



# THE CYBERSENTINEL

*The official newsletter of CyberPatriot – AFA's National Youth Cyber Education Program*

DECEMBER 2025

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## CyberPatriot 18 State Round

The CyberPatriot 18 State Round will take place December 11-14, 2025.

All registered teams may compete in the CyberPatriot 18 State Round. There is no score cutoff or participation requirement. If your team did not compete in earlier rounds, you can still compete in the State Round.

# CYBER PATRIOT 18

For Open and All Service Division teams, the State Round is a stand-alone round where all teams start with a clean slate and previous scores do not count. For Middle School Division teams, the Introductory Round and State Round scores *are considered* for State Awards and advancement to the Semifinals. If a team did not participate in or did not score high in earlier rounds, they can still compete in the State Round. Teams may win awards even if it is the first time they compete this season.

### Competition Windows

Teams may choose any 4-hour long window from the following availability:

- **Thursday: 9:00 AM - 10:00 PM ET**
- **Friday: 9:00 AM - 11:59 PM ET**
- **Saturday: 8:00 AM - 11:59 PM ET**
- **Sunday: 10:00 AM - 8:00 PM ET**

### State Round Challenges

Teams will be challenged on three virtual machines and two Cisco Networking exercises.

- Server 2022
- Mint 21
- Ubuntu 24
- Cisco Quiz
- Cisco Packet Tracer

## CyberPatriot 18 State & Tier Awards

Within each division, printed state award certificates are given to the top three teams per state. [Note: Canada and the "At-Large" region (international teams) are each recognized as a state].

It is important to note that the Platinum tier always outranks the Gold tier, which always outranks the Silver tier. Platinum tier teams are typically the teams to earn printed state awards. Tier awards are digital certificates given to the top three teams per state in the Gold and Silver tiers. While these teams are not necessarily the top overall in their state, they are the top within their skill level and deserve proper recognition.

Examples of state and tier awards can be found in section 4005 | Awards on page 49 of the [Official Rule Book](#).

\*Note that the Platinum Tier receives a State award and does not qualify for tier recognition, since they are recognized as top in their state. [Round 2/Introductory Round scores](#) are available on the CyberPatriot website.

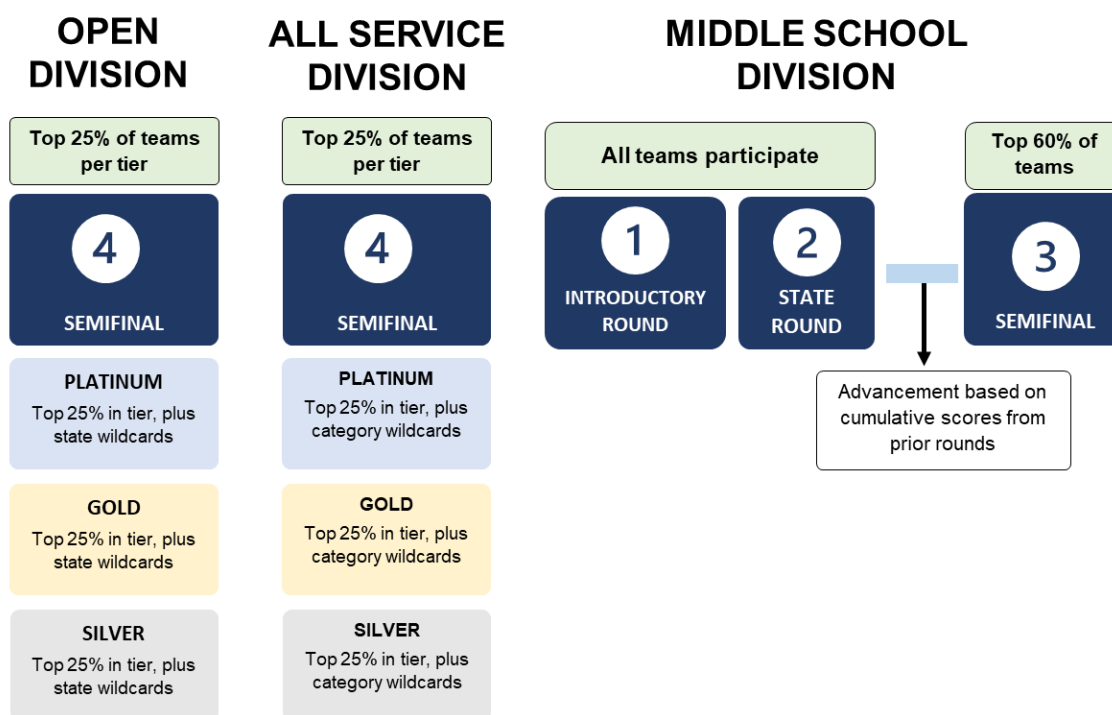
## CyberPatriot 18 Semifinals Advancement

Each Division has a unique Semifinal advancement.

**Open Division** - Only the top **25%** of teams (within each skill tier) advance to the Semifinal Round 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.

**All Service Division** - Only the top **25%** of teams (within each skill tier) advance to the Semifinal Round 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. \*Due to the limited number of teams in the USNSCC category, tier placement and advancement will be decided differently than other categories.

**Middle School Division** - Only the top **60%** of teams advance to the Semifinal Round based on their cumulative score from the Introductory Round and the State Round.



## CP-18 Participant Kits

Participant kits continue to be shipped. The participant kit includes a CP-18 T-shirt and sticker for every registered team member. Coaches will receive one box with gear for themselves and their competitors ONLY.

*\*Please note, mentor and team assistant gear is sent separately (directly to the volunteer) and not included in the team order.*





The CP-18 participation certificate template is also available for download from the coach dashboard.

Have questions regarding your participant kit? Contact The CyberPatriot Program Office at [info@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:info@uscyberpatriot.org).

## CyberPatriot Alumni Spotlight

Kegan Abbott | CyberPatriot V, VI



### What are you up to now?

I am the director of Cybersecurity & IT Infrastructure for a Global Radiology/Medical Environment. I also own a cybersecurity consulting company serving Military & Government Agency customers - consulting, designing, & implementing the full scope of network and physical security. Including DHS, CBP, & Army.

### How did participating in the CyberPatriot competition influence your plans for your future?

CyberPatriot is a core, foundational component of the skillset I have leaned on daily in my career for the last ten years. Access to our team's industry mentors provided early exposure to career professionals that I was able to have open and honest conversations with. They served as a wealth of information and not only answered questions but addressed my concerns about entering the IT/Cybersecurity field. Our team mentors motivated me and truly helped me realize my dream of working in this field was attainable with hard work and dedication.

### What was the most valuable lesson you learned from CyberPatriot?

The most valuable lesson that I learned from CyberPatriot and still use every day in my career is the ability to go into an unknown environment with wide open eyes - looking for common mistakes, insecure configurations, and symptoms/remnants of adversary presence. The sense of urgency from the time-limited nature of a competition translated into incredible real-world preparedness that put me ahead of my peers in the industry.

### What is your advice for the next generation of CyberPatriot?

Take full advantage of the program! You'll get out of it what you put in. Never be afraid to ask questions. Study, keep an open mind and assume you know nothing. Spend as much time around mentors and those with more experience/knowledge in your interest areas as you can. Serve others with your skills. This is a challenging career, but at the end of the day, there is no better feeling than knowing you helped protect a person, company, or our country from digital adversaries.

**Fun Fact:** I originally wanted to be a firefighter! After a physical disability prevented that, I turned to "digital firefighting" through defensive cybersecurity - fighting digital fires and both protecting firms from breaches and helping those in need recover from ransomware.

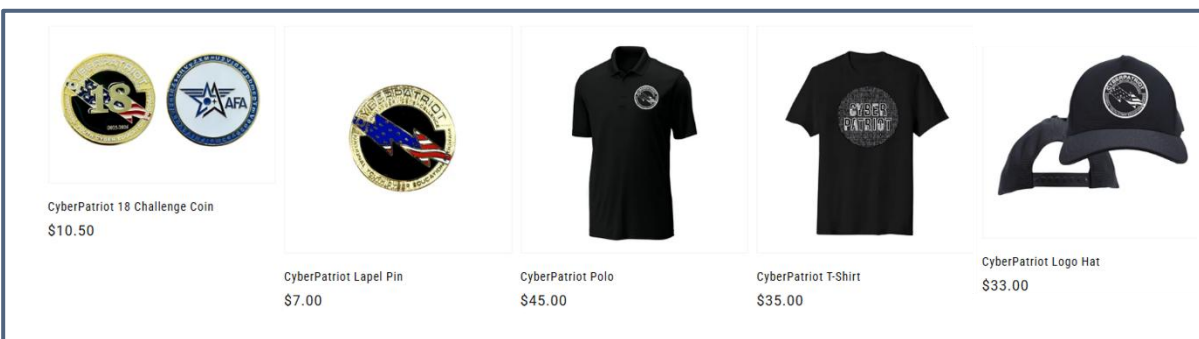


**Do you want to be featured in an issue of the CyberSentinel?**  
Complete the [survey](#) and your story could be in the spotlight!



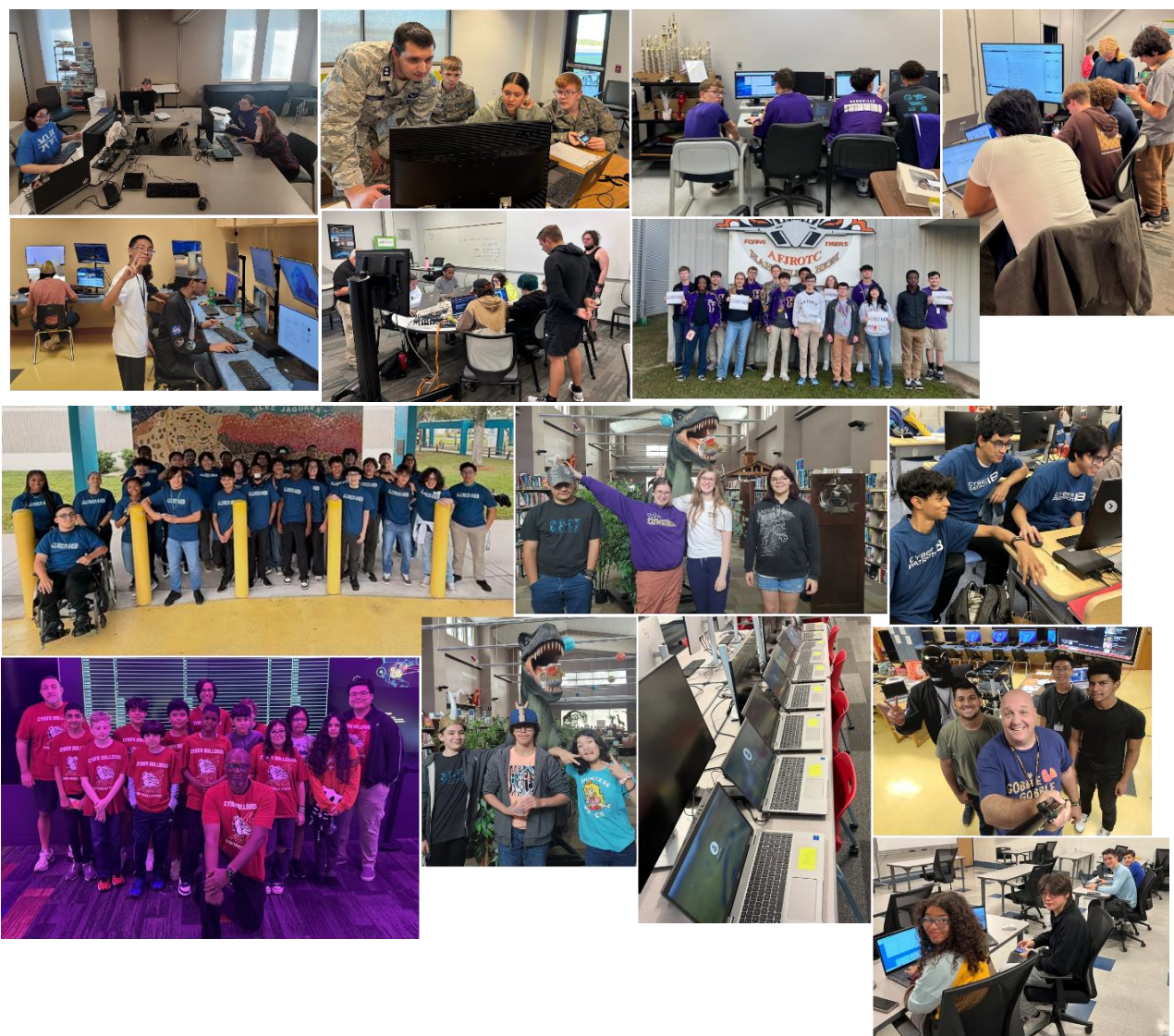
## ShopAFA

CyberPatriot 18 challenge coins are available on ShopAFA. You'll notice we've also expanded the CyberPatriot collection! Visit [ShopAFA](#) today and see what new items are available!



## CP-18 Highlights

The 18<sup>th</sup> season of the National Youth Cyber Defense Competition is well underway! Nearly 3,000 high school division teams competed in Round 1 that took place in October and over 3,200 high school and middle school division teams participated in the Intro Round/Round 2 in November. We love to see what the teams are up to – be sure to tag us on social media and send us your team photos during the competition season!



Thank you to all the CyberPatriot Sponsors who make our program possible:

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