice, suggestions, hands-on assistance, and electronic communication such as email, blogs, forums, questions and answers websites, and other social media. Questions with verbiage taken from the competition challenges and tasks or describing a problem from a challenge or task may not be posted to any website. Answers or solutions to competition round challenges or tasks found online or obtained by other means shall not be used by the team – it is considered copying answers.

Coaches, technical mentors, and team assistants may only assist teams with:

- a. Administrative issues before the image is opened.
- b. Entering the Unique Identifier and Cisco NetAcad Challenge login credentials.
- c. Timekeeping.
- d. Local area network outages and other connectivity issues that occur outside the competition image.
- e. Issues with the host system unrelated to the competition image itself.
- f. Dangerous or threatening situations that require adult intervention.
- g. Maintaining the team's saved scoring data at the end of the competition period.

### 1. Registered Competitors

Competitors are responsible for their team's performance during the competition and may NOT receive or request assistance outside of their team's competitors. Once a competition period begins, coaches, technical mentors, team assistants, competitors on other teams, and other non-team members shall not coach, assist, collaborate, or advise competitors until the completion of the competition period.

- a. Only the competitors REGISTERED with a team shall compete with that team.

- b. Only teams that have been verified by their verification official and approved by the CyberPatriot Program Office are eligible to compete. Coaches who have not been verified and approved will not receive competition-related emails.
- c. No fewer than two and no more than five competitors may compete at a time.
- d. A team's sixth registered competitor may be substituted for any of the two to five competing competitors at the coach's discretion. Once a substitution is made, the competitor that has been removed from the competition may not return in that round.
- e. Teams that do not have all of their competitors registered by the deadline will have their scores withheld until competitors have been officially added to the roster.

## 2. Substitutions / Alternate Competitor

Competitors on a team who are not competing (e.g., sixth member of a team, also known as the substitute or alternate) may observe the competition from within the competition space; however, they shall not advise or assist the team until they have been substituted into the competition or until the competition has ended. Additionally, substitute competitors may not be advised on the competition by coaches, technical mentors, or non-team members.

Substitutions are a one-time event during a round of competition. Once a substitute enters the competition for another competitor, the competitor exiting the competition may not reenter during that round, and the exiting competitor cannot assist the team once they have been substituted.

## 3011 | Allowable Resources

### 1. Internet Resources

During competition rounds, Internet resources (e.g., FAQs, how-to guides, existing discussion forums, company websites, documentation, software, shell scripts, batch files, registry exports) are valid for competition use under the following conditions:

- a. The resource is free, and access has not been granted based on a previous fee, membership, employment, purchase, credit card, or other monetary instruments.
- b. No token, smart card, common access card, etc., is required to access it.
- c. The resource is publicly and reasonably available to all teams.
- d. The resource must not be specifically created for the CyberPatriot competition or any event using CyberPatriot software.
- e. The resource was not staged at an internet location by the team.
- f. The resource was NOT created by other teams, coaches, technical mentors, or team assistants.

Resources located on the CyberPatriot website may also be used during competition.

### 2. Printed Material

Printed or handwritten reference materials (books, magazines, checklists, etc.) are permitted in competition spaces. Competitors shall choose and collect their team's printed material for the competition round WITHOUT the assistance of coaches, technical mentors, other teams' competitors, or non-competitors. Competitors are not required to reprint existing material.



### 3. Electronic Media and Communication Devices

Coaches shall ensure that their teams compete without outside assistance through electronic media or communication devices. The following stipulations apply to this rule:

**A. Electronic Media** – Because inconsistent Internet connections among teams may cause a competitive disadvantage, electronic media as defined below may be used in the online competition rounds under the following conditions.

1. Permitted electronic media is defined as memory sticks, flash drives, removable drives, CD-ROMs, or other similar storage devices.
2. Media must be prepared by a team's competitors. Coaches, technical mentors, other teams, and non-competitors shall not prepare a team's electronic media.
3. Authorized Patches, Updates, Documents, and Data. Patches, updates, and other Internet resources and software tools authorized in the "Software Tools" paragraph in this chapter are permitted on electronic media.
4. Offline Copy of Online Resources. A team may use an offline copy (on electronic media) of an otherwise freely available Internet resource, subject to the same definitions and restrictions as 4009.1 and its sub-parts.

**B. Communication Devices** – Cell phones, smartphones, and other wireless or wired devices are allowed in the competition space but shall be used to communicate only with team members, or in an emergency, they may be used to contact emergency services or appropriate people. The devices shall not be used to send, receive, post, share, or obtain competition information to and from people or sources outside of the team.

**C. Staging Resources** – Teams shall not stage or access unauthorized resources on the Internet, networks, systems, servers, storage devices, communications devices, etc. Emailing or otherwise transferring unauthorized tools, scripts, and data to the image host computer via another computer or device is prohibited. Secure FTP sites may not be used.

### 4. Software Tools and Scripts

Competitors shall set up and use software tools without outside assistance. Internet resource conditions also apply to software tools.

1. The tool must be searchable on the public Internet with the Google search engines. ALL Internet users have access to the tool(s).
2. WinMD5, 7-Zip, and the virtual machine player designated on the CyberPatriot website Technical Specifications page are competition software and are authorized for the online rounds of competition. Teams using other software tools that do not meet competition technical specifications compete at their own risk. (See Chapter 3.)
3. Teams should not delete, disable, or tamper with anything in the CyberPatriot folder or the CyberPatriot Scoring Service on their images. Furthermore, they should ensure that any antivirus or antimalware software that is installed on competition images does not interfere with this folder or service.
4. Scripts. For purposes of the competition, scripts created by the competitors of a CyberPatriot team are not considered software tools.
  - a. Teams may use scripts at their own risk. Failure to gain points using a script will not receive consideration for score correction or appeal.



- b. Teams shall not use scripts or software created by members of other CyberPatriot teams, coaches, technical mentors, or team assistants.
- c. Teams from the same school or organization may not collaborate in the creation of scripts and may not share scripts with each other or other teams.
- d. Teams may not update scripts based on competition information provided by other teams.










## 5. Posting or Publicizing Resources

Publicly posting, distributing, or otherwise publicizing scripts, software, or other resources that were created for the CyberPatriot competition or events involving CyberPatriot software is *prohibited*.

## 3012 | Competition Image “One Instance” Rule

A team may open only one instance of each image or competition software at a time during a competition round. An instance is defined as each time a competition image or competition software is opened in a virtual machine player, Internet browser, or another software program. This rule also applies to teams competing distributed from homes or other facilities.

**A. Instances of Different Images** – If a competition round involves more than one image or other competition software, then only one instance of each distinct image or software may be opened at a time. *The team may not have more than one instance of either image up at the same time (as depicted in the graphic below).*

“Multiple Instance” Rule Explanation	 Computer 1	 Computer 2	 Computer 3
<b>ACCEPTABLE</b> (No more than one copy of an image is open simultaneously)		 ubuntu	
<b>PENALTY</b> (Simultaneously running two copies of the same image)		 ubuntu	

**B. Shadowing** – Shadowing, following, parallel operations, training, or any other use of a second or more instance of an image or scoring client, online or offline, is NOT permitted.

**C. Additional Compressed (NOT UNZIPPED) Image Downloads** – Teams may place an additional ZIPPED download of each image in a given round of competition on other host computers. If the host computer fails or the original download is corrupted or deleted, the team may use this compressed image. Coaches shall ensure that the zipped images are deleted after the competition round.

**D. Re-Opening Images** – A second instance of an image may be opened if only the original image is corrupted or malfunctions. In this case, the original instance must be closed and deleted before the team opens another instance. If the original instance is not closed, the scoring engine will show multiple concurrent instances of the image, which is grounds for an inquiry and a penalty. The competition period time will continue regardless of the time required for opening a new image.

**E. Image Snapshots** – Using image snapshots or similar capabilities are allowed for CP-XVII. Snapshots include the use of host system file copy mechanisms to create a backup copy of an image. Snapshots or backups may be used to roll back to a previously known good state. If the competition

image becomes corrupted or unusable, snapshots are an acceptable way of attempting to recover the competition image.

## 3013 | Offensive Activity and Tampering

Participants shall not conduct offensive activity or tampering against other teams, competitors, the competition systems and servers, documents, tasks, or non-participants to gain a competitive advantage for them or others. Additionally, participants may not actively seek or exploit vulnerabilities in images, competition systems, competition software, or tasks at any time.

Offensive activity includes:

1. Hacking.
2. Reverse engineering of CyberPatriot and Competition-related software.
3. Interference with another team's ability to compete.
4. Social engineering or posting of false information to platforms including the CyberPatriot Facebook page, Twitter, text, chat, email, etc.
5. Tampering with, copying, or modifying components of competition images, the competition scoring system, or other competition software or hardware. Copying an image in its entirety to be used as a backup is not permitted.
6. Changing or tampering with host systems, clients, or host timekeeping devices.
7. Tampering with or modifying documents belonging to other participants or the CyberPatriot Program Office.
8. Any other activity aimed at manipulating or deceiving other competitors, the CyberPatriot Program Office, or competition staff.
9. Posting or otherwise communicating vulnerabilities in an image or task except to the CyberPatriot Program Office.
10. Penetration testing competition images or competition systems or tasks.
11. Attempted or successful unauthorized entry into or attacks on competition systems.
12. DDoS or DoS attacks on CyberPatriot participants, networks, or systems.

**Warning: Unauthorized copying of competition scoring software components from the virtual machine may damage the systems to which they are copied.**

## 3014 | Inquiries for Rules Violations

In cases of apparent violations of the rules in Chapter 3, scoring, or other irregularities, the National Commissioner may appoint a CyberPatriot staff member to conduct an inquiry. The following items may be part of an inquiry:

1. **Competition Materials**. Competition images, documents, software, and exercises that are involved in an inquiry require special handling by coaches.
  - a. **Security** – The coach of a team that is the subject of an inquiry or who has team members that are subjects of an inquiry shall secure and take measures to prevent access to the competition materials affected. They shall not be opened, modified, or otherwise tampered with unless requested by the investigator. Forensic analysis of images may be done during the inquiry.

- b. **Transfer or Upload** – When required, the coach shall transfer or upload the competition images and other materials to a designated location.
- 2. **Interviews** – Interviews conducted in the course of the inquiry may be held in-person, by telephone, or by other means.
- 3. **Questionnaires** – The investigator may request that participants involved in an inquiry respond to a questionnaire concerning the inquiry.

# Chapter 4 | Challenges, Scoring, Advancement, and Awards

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## 4001 | Competition Challenges

The CyberPatriot online competition rounds contain one or more of the following scored challenges. The National Commissioner may direct additional challenges. Competition challenges become more difficult with each round.

### 1. Network Security Challenge

The Network Security Challenge is the main event during the online rounds. It is a cyber defense event based on finding and fixing security vulnerabilities in virtual machines images. Additionally, teams may be asked questions about the actions they took during the challenge. The CyberPatriot Competition System (CCS) is used to score this challenge.

- a. **Virtual Machine Image (Image)** – CCS scores teams on their discovery and remediation of vulnerabilities in an image. A CyberPatriot image is a simulated operating system played on a virtual machine player that contains scoring software. Specific operating system image types will be released before the competition rounds.
- b. **Coach Image Responsibilities** – As mentioned in a previous section, coaches shall ensure that passwords, competition round images, and competition software are strictly controlled. When the round is complete, coaches shall delete the competition images and ensure their competitors delete the competition images according to the guidance in competition emails. Coaches may maintain the team's saved scoring data until the result of an appeal or inquiry is published and then delete the data.
- c. **Accurate Host Computer Time** – Host computer clocks must be set to the correct local time zone, time, and date. Teams should check these factors before competing and NOT change the host computer time or date once a round has begun. Teams can use <https://www.time.gov> to check their local clock.
- d. **CyberPatriot Competition System (CCS)** – CCS is an Internet-dependent competition system used for the online competition Rounds. CCS uses a client-based scoring system based on scored security vulnerabilities that are fixed, remediated, or identified in an image. It is possible to reduce a score if a fix to one vulnerability undoes a previous fix, or if a team is assessed a penalty for an action that makes a system less secure or conflicts with the scenario for that Round. Points lost to penalties can be recovered by way of corrective action. Not all vulnerabilities in an image are scored.

### 2. Cisco Networking Academy (NetAcad) Challenge

The Cisco NetAcad Challenge is a timed event administered by Cisco Systems in which teams answer questions regarding networking and complete virtual networking challenges with the Cisco Packet Tracer software. Middle School Division teams will participate in Cisco NetAcad Challenges for score starting in the Introductory Round.

- a. **Cisco Networking Academy Website** – All Open, All Service, and Middle School Division coaches and technical mentors can gain access to this site at the beginning of the competition season. All networking challenges during the online rounds take place on this site.

Note: Competitors under 13 years of age are permitted to access the Cisco Networking Academy online only with the permission of their parent or guardian. Coaches must ensure

that the parent or guardian of the competitor has given their permission for their child to use the Cisco Networking Academy website.

- b. **Scoring** – The networking quizzes are immediately scored upon submission, while the virtual networking Packet Tracer exercises are manually scored by the Cisco engineers. They are then weighed with the Network Security Challenge per the Competition Challenges document.

### 3. Other Challenges

The National Commissioner may direct other challenges during the competition season. Challenges may or may not be announced in advance of a competition round.

### 4. National Finals Competition

The National Finals Competition is an in-person competition round held in Bethesda, Maryland. The National Finals Competition includes a Red Team (attacker) activity and more challenges than the online rounds.

A separate document is published after the Semifinals that covers rules specific to the National Finals Competition. Until this season's document is released, teams should assume that all rules governing behavior in the online rounds hold true unless they conflict with rules in the National Finals document.

The CyberPatriot Program Office will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and keep teams informed on plans for the National Finals Competition with the health and safety of the teams that qualify as the top priority for determining the best path forward.

## 4002 | Scoring

### 1. Score-Governing Rules

The following rules govern scoring for all online rounds of competition at all skill levels (tiers) in all divisions.

**A. Network Security Challenge** – Scores are based on the number of security vulnerabilities fixed or remediated and questions about actions taken on images. It is possible to reduce a score if an action undoes the protection of a previous fix.

**B. Cisco NetAcad Challenge** – Scores are based on team performance in quizzes and/or virtual networking activities.

**C. Boeing Cyber-Physical Systems Challenge** -- Scores are based on team performance solving issues and protecting data and networks.

**D. Other Factors** – Percentages, difficulty, number of vulnerabilities fixed, or other weighting factors will NOT be used to calculate scores in the Qualification Rounds and will NOT be considered in the advancement of teams to any competition round.

**E. Weighting** – The Network Security Challenge will be the most heavily weighted event even in rounds that include a Cisco NetAcad Challenge and other challenges.

**F. Administrative Penalties** – Penalties may be applied to teams’ scores for rules and conduct violations

**G. Tiebreakers** – If teams have a tie score that affects their advancement to a State Round tier or the Semifinals, all tied teams will advance.

State Awards. If teams have a tie score that affects the outcome of a State Award, the following tiebreakers (in order) will be used to resolve the tie in this order:

1. Highest score in the State Round Network Security Challenge (Images)
2. Highest total score in the Qualification Rounds
3. Highest total Round 2 or Introductory Round score
4. Fastest time to the team’s final State Round Network Security Challenge score. The CyberPatriot Competition System scoring server time is the official time.

Semifinals Awards. If teams have a tie score that affects the outcome of a Semifinals Award, the following tiebreakers (in order) will be used to resolve the tie in this order:

1. Highest score in the Semifinals Network Security Challenge (Images)
2. Highest total score in the State Round
3. Highest total Round 2 or Introductory Round score
4. Fastest time to the team’s final Semifinals Network Security Challenge score. The CyberPatriot Competition System scoring server time is the official time.

National Finals Competition Advancement. If teams have a tie score that affects their advancement to the National Finals Competition, or if teams have a tie score that affects the outcome of an award, the following tiebreakers (in order) will be used to resolve the tie in this order:

1. Highest score in the Semifinals Network Security Challenge (Images)
2. Highest total score in the State Round
3. Highest total score in the Qualification Rounds
4. Highest total Round 2 or Introductory Round score
5. Fastest time to the team’s final Semifinal Network Security Challenge score. The CyberPatriot Competition System scoring server time is the official time.

National Commissioner’s Tiebreaker Determination. In the event that a tie cannot be broken with the methods listed, a coin toss or other method designated by the National Commissioner shall determine the winner.

## **2. Score Corrections**

Only a coach or a coach alternate may submit a request to correct their team’s scores. There are two ways to request score corrections.

1. **Score Correction Request** – A score correction request is an online form used by Coaches during the scheduled competition round to request a score correction for their team. A team’s score correction due to an administrative, technical, or scoring error requires a coach to submit an online score correction request. The link to the online score correction request form is found in the StartEx email. Teams will not receive an answer to their requests. Requests that are approved will result in a team’s score modification.

- a. **Deadline** – The deadline for a coach to request a score correction is 11:59 PM Eastern Time on the day the scheduled round ends. If a team competes during a competition round extension or on an Emergency Competition Date, the deadline for a coach to request a score correction is 11:59 PM Eastern Time of the day in which they competed. Requests to correct scoreboard warnings and suspected scoring issues during the round will not be accepted after the deadline.

- 1) **Documentation** – Score Correction Requests will be submitted online without supporting documentation. The CyberPatriot Program Office will request documentation as needed. However, coaches who document a scoring error may expedite the correction process and further their team's case. Valuable documentation includes the following.
  - a. **Scoring Files** – Scoring data stored on the Windows images (C:\CyberPatriot\ScoringData folder) and the Ubuntu images (/opt/CyberPatriot/) is the best documentation to prove a scoring error. The data may be copied from the image and emailed to the CyberPatriot Program Office. To ensure that an image is not damaged, coaches should copy the data and not remove or alter it.
  - b. **Full-Screen Capture of the Scoring Report Page\*** – If the scoring report page's screen capture is cut off or modified, it will likely not be considered. The screen capture should be easily readable and include: CyberPatriot Logo, Report Generated Time, Current Unique Identifier, Known Issues Fixed, Penalties Assessed, Score, Copyright Information, and Connection Status.  
*\*NOTE: Screen captures of the Scoring Report are to be submitted to CyberPatriot and then deleted before the next competition Round. It is a rules violation to keep a screenshot of the Scoring Report for reasons other than score discrepancy disputes.*
  - c. **Competition Scoreboard Screenshot** – Complete screenshots are helpful, but not required.

- 2. **Preliminary Score Discrepancy Report** – After the online round is complete, preliminary scores are published. At that time, only coaches or coach alternates may submit an online Preliminary Score Discrepancy Report. The report is for a discrepancy in the preliminary scores only. It is not a means of submitting technical issues that should have been submitted in a Score Correction Request. Coaches may not use the report to report administrative, technical, or scoring errors during the online round. Discrepancies that coaches may note on the form include incorrect scores, penalties, team number mix-ups, overtime, and multiple instances. The link to the online Preliminary Score Discrepancy Report form is found in the Preliminary Scores email.

- a. **Deadline** – The deadline for a coach to submit a Preliminary Score Discrepancy Report is published in the preliminary score email following the round. It is typically one to two working days after the preliminary scores are published. Requests to correct scores will not be accepted after the deadline.

### 3. Appeals Process

The appeals process is a formal procedure that ensures competition fairness by considering unforeseen conditions that impact a team's ability to compete. The process is NOT a vehicle for a team to pursue advancement in the competition by other means. Appeals include requests for Emergency Competition Dates. Appeals will be submitted through the online Appeals Form, which is published in the competition round emails. The following rules apply to appeals. The National Commissioner is the final decision authority on all appeals.



**A. Deadlines** – Unless otherwise published by the CyberPatriot Program Office, appeals must be received by the CyberPatriot Program office before 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the Tuesday after the start of the round.

**B. Originator** – Only the team's coach or coach alternate may originate a team's appeal.

**C. Grounds Not Considered for Appeals**

- Issues stemming from using other virtualization software or versions other than the version of the virtual machine player as published on the technical specifications page on the CyberPatriot website.
- Failure to receive competition email
- Ignorance of the original competition round dates
- Failure to secure a coach alternate
- Failure to access the competition space
- Scheduling conflicts
- Internet connectivity issues that are not due to uncontrollable circumstances
- Failure to properly work out connectivity issues with the IT department (e.g., firewall exceptions, using the Connection Test software)
- Hot spot or air card failure
- Issues caused by changing default virtual machine player settings (e.g., memory, processors).
- Coach or team-caused use of incorrect Unique Identifiers or Cisco Login Credentials after the first Qualification Round.
- Issues related to the use of non-Windows host systems (For compatibility issues, teams should have access to at least one Windows host computer that meets hardware and software technical specifications.).
- Issues related to Windows host computers and software that do not meet technical specifications listed in the Rules Book or competition email (e.g., no 64-bit system, virtual technology disabled, etc.)

**D. Scored Vulnerability Fixes or Remediation** – Any appeal concerning an alternative scored vulnerability fix or an alternative remediation method must be certified by the registered coach. The appeal must be first reported in the Score Correction Request, or it will not be considered. If the appeal is determined to be valid, the coach or coach alternate must certify it on the Appeals Form. Failure to score points through the use of a script(s) will not be considered.

1. A statement certifying that the team members did not read, discuss, overhear, post, or otherwise receive, share, or publicize the vulnerability fix or remediation with any other team to include those in the same organization or school or those teams coached by the same coach.
2. A statement certifying that the team actually tried the fix or remediation that is the subject of the appeal
3. A description of how the team found out about the scored vulnerability.
4. A full and detailed description of the commands and actions taken to fix or remediate the vulnerability.

**E. Format and Documentation** – Appeals are submitted in the online Appeals Form which is found in the Start-Ex email. All appeals must be supported with appropriate documentation (e.g., letters from school principal and news report outlining school or organization closures). Documents cannot be provided via the online form must be emailed to [cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org) before the deadline for appeals.

**F. Notification of Results** – The CyberPatriot Program Office will email the coach the results of their appeals.

## 4. Results Publication

The results or links to the results of competition rounds will be published in the following media.

1. The CyberPatriot website: [www.uscyberpatriot.org](http://www.uscyberpatriot.org)
2. Competition Round Results Email

Coaches may receive a courtesy copy of the Results Email within an hour before the results are published on the CyberPatriot website. To allow coaches to notify their teams of their results, the CyberPatriot Program Office requests that participants do not post the results on social media sites before they are posted on the CyberPatriot website.

## 4003 | Penalties

Any and all of the penalties below may be applied for any violations of the rules in this document, including misconduct:

### 1. Minor Penalties

In the event of a minor rule violation, the National Commissioner may impose competition penalties on a team including:

- Score reduction.
- Time disadvantage in future competition rounds.
- Invalidation of a team's competition round score.

### 2. Major Penalties (Disqualification)

If the National Commissioner rules that a participant or team committed a major rules violation, they may be disqualified. Disqualified participants and teams are ineligible for awards and recognition to include sponsor scholarships and internships and are subject to:

**A. Suspension** – The terms and time limit of a participant or team suspension from the competition are at the discretion of the National Commissioner.

**B. Termination** – A participant or team is immediately terminated from the CyberPatriot Program for the entire season.

**C. Ban** – A ban is the permanent disqualification of a participant or team from the CyberPatriot program. It is the most severe administrative penalty that can be imposed. Reinstatement is at the sole discretion of the National Commissioner.

### 3. Other Penalties

Other penalties invoked by the National Commissioner may affect a team's final score or advancement. A team or participant that does not cooperate in an inquiry may incur a penalty to include the disqualification, suspension, or ban of an individual or team as determined by the National Commissioner.

## 4. Replacement Teams

If a team that has advanced to the National Finals Competition is suspended, unable to compete, or banned, a replacement team may be chosen at the discretion of the National Commissioner. In the event the National Commissioner decides to designate a replacement team, the following criteria will be considered:

- The team that would have next qualified to advance per the competition rules but did not advance.
- Teams that did not compete in the Platinum Tier State Round in their respective division shall not be considered for the National Finals Competition.
- If a designated replacement team did not respond with the information required for the competition or to support its logistics when requested, the National Commissioner may revoke the designation of the replacement team.

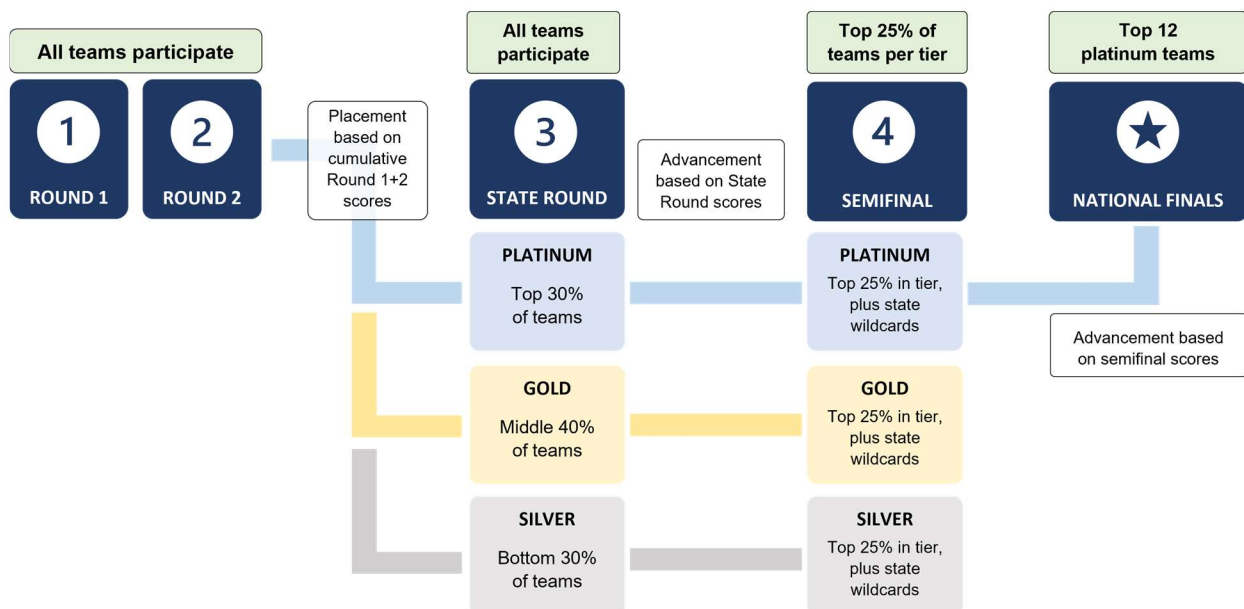
## 4004 | Advancement

The following subparagraphs detail the differences in advancement between the Open, All Service, and Middle School Divisions.

Note that geographical areas recognized in the competition for awards and advancement are U.S. states, Canada, and the At-Large teams. The At-Large teams are considered one group and it consists of teams from the U.S. territories and teams located in other nations, including Department of Defense Education Activity schools.

### 1. Open Division Advancement

The graphic below depicts team advancement for the Open Division.



**A. Round 1** – Round 1 is a qualification round. All teams may participate in this round.

**B. Round 2** – Round 2 is a qualification round. All teams may participate in this round regardless of their participation in Round 1.

**C. State Round** – All teams are eligible to participate in the State Round regardless of their participation in Rounds 1 and 2; however, they must compete within their assigned skill tier (Platinum, Gold, or Silver). The Platinum Tier is more challenging than the Gold Tier, which is more challenging than the Silver Tier. Tier placement is permanent for the remainder of the season. Teams may not be promoted or demoted between tiers and may not self-select tiers.

1. **Platinum Tier** – Top 30% of Open Division teams based on cumulative Round 1 and Round 2 scores. Highest ranking tier, and the only tier eligible to qualify for the National Finals Competition. Always outranks the Gold Tier.
2. **Gold Tier** – Middle 40% of Open Division teams based on cumulative Round 1 and Round 2 scores. Ineligible to qualify for National Finals Competition. Always outranks the Silver Tier.
3. **Silver Tier** – Remaining 30% of Open Division teams based on cumulative Round 1 and Round 2 scores. Ineligible to qualify for National Finals Competition.

Advancement to Semifinals is based solely on a team's State Round score.

**D. Semifinals** – Only the top 25% of teams (within each skill tier) advance to the Semifinals based on State Round scores. If a specific state, Canada, or the At-Large Region is not represented by a team advancing in the top 25%, the single highest scoring team from that state will advance as a wildcard. Teams must have a score higher than zero points to advance.

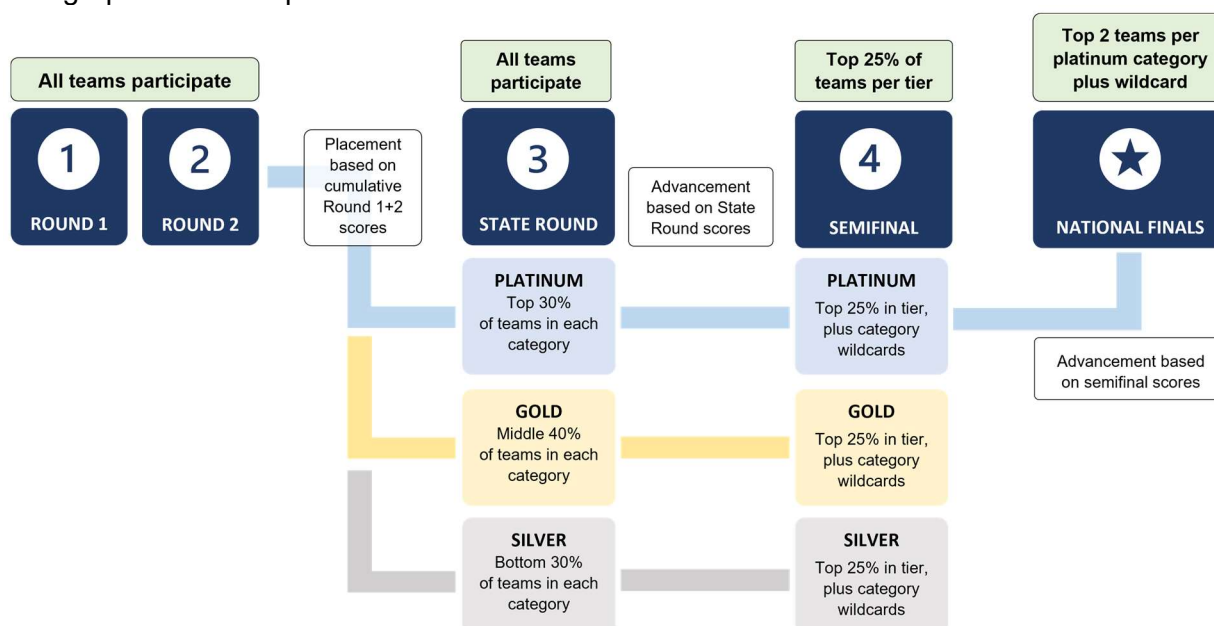
Advancement to National Finals Competition is based solely on a team's Semifinals score.

**E. National Finals Competition** - The 12 highest scoring\* Open Division teams from the Platinum Tier advance to the National Finals Competition based on their Semifinals scores.

*\*NOTE: Advancement to the National Finals competition is limited to two teams from the same school, organization, or coach in the Open Division. If an otherwise qualifying team does not advance to the National Finals Competition, the next highest qualifying team will advance.*

## 2. All Service Division Advancement

The graphic below depicts team advancement for the All Service Division.



**A. Round 1** – Round 1 is a qualification round. All teams may participate in this round.

**B. Round 2** – Round 2 is a qualification round. All teams may participate in this round regardless of their participation in Round 1.

**C. State Round** – All teams are eligible to participate in the State Round regardless of their participation in Rounds 1 and 2; however, they must compete within their assigned skill tier (Platinum, Gold, or Silver). The Platinum Tier is more challenging than the Gold Tier, which is more challenging than the Silver Tier. Tier placement is permanent for the remainder of the season. Teams may not be promoted or demoted between tiers and may not self-select tiers.

Tier placement is also dependent on the category of an All Service Division team. There are six categories:

- 1) Army JROTC,
- 2) Navy JROTC and Coast Guard JROTC
- 3) Marine Corps JROTC
- 4) Air Force JROTC and Space Force JROTC
- 5) Civil Air Patrol
- 6) Naval Sea Cadet Corps.

Note: Navy JROTC and Coast Guard JROTC are combined as one category. Air Force JROTC and Space Force JROTC are combined as one category.

1. **Platinum Tier** – Top 30% of teams from each category based on cumulative Round 1 and Round 2 scores. Highest ranking tier, and the only tier eligible to qualify for the National Finals Competition. Always outranks the Gold Tier.
2. **Gold Tier** – Middle 40% of teams from each category teams based on cumulative Round 1 and Round 2 scores. Ineligible to qualify for National Finals Competition. Always outranks the Silver Tier.
3. **Silver Tier** – Remaining 30% of teams from each category based on cumulative Round 1 and Round 2 scores. Ineligible to qualify for National Finals Competition.

Advancement to Semifinals is based solely on a team's State Round score.

**D. Semifinals** – Only the top 25% of teams (within each skill tier) advance to the Semifinals based on State Round scores. If at least six teams from an individual category are not represented as part of the top 25%, the highest scoring teams from that category will advance as a category wildcard. Teams must have a score higher than zero points to advance.

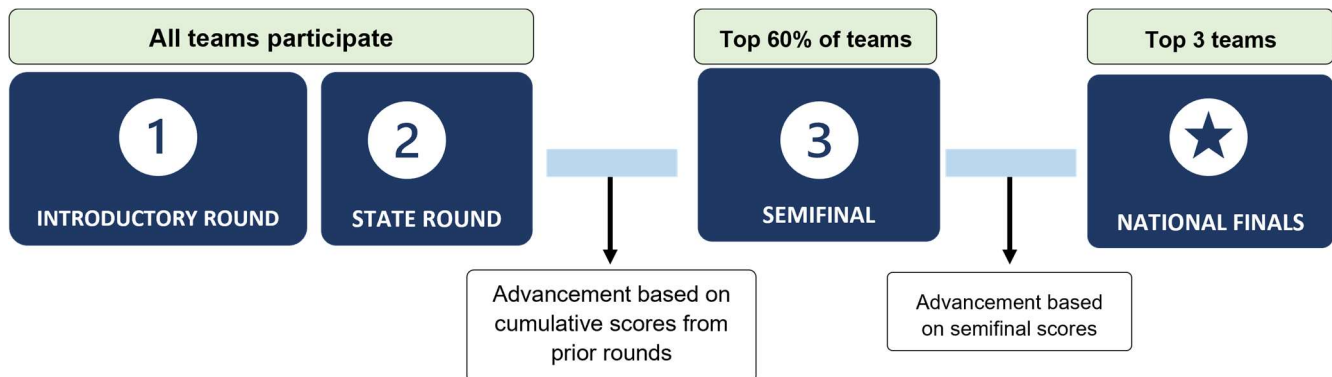
Advancement to the National Finals competition is based solely on a team's Semifinals score.

**E. National Finals Competition** – In total, 13 All Service Division teams from the Platinum Tier advance to the National Finals Competition. Based on Semifinals scores, the two highest-scoring teams\* from each category advance to the National Finals Competition. Additionally, the team with the highest national score that was not advanced as a "top-two" category team advances as a wildcard.

*\*NOTE: Advancement to the National Finals competition is limited to one team from the same school, organization, or coach in the All Service Division. If an otherwise qualifying team does not advance to the National Finals Competition, the next highest qualifying team will advance.*

### 3. Middle School Division Advancement

The graphic below depicts team advancement for the Middle School Division.



**A. Introductory Round – The Introductory Round** is a qualification round. All teams may participate in this round.

**B. State Round** – The State Round is an elimination round. All teams are eligible to participate in the State Round regardless of their participation in the Introductory Round.

**C. Semifinals** – Only the top 60% of teams advance to the Semifinals based on their cumulative score from the Introductory Round and the State Round.

Advancement to the National Finals competition is based solely on a team's Semifinals score.

**E. National Finals Competition** – The three (3) highest scoring\* teams in Semifinals advance to the National Finals Competition. Only one team from the same school, organization, or coach can advance to the National Finals Competition in the Middle School Division.

*\*NOTE: Advancement to the National Finals competition is limited to one team from the same school, organization, or coach in the Middle Division. If an otherwise qualifying team does not advance to the National Finals Competition, the next highest qualifying team will advance.*

## 4005 | Awards

Teams may earn recognition for their performance in the State and Seminal Rounds. A list of award winners is published with the scores on the CyberPatriot website.

### 1. AFA State Awards

Teams must compete in the state round to be eligible for a state award. AFA State Awards are higher ranking than State Tier awards, because they recognize top teams from the entire pool of division teams within the state

**A. Open Division** – The top three teams overall in each state, Canada, and the At-Large region are mailed a hard-copy AFA State Awards based on their State Round score. \*

**B. All Service Division** – The top three teams overall (regardless of category) in each state, Canada, and the At-Large region are mailed a hard-copy AFA State Awards based on their State Round score.\*

*\*Because the level of difficulty varies between tiers at the high school level and scores are not adjusted for difficulty, Platinum Tier teams always rank higher than Gold Tier teams, which always rank higher than Silver Tier teams. See the example below:*

Team	State	Tier	State Rd. Score	Award(s)
A	AK	Platinum	150	1 <sup>st</sup> Place AFA State Award
B	AK	Platinum	145	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place AFA State Award
C	AK	Gold	185	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place AFA State Award AND 1 <sup>st</sup> Place Gold Tier
D	AK	Gold	160	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place Gold Tier
E	AK	Gold	158	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place Gold Tier
F	AK	Gold	155	--
G	AK	Silver	200	1 <sup>st</sup> Place Silver Tier
H	AK	Silver	199	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place Silver Tier

**C. Middle School Division** – The top three teams overall in each state, Canada, and At-Large region receive a hard-copy AFA State Awards based on their cumulative Introductory Round and State Round scores.

## 2. State Tier Awards

**A. Open Division** – The top three Gold Tier teams and the top three Silver Tier teams in each state, Canada, and At-Large teams receive a digital State Round Tier Certificate (via email).

**B. All Service Division** – The top three Gold Tier teams and the top three Silver Tier teams in each state, Canada, and At-Large teams receive a digital State Round Tier Certificate (via email).

**C. Middle School Division** – Because there are no tiers in this division, there are no tier awards.

## 3. Semifinal Awards

All teams that qualify for the Semifinals (across all divisions) receive a Semifinalist certificate (via email). Additionally:

**A. Open Division** – The top 20 scoring Open Division teams in each Tier receives a digital certificate (via email).

**B. All Service Division** – The top five teams in each category of the All Service Division at each Tier level receive a digital certificate (via email).

**B. Middle School Division** – The top 25 teams based on Semifinals scores receive a digital certificate (via email).

## 4. National Finals Awards

All teams (and individual team members) qualifying for the Nationals Finals Competition will receive a National Finalist hard-copy certificate.

**A. Open Division** – The top three scoring teams based on cumulative scores of all National Finals competition events earn a trophy.

**B. All Service Division** – The top three scoring teams based on cumulative scores of all National Finals competition events earn a trophy.

**B. Middle School Division** – The top three scoring teams based on cumulative scores of all National Finals competition events earn a trophy.

*NOTE: Additional awards and/or scholarships may be presented for individual challenges and competition components.*



# Appendices

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## Appendix I | Coach Agreement

Coaches are vital to the success of CyberPatriot. Without coaches' voluntary partnership, CyberPatriot will never be able to expand to the tens of thousands of schools and students who are eager to participate – and whom our nation needs. The CyberPatriot coach serves in two roles. The coach (with additional assistance at her/his sole discretion) guides the team through preparation for the competition. As importantly, the coach is a critical member of the CyberPatriot management team who ensures:

1. Access to minor competitors in a way that protects them and respects parental prerogatives; and
2. The integrity of the competition during online and in-person competitions.

As a CyberPatriot coach, I agree to uphold the highest standards of integrity, sportsmanship, honesty, and good citizenship. I will encourage my team to compete fairly, honestly, and with a constructive attitude that celebrates our successes as well as those of other teams.

### Access To Competitors

1. Coordinate parental notification and permissions to allow their minor children to participate in the program per the current "CyberPatriot User Agreement and Privacy Policy" published by the Air & Space Forces Association.
2. Coordinate and provide permission for any student/cadet to register in the CyberPatriot Competitor Relationship Management (CRM) system.
3. Coordinate, arrange, and approve involvement with the team by any technical mentor(s) or team assistants at the coach's sole discretion, whether in-person or online and whether obtained from the CyberPatriot mentor database or any other source.
4. Abide by the CyberPatriot Standards of Conduct attached to this document.
5. Act as the team's single point of contact for the CyberPatriot Program Office.

### Academic Program

1. Deliver basic network security training to all assigned competitors as may be reasonably accommodated at the coach's sole discretion.
2. Encourage competitors to devote some time to self-study/preparation for the competition.
3. Not provide any training of offensive techniques, hacking, or social engineering as part of any CyberPatriot training or curriculum.

**NOTE:** *This guidance may seem too flexible, but it is intended to spark creativity. Encouraging competitors to take a central role in team preparation (with adult guidance and involvement) enhances both team cohesion and performance.*

### Competition Management

1. Select and designate primary and alternate competitors for each competition period. The competitors for any single competition period must be assigned from competitors registered in the CyberPatriot Competitor Relationship Management (CRM) System.

2. Uphold the integrity of the competition by ensuring that no more than five competitors at a time in any particular round of the competition and those competitors do not receive assistance from any external source.
3. Ensure that all rules of the competition as described in the CyberPatriot Rules Book and competition emails are strictly followed.
4. Report any technical or security issues involving competition systems or tasks only to the CyberPatriot Program Office and not widely publicize them in order to protect the systems and tasks from exploitation.
5. Not aid or abet any competitor attempts to socially engineer, hack, or undertake any offensive activity against competition systems, other teams, or any other party and report any instances of this behavior to the CyberPatriot Program Office.

### **Competition Logistics**

1. Coordinate and support all elements of the preparatory training and online competition rounds, including arranging a competition location and obtaining necessary computer equipment for training/Qualification Rounds of the competition.
2. Provide feedback to the CyberPatriot management team and coordinate feedback from competitors designed to improve the entire program.
3. Agree to coordinate logistics for the trip with the CyberPatriot Program Office (all expenses except entertainment and personal expenditures will be funded), should the team advance to the National Finals Competition.
4. Agree to accompany the team and be responsible for supervision and guardianship during the travel and onsite at the National Finals Competition.

I have read, understand, and agree to discharge the responsibilities described in the CyberPatriot Coaches' Agreement to the best of my abilities.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix II | Standards of Conduct

Working with young people can be among the most gratifying and impactful endeavors an adult can undertake, but there are also special responsibilities that must be discharged to prevent harm to the minor. As a CyberPatriot coach, technical mentor, or team assistant, I promise to strictly follow the rules and guidelines in this CyberPatriot Standards of Conduct as a condition of my providing services to the youth participating in CyberPatriot.

### **As a CyberPatriot coach, technical mentor, or team assistant, I will:**

- Treat everyone with respect, patience, integrity, courtesy, dignity, and consideration;
- Emphasize ethical use of the internet and information technology skills and knowledge;
- Insofar as practical, avoid situations where I am alone with an individual minor;
- Use positive reinforcement rather than criticism when working with competitors;
- Refrain from giving expensive gifts to minors without prior written approval from the parents or guardian of the individual;
- Report suspected abuse of any kind to law enforcement, school authorities, and the local Child Protection Services agency as required by law; and
- Cooperate fully in any investigation of abuse of minors.

### **As a CyberPatriot coach, technical mentor, or team assistant, I will NOT:**

- Smoke or use tobacco products in the presence of minors;
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of alcohol at any time while working with the team;
- Use, possess, or be under the influence of illegal drugs at any time;
- Pose any health risk to others (e.g., no contact with the team when in a contagious condition);
- Strike, spank, shake, or slap any youth participating in CyberPatriot;
- Humiliate, ridicule, threaten, or degrade any youth participating in CyberPatriot;
- Touch a youth in a sexual or another inappropriate manner;
- Use discipline that frightens or humiliates any youth participating in CyberPatriot; and
- Use profanity in the presence of any youth participating in CyberPatriot.

I understand that any action inconsistent with these Standards of Conduct, or failure to take action mandated by these Standards of Conduct, may result in my removal and prohibition from any future participation in CyberPatriot.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix III | Parental/Guardian Approval

I, the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, hereby give my permission for my  
(student's name)  
child to participate in the CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Defense Competition, and allow the team  
coach, \_\_\_\_\_, to have unsupervised access to my child  
(coach's name)  
during CyberPatriot activities. I take full responsibility in allowing the coach to interact with my child,  
and for my child to learn cyber defensive skills and techniques as taught in the program.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix IV | Competitor Safety and Protection

Safety and competitor protection are the top priorities of the CyberPatriot program. A coach should always consider the health and well-being of his team in choosing a competition environment.

### Safety and Competitor Protection Requirements

School, organization, and local directives govern the safety and protection requirements of minors and facility standards. Some safety considerations in choosing a competition space are listed below.

- Facility Security
- Crime Areas
- Trip Hazards
- Adequate Lighting
- Electrical Safety
- First Aid Kit
- Emergency Services Available
- Vehicle Safety
- Slip areas caused by ice, snow, water, petroleum products, etc.
- Unsupervised access to competitors by other adults in public facilities

Coaches should mitigate any safety issues through remedial action or warnings to competitors and technical mentors.

### Reporting of Incidents

In the event of an accident or other incident involving competitors in a CyberPatriot event; school, organization, and local reporting procedures shall be followed. After notification of proper local authorities, coaches should notify the CyberPatriot Program Office following a significant incident at a CyberPatriot event. Incidents of interest to the CyberPatriot Program Office are:

- Competitor who is a missing person last seen at a CyberPatriot event
- Injured competitor requiring hospitalization
- Criminal act against a competitor, coach, chaperone, technical mentor, competition staff, or CyberPatriot supporter
- Severe weather or natural disaster that could negatively affect the competitors or competition

**Reports to the CyberPatriot Program Office can be emailed to [info@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:info@uscyberpatriot.org) or made by phone at +1 (877) 885-5716.**

## Appendix V | Coach Change Requests

Coaches ensure that minors participating in the competition are protected and that parental prerogatives are respected. An individual taking on the role of coach for (any amount of time) is expected to assume the coach's responsibilities of protecting minors and preserving the integrity of the competition by ensuring that all competitors conduct themselves in a fair, ethical, and sportsmanlike manner.

### **Coach Alternate Request (one round only)**

Coach Alternate requests for a single competition round may be submitted via the official Coach Alternate Request form ([click here to access the online form](#)). Only the registered coach or verification official may submit the form. The form is available at the URL below. I can also be found in the competition round Download Instructions and/or StartEx emails.

*Coach Alternate Request Form URL – <https://forms.gle/iT8TcuwakXXskKsh9>*

A coach alternate request and approval are valid for only ONE competition round.

The online request form requires the following information.

- Registered Coach's name
- Name of Coach Alternate
- Coach Alternate's Email Address.
- That the Coach Alternate agrees to the Coaches' Agreement and Standards of Conduct in the CyberPatriot Rules Book at the Link.
- Certification that the coach or verification official (e.g., Principal, Assistant Principal, Organization Leader, etc.) has verified that (Name of Coach Alternate) is authorized to work unsupervised with minors the youth protection and other policies of my school or organization.

### **Coach Change Request (permanent change for remainder of competition)**

If the coach of record is unable to supervise the team over several rounds, they must contact the CyberPatriot Program Office at [info@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:info@uscyberpatriot.org) to transfer the team to another school or organization-approved adult for the remainder of the season.

The request should come from the existing coach of record. If that individual is unable to submit the request, the verification official must submit the request for the coach change. The name and email address of the new coach should be provided in the email, along with the team numbers of the teams the individual will be taking over.

The new coach must have an existing CyberPatriot volunteer account (or should create one) in order for the transfer to be made.

## Appendix VI | Competitor Code of Conduct

1. I will consider the ethical and legal implications of my online actions every time I participate in CyberPatriot.
2. I will not conduct, nor will I condone, any actions that attack, hack, penetrate, or interfere with another team's or individual's computer system and tasks, nor will I use the cyber defense skills I learn in CyberPatriot to develop hacking or other offensive skills.
3. I will not illegally copy or distribute software or other intellectual property.
4. I will not visit inappropriate Web sites while preparing for or participating in CyberPatriot.
5. I will not participate in or condone cyberbullying which includes such behaviors as teasing, threatening, intimidating, humiliating, sexual harassment, racial harassment, and stalking.
6. I will follow the CyberPatriot rules of the competition and will accept appropriate guidance from my coach.
7. I will not tamper with, modify, monitor for vulnerabilities, penetration test, or attempt to manipulate any element of the CyberPatriot competition or scoring systems.
8. I will report any technical or security issues involving competition systems or tasks to my coach for further reporting to the CyberPatriot Program Office and not publicize them to avoid exploitation of the systems or tasks.
9. I will not attempt to deceive, hoax, or "prank" other teams by forwarding or posting erroneous or deceptive information on the Internet, by email, or on social networking sites.
10. I understand that violation of this code of conduct is grounds for my immediate dismissal from my team and the disqualification of my team from the CyberPatriot competition.
11. I will strive to use my participation in CyberPatriot to further my understanding of cybersecurity.

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix VII | CyberPatriot 17 Competitor Post-Competition Round Statement

Competitors shall provide an electronic or hard copy of this statement to their **coach before 11:59 PM ET of the competition round's last scheduled day**. Teams competing on an Emergency Competition Date shall submit the form to their coach before 11:59 PM of their Emergency Competition Date.

- Competitors may send this form to their coach from an email address belonging to them with their name typed in the signature line.
- Coaches may transfer the form's contents to an online document, but it must have an attributable email address for each competitor and places to type their name, round number, and date.
- Teams meeting in-person as a group may print a copy of the form and have all competitors sign and date it.

### STATEMENT

I, \_\_\_\_\_, followed all rules and Appendix VI of the CyberPatriot Rules Book  
(Type or print your name)

during \_\_\_\_\_. I deleted all competition images, software, documents, and  
(Type or print round # or name)

information and did not distribute them beyond my team. I further attest that I did not receive, share, or seek answers or information about the competition round from persons or sources outside of my team before, during, or after the competition round.

**Team Number:** 15 – \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix VIII | Sponsors and Sponsorship

The Air & Space Forces Association and the CyberPatriot program take great care in the branding of CyberPatriot. Our sponsors must have common values with the Air & Space Forces Association and make a significant contribution to the CyberPatriot program before they can be associated with the program.

### National Sponsors

Our national sponsors provide the resources to sustain the CyberPatriot program across the United States and the globe. According to their sponsorship level, CyberPatriot's national sponsors earn recognition in CyberPatriot events, as well as name association with CyberPatriot. CyberPatriot literature and other media contain the sponsors' logos. National sponsors conduct their sponsorship through the CyberPatriot Program Office.

### Local Team Sponsors

Local sponsors may sponsor specific local teams but may not use the CyberPatriot logo in their advertising. If a team advances to the National Finals Competition or is involved in another event other than a team competition, the team shall not use the local sponsor's name, logo, or other identifying characteristics.

If you know of anyone interested in becoming a CyberPatriot national sponsor or if you want to know more about sponsorship, please visit our website at [www.uscyberpatriot.org](http://www.uscyberpatriot.org) or contact the CyberPatriot Program Office by email at [info@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:info@uscyberpatriot.org) or call +1 (877) 885-5716.