THE CYBERSENTINEL

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

MARCH 2025

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CyberPatriot 17 National Finals Competition

The CyberPatriot 17 National Finals Competition is set for March 15-17, 2025. We are excited to have the National Finalist teams join us in Rockville, MD!

The event kicks off on March 15 with the Opening Ceremony, followed by Competition Orientation and System Familiarization in the afternoon, and The Career Portal/Industry Perspectives (TCP/IP) event in the evening. The main event - competition day – will be all day on Sunday, March 16. Teams will start with the Network Security Master Challenge and wrap up competition day with the Cisco NetAcad Challenge and Boeing Cyber-Physical System Challenge.

The National Finals Competition, and the CyberPatriot 17 season, will come to a close on Monday evening at the Awards Banquet. At the banquet, the winning teams are announced and deemed National Champions. The Awards Ceremony will also be live streamed on CyberPatriot's YouTube channel starting at 6:30 PM ET.

THE CHALLENGES	
Network Security Master Challenge	During the Network Security Master Challenge, teams are provided with multiple virtual operating systems (also known as "images"). Each team serves as administrators for a small business, working to find and fix vulnerabilities, maintain critical services, resolve injects and defend against hostile Red Team attackers.
Cisco NetAcad Challenge	During the Cisco NetAcad Challenge, teams will be scored on their ability to demonstrate proficiency in network security administration. Cybersecurity knowledge and skills are tested with a networking quiz and a hands-on networking exercise.
Boeing Cyber-Physical System Challenge	In the Boeing Cyber-Physical System Challenge, teams are presented with an operational system that tracks and maintains flight information. Each team acts as a product security engineering team that has been tasked with securing the system from threats that could impact air safety.

Meet the National Finalist Teams

OPEN DIVISION

CANYON CREST ACADEMY
Conspiracy

EASTERN TECHNICAL HIGH SCHOOL
Pbchocolate

FRANKLIN HIGH SCHOOL
Half Dome

HIGHLANDS RANCH HIGH SCHOOL
Falcon Transfer Protocol
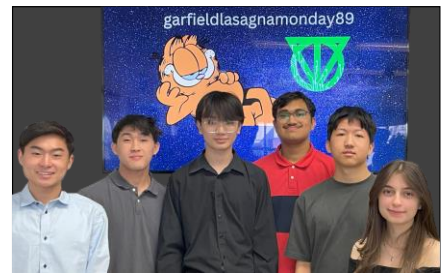
JOHNSON HIGH SCHOOL
Team 2

LOYOLA BLAKEFIELD
Axios

SCOUTING AMERICA EXPLORING CLUB 2928
CyberAegis Phoenix

SCOUTING AMERICA EXPLORING CLUB 2928
CyberAegis Veritas

THOMAS JEFFERSON HIGH SCHOOL
garfieldLasagnaMonday89

TROY HIGH SCHOOL
Runtime Terror

WESTVIEW HIGH SCHOOL
TitanTurtles

WILLIAM LYON MACKENZIE COLLEGIATE INSTITUTE
FNASA

ALL SERVICE DIVISION

ARMY JROTC

WEST VALLEY INNOVATION CENTER
77 69 6E

THEODORE ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL
Floppy Disks

NAVY JROTC

MIAMI BEACH SENIOR HIGH
The Chill Guys

TROY HIGH SCHOOL
coast2coast

MARINE CORPS JROTC
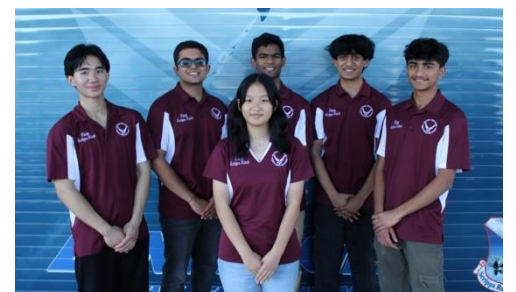
ALLEN HIGH SCHOOL
Alpha Eagles

MARINE MILITARY ACADEMY
Devil Dogs

AIR FORCE JROTC

MIDWEST CITY HIGH SCHOOL
Bombers

SCRIPPS RANCH HIGH SCHOOL
Terabyte Falcons

CIVIL AIR PATROL

BURKE COMPOSITE SQUADRON
Cyber Monkeys

RARITAN VALLEY COMPOSITE SQUADRON
CyberRavens

U.S. NAVAL SEA CADET CORPS

BAND OF THE WEST DIVISION
Silicon Knights

SACRAMENTO DIVISION
Sacramento Ciphers

ALL SERVICE DIVISION WILD CARD
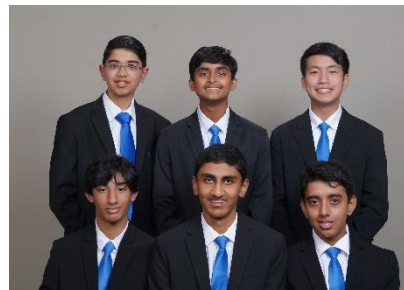
PUNAHOU SCHOOL
Punahou CELT

ARMY JROTC

MIDDLE SCHOOL DIVISION

SCOUTING AMERICA EXPLORING CLUB 2927
CyberAegis Odyssey

SCOUTING AMERICA EXPLORING CLUB 2927
CyberAegis Stardust

TOBY JOHNSON MIDDLE SCHOOL
Sentinel Rock

CyberPatriot All-American

The Cyber All-American honor is given to CyberPatriot competitors who have qualified for the National Finals Competition all four years of their high school careers. Past recipients include:

2015	Connor Quick	Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School
2015	Joshua Klosterman	Big Sioux Composite Squadron
2015	Carlin Idle	Colorado Springs Cadet Squadron
2016	Victor Griswold	Colorado Springs Cadet Squadron
2017	Leon Gaulin	Montachusett Regional Vocational Technical School
2018	Noah Bowe	Colorado Springs Cadet Squadron
2018	Taylor Coffey	Colorado Springs Cadet Squadron
2020	Charissa Kim	Troy High School
2021	Evan Huang	US Naval Sea Cadet Corps Sacramento Division
2021	Justin Lin	Del Norte High School
2022	Emily Foreman	Sacramento Division
2022	Kevin Hu	Del Norte High School
2022	Emily Kelso	Sacramento Division
2022	Darius Kianersi	Thomas Jefferson High School for Science & Technology
2022	Tristan Lee	Theodore Roosevelt High School
2022	Darin Mao	Thomas Jefferson High School for Science & Technology
2022	Tanay Shah	Del Norte High School
2022	William Smith	Sacramento Division
2023	Chan Chung	Troy High School
2023	Akhil Guntur	Del Norte High School
2023	Jonathan Lin	Del Norte High School
2023	Brian Ni	Troy High School
2023	Akshay Rohatgi	Del Norte High School
2023	Alvin Zheng	Del Norte High School
2024	Anna Wu	Troy High School
2024	Rohan Juneja	Del Norte High School
2024	Safin Singh	Del Norte High School
2024	Yannis Smith	Sacramento Division

This year, three competitors have earned the Cyber All-American designation:

PRATHAM RANGWALA
Franklin High School

PRIYAM RANGWALA
Franklin High School

ETHAN ZHAO
*Scouting America
Exploring Post 2928*

2025 CyberCamp Host Registration is Open

Keep your students engaged in cybersecurity over summer break!

Host Registration for 2025 CyberCamps is open until May 1, 2025.

CyberCamps emphasize fun, hands-on learning of cybersecurity principles that are relevant and applicable to everyday life.

The Standard CyberCamp is designed for campers who are new to the world of cybersecurity. The goal at the end of the camp is to have students ready to compete in the CyberPatriot National Youth Cyber Competition. The Standard CyberCamp consists of an introduction to cybersecurity, cyber careers, the National Youth Cyber Defense Competition, Windows Security Policies, auditing, Linux basics, intro to using a CLI, and command line security.

The Advanced CyberCamp option takes campers to the next level and is designed for students who may have either competed in the National Youth Cyber Defense Competition or have attended an AFA Standard CyberCamp. The Advanced CyberCamp curriculum consists of Windows graphical utilities, command line, Sysinternals Suite, Linux Init Systems, advanced command line, processes and scheduled tasks, security policies, PAM and Cisco NetAcad.

During each AFA CyberCamp, campers are immersed in a mock competition where they work on securing virtual images by finding and fixing vulnerabilities.

Host organizations can choose to host a camp during any of the available weeks. Both standard AND advanced camps are offered each week.

[Click here to learn more about CyberCamps today!](#)

WEEK	DATE
Week 1	June 2 - 6
Week 2	June 9 - 13
Week 3	June 16 - 20
Week 4	June 23 - 27
Week 5	July 7 - 11
Week 6	July 14 - 18
Week 7	July 21 - 25
Week 8	July 28 - August 1
Week 9	August 4 - 8
Week 10	August 11 - 15

CyberPatriot Alumni Spotlight

Lavanaya Garg| CyberPatriot XI, XII

What are you up to now?
I am currently in my final year as an undergraduate student at the University of California, Irvine, majoring in Political Science. Alongside my studies, I work as a litigation law clerk at a law firm, gaining hands-on experience in the legal field. My passion for cybersecurity, developed through my participation in CyberPatriot, has shaped my academic and career path, leading me to apply to law school with an interest in cybersecurity law and policy.

How did participating in the CyberPatriot Competition influence your plans for your future?
Participating in CyberPatriot was a transformative experience that sparked my passion for cybersecurity and the legal challenges surrounding it. As Team Captain, I developed critical skills in problem-solving, teamwork, and perseverance, which have been invaluable in my academic and professional journey. Competing at the national level exposed me to the urgent need for stronger cybersecurity policies and regulations, inspiring me to pursue a career in cybersecurity law. Now, as I apply to law school, I am eager to combine my technical knowledge with legal expertise to advocate for stronger protections in the digital space.

What is the most valuable lesson you learned from CyberPatriot?

The most valuable lesson I learned from CyberPatriot is that cybersecurity is not just about finding vulnerabilities, it's about resilience, adaptability, and teamwork. Early in the competition, we realized that securing systems wasn't just about identifying weaknesses; it was equally important to keep services running. One of our key breakthroughs came when we recognized that turning on critical services and maintaining functionality while applying security measures was essential to performing well. Instead of simply locking systems down, we had to balance security with usability in a high-pressure, timed environment. This experience taught me that problem-solving in cybersecurity and in life requires both a proactive mindset and a collaborative team effort. If one of us got stuck, another would step in with a fresh perspective, ensuring we moved forward together. CyberPatriot reinforced that technical expertise is only one piece of the puzzle; the ability to work under pressure, pivot strategies, and think critically as a team is what truly leads to success. That lesson stuck with me, shaping how I approach challenges today, whether in law, technology, or beyond. Now, as I am interested in pursuing a career in cybersecurity law, I carry with me the knowledge that security is not just about defense, but about ensuring systems remain functional, accessible, and protected in an evolving digital landscape.

What is your advice for the next generation of CyberPatriot?

Think beyond just finding vulnerabilities, understand the bigger picture. One of the most important lessons my team learned during CyberPatriot was that cybersecurity isn't just about securing systems; it's about keeping them operational while protecting them. The competition isn't just a test of technical skills, it's a test of problem-solving, teamwork, and adaptability under pressure. Don't be afraid to fail and learn from mistakes. Some of the best lessons come from troubleshooting something that didn't go as planned. Be willing to experiment, document what works (and what doesn't), and always keep improving. Most importantly, lean on your team. No one knows everything, but together, you can cover each other's blind spots. Communicate, delegate, and trust each other's strengths. The ability to work as a cohesive unit will take you further than any single technical skill. Whether you pursue a career in cybersecurity, law, policy, or another field, the skills you gain from CyberPatriot - critical thinking, perseverance, and teamwork - will serve you for life. Keep learning, stay curious, and enjoy the challenge!

Random Fact: I once captained a CyberPatriot team to National Finals while balancing my passion for public speaking and debate. This meant I could go from securing a network to arguing a case in a mock trial on the same day! Competing in cybersecurity taught me technical problem-solving, while debate sharpened my ability to think critically under pressure. Now, as I pursue law school, I love finding connections between the two fields, especially in areas like cybersecurity policy and digital rights.

Do you want to be featured in an issue of the CyberSentinel?
Complete the survey and your story could be in the spotlight!

Cisco NetAcad Learn-a-Thon

Don't forget about this great opportunity! Click Here to learn more about the Cisco Lean-A-Thon Pathway and the opportunity to earn an industry certification **FOR FREE!**

Gannon University Sponsor Highlight

CyberPatriot Sponsor Gannon University is pleased to announce they are offering scholarships to top high school teams in **Pennsylvania, Ohio, and New York.** Based on the team's performance in the State Round of CyberPatriot 17, the team is eligible for a reward that corresponds to their tier level.

Tier Awards:
- Platinum tier top 3 teams in your state (PA, OH, NY), Gannon will award each member a $2,000 renewable CyberPatriot award on top of any additional scholarships and grants Gannon offers upon acceptance.

- Gold tier top 3 teams in your state (PA, OH, NY), Gannon will award each member a $1,500 renewable CyberPatriot award on top of any additional scholarships and grants Gannon offers upon acceptance.

- Silver tier top 3 teams in your state (PA, OH, NY), Gannon will award each member a $1,000 renewable CyberPatriot award on top of any additional scholarships and grants Gannon offers upon acceptance.

To be able to utilize the scholarship, eligible students should complete the scholarship form by April 25, 2025. Completing the form is just to hold the scholarship should the student choose to apply and attend Gannon University in the future. If you do not complete this form, you forfeit the right to this scholarship in the future.

Gannon prides itself as a forward-thinking institution that drives education and opportunities that will meet the future demands of our workforce. Specifically, Gannon offers cybersecurity programs in their cutting-edge Institute for Health and Cyber Knowledge, making them a leader in the education of future cyber experts.

Gannon believes students on your team would be a great addition to their growing student population at Gannon and a vital future professional of the global workforce.

To accept this award, individuals must major in cybersecurity and remain in this major during their time at Gannon. Direct admission into the cybersecurity program also automatically qualifies any student for a $3,000 renewable cyber scholarship. Both the CyberPatriot and Gannon University Cyber award, as well as other scholarships or financial aid, can be stacked together. Individuals must also enroll at Gannon in their first semester following high school graduation.

Gannon's rolling admissions policy means individuals can still apply if this is their senior year. To do so, visit www.gannon.edu/apply.

If individuals still have remaining high school years, this offer will remain until they graduate. Individuals can apply as early as the summer before their senior year.

Congratulations to all CyberPatriot teams on their efforts during the competition!

CyberPatriot in the News

City school board recognizes Cyber Cats
The Scottsboro Junior High Cyber Cats were recognized for their performance at the state CyberPatriot competition. Scottsboro Junior High School had three teams that competed at the state event. Of the three, one team won the state championship and another was the runner-up. All three teams participated in the national semi-final round in January.

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

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Cyber Diamond Sponsors

CISCO

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AIR & SPACE **STEM Outreach**

BOEING

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American Military University **AMU**

CISA Cybersecurity & Infrastructure Security Agency

EMBRY-RIDDLE Aeronautical University FLORIDA | ARIZONA | ONLINE

leidos

NORWICH UNIVERSITY

Want to be featured in the next edition of the CyberSentinel?
Please send email highlights or accolades to info@uscyberpatriot.org.