

30 January 2025

Scholastic bowl parents,

National tournaments are a way to recognize the hard work and skill of our successful Winnebago teams. They are also a great motivator for players at the end of the year, since they allow our players to see how they match up against teams we do not normally get to play while building lasting memories and strengthening teammate bonds. Players are not required to attend a national tournament, but I highly recommend it, even for freshmen and sophomores, who get a lot of benefit out of the team building and experience that a national tournament offers.

There are three well-regarded national tournaments:

1. NAQT's Small School National Championship Tournament (SSNCT) at the end of April caters to small schools in two divisions. We play in the Traditional Public Schools division and do not have to play against Open Division teams representing small but selective private schools or magnet schools.
2. NAQT's High School National Championship Tournament (HSNCT) over Memorial Day weekend is the largest national tournament.
3. PACE's National Scholastic Championship (NSC) in early June has a limited and elite field of teams and the hardest and best-written question set of any national tournament.

Winnebago scholastic bowl has historically been very successful, and we qualify for all three of these national tournaments in most years. The players choose a national tournament to attend based on their personal objectives each season.

This year, our players are debating between two options: SSNCT and HSNCT. To help us make a decision as a group, please look over the details about each tournament on the following two pages with your player. If you have a strong preference for one tournament or another, you can contact me directly or send word with your player before our next Thursday practice.

You can contact me with questions at:

strey.k.a@gmail.com

S T R E Y [dot] K [dot] A [at] GMAIL [dot] COM

This information sheet and my email address can also be found on our team website at:

bago-qb.org

B A G O [dash] Q B [dot] O R G

Thank you for always supporting your player and the team!

Kristin Strey, Winnebago HS scholastic bowl coach

# Small School National Championship Tournament (SSNCT)

[naqt.com/ssnct](http://naqt.com/ssnct)

Friday, April 25 – Sunday, April 27

Hyatt Regency O'Hare in Rosemont, Illinois

## Travel Schedule

If we attend this tournament, we will leave on the morning of Friday, April 25th. We will do a team cultural experience (see below) during the day, check in at the hotel, register with the tournament, and play scrimmage matches in the evening. Competition will span Saturday and Sunday. We will drive back on Sunday evening, with a likely return time before 8:00pm on Sunday the 27th. Players will miss one day of school.

## Tournament Structure

Educationally and competitively, we will get the most out of this tournament. SSNCT is limited to small schools, and the division in which we would play is limited to what NAQT calls "traditional public schools," meaning that we will not play against small but highly selective private schools or against magnet schools. The competition level is high, but it matches our capability well; at this tournament, we stand a good chance of making the playoffs and finishing with a winning record like we did last year (we finished tied for 21st place with a record of 8-4), which is an enormous achievement at any national tournament.

At this tournament, we would play scrimmage matches on Friday night and preliminary matches all day Saturday. On Sunday, we would play some combination of playoff and scrimmage matches in the morning. After lunch, we would spectate the last few playoff matches among the very best teams at the tournament and finally watch the national championship match on the grand stage.

SSNCT sets their preliminary round schedules ahead of time by dividing the teams into pools. Because of this, we would know our schedule ahead of time, so spectators could come and watch us relatively easily.

## Cultural Activities

Because we need to be at the hotel during the day on Friday for team check-in and to drop off our buzzer system, we will use Friday morning and early afternoon for a cultural team building activity. The players will choose whether we spend the day at the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of Science and Industry, the Field Museum, or the Shedd Aquarium. The team budget will cover the cost of admittance.

## Expenses

We will stay over at the host hotel on Friday and Saturday nights. The school may or may not ask me to charge you to partially cover the expense of lodgings; more details will be available on that after we choose a tournament. In the past, this cost has been about \$100.

We will likely have a school-provided lunch on Friday, but players will be responsible for up to seven meals (Friday dinner; Saturday breakfast, lunch, and dinner; Sunday breakfast, lunch, and possibly dinner), with a likely cost of about \$175 if a player does not pack snacks or breakfast items.

The hotel houses a breakfast buffet at O'H American Grill (\$25/person before tax) and a convenience store/Starbucks/ready-to-eat shop called Perks where you can generally assemble a meal for around \$20-25. It is likely but not guaranteed that NAQT's contract with the hotel will include a lunch buffet as well, which usually runs just under \$20/person for good-sized, pre-made, hot meals. Further restaurant details are at [hyatt.com/hyatt-regency/en-US/chiro-hyatt-regency-ohare/dining](http://hyatt.com/hyatt-regency/en-US/chiro-hyatt-regency-ohare/dining).

# High School National Championship Tournament (HSNCT)

naqt.com/hsnct

Thursday, May 22 – Tuesday, May 27 (Memorial Day weekend)

Atlanta Marriott Marquis and Hilton Atlanta in Atlanta, Georgia

## Travel Schedule

If we attend this tournament, we will leave on the morning of Thursday, May 22nd, and will drive throughout the day. We will stay over Thursday into Friday in or near Chattanooga, Tennessee. On Friday, we will do a cultural activity in the morning (see below), eat lunch, and continue our drive, reaching Atlanta, Georgia in the mid-afternoon to check in at the hotel and play scrimmage matches. Competition will span Saturday and Sunday. We will stay an additional night into Monday, visit the Georgia Aquarium on Monday morning, and drive back to roughly Metropolis, Illinois. We will need to stay over again and finish the drive on Tuesday, arriving sometime in the afternoon to early evening. Players will miss four days of school. Non-seniors will likely not miss any finals, but may miss several days of test preparation.

## Tournament Structure

This is the much more difficult of the two tournaments we are considering, but is a good chance to test the upper limits of our skills as a team. HSNCT does not limit its attendance, and it is unlikely we will make the playoffs at this tournament. In 2022, we finished 261st of 272 teams with a record of 2-8, so our goals as a team would be to reach one win under 50% win rate and score above 12 points per bonus, rather than to finish in any top percent of the field.

At this tournament, we would play scrimmage matches on Friday night and preliminary matches in either the morning or the afternoon of Saturday. On Sunday, we would play scrimmage matches, then spectate the last few playoff matches among the very best teams at the tournament, and finally watch the national championship match on the grand stage.

HSNCT does not set a preliminary schedule in advance. This tournament uses a power-matched card system, meaning we will never be able to tell spectators where we will be ahead of time.

## Cultural Activities

On the way down to the tournament, we will stop at Lookout Mountain in Chattanooga to see the site of the Civil War's "battle above the clouds." We will visit the Georgia Aquarium, the largest aquarium in America, on the Monday after the tournament. The team budget will cover the cost of admittance. We will visit the Varsity for team lunch or dinner on Saturday (depending on our assigned prelim schedule).

## Expenses

We will stay over in a budget hotel on Thursday and Monday nights. We will stay over at the host hotel on Friday and Saturday nights. Because this trip is so much more expensive, the school will definitely ask me to charge you to partially cover the expense of lodgings. More details will be available on that after we choose a tournament, but I expect you may need to contribute \$150-200 for lodging.

We will likely have a school-provided dinner on Sunday, but players will be responsible for up to sixteen meals (Thursday lunch and dinner, Friday breakfast, lunch, and dinner; Saturday breakfast, lunch, and dinner; Sunday breakfast and lunch; Monday breakfast, lunch, and dinner; and Tuesday breakfast, lunch, and dinner), with a likely cost of about \$250-300 if a player does not pack snacks or breakfast items.

We will eat at McDonald's on the way down and up to save money. While in Atlanta, the hotel complex attaches via skybridge to Peachtree Center, an indoor mall complex with many restaurants. In my experience, a meal from any fast food restaurant in Peachtree Center will run between \$20-25, since the mall caters to business travelers coming in through Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport.