



National Collegiate Soil Judging Contest Rules

Revised September, 2017

I. Name

The contest shall be known as the National Collegiate Soil Judging Contest

II. Description of Contest

The intent of the contest is to encourage team effort as well as individual knowledge in identifying, evaluating, classifying, and describing soil profiles. The award consists of a traveling trophy presented to the first-place winning team and provided by ASA and SSSA. At least the top three teams receive permanent trophies and the five high scoring individuals receive plaques or trophies. The host school provides the trophies and plaques.

III. Eligibility

A. Colleges and Universities

1. Any college or university that provides a curriculum in agriculture, soils, geosciences, and/or environmental science may enter a team in the National Collegiate Soils Contest if it has an interest in the contest and is selected to represent its region.
2. Schools may form a multi-institution team composed of students in their region with prior approval of the coaches in that region. Schools may participate as either a multi-institution team or a single-institution team, not both. When a regional contest is held, multi-institution teams must compete and qualify the same as other teams in the region. When no regional contest is held, the regional coaches report to the national contest host which teams qualify to represent their region (see region list in IV. B.).
3. The number of teams competing in the National Collegiate Soils Contest from each region shall be determined by the number of schools competing in each regional contest. Each multi-university team counts as one "institution" for the purpose of determining the number of teams from each region competing at the National contest. The number of teams from each region shall be determined as follows:
 - (a) If three or fewer teams from different institutions compete in a regional contest, all teams go to the national contest.
 - (b) If four to seven teams from different institutions compete in a regional contest, three teams go to the national contest.
 - (c) If eight to twelve teams from different institutions compete in a regional contest, four teams go to the national contest.
 - (d) If thirteen or more teams from different institutions compete in a regional contest, five teams go to the national contest.

4. A college or university may enter only one team in the National Collegiate Soil Judging Contest. In case an eligible team does not wish to compete, the next ranking team or teams will be eligible to represent their region in the national contest.
5. If a regional contest is not held, the region may select one or two teams by any means agreeable with the team coaches in the region.
6. The host institution cannot enter a team in the National Collegiate Soil Judging Contest.
7. International participation in the national soil judging contest shall be encouraged by the National Soil Judging Contest Committee (AS425), which is authorized to waive or adjust rules or restrictions for eligible teams from institutions outside the United States.

B. Team Members

1. Each team should consist of four members, although a team may compete with only three.
2. All team members must be undergraduate students in good standing, enrolled in an agricultural, soils, geosciences, and/or environmental science or related curriculum at their respective institution at the time of the national contest; however, any student who has participated in the qualifying regional contest and has received a B.S. degree or equivalent prior to the national contest would be eligible to participate in the national contest provided graduation is not more than one (1) semester or two (2) quarters prior to the national contest.
3. All team members must be eligible to represent their institutions according to the eligibility rules of that institution.
4. A team member may participate in the National Collegiate Soils Contest as long they are classified as an undergraduate student by their institution. Eligibility will be limited to a maximum of four (4) years participation in regional and national soils judging contests.
5. Team alternates will be allowed to use the practice pits, but will not be allowed to participate in the contest. This provision allows more teams to participate, while keeping the student numbers manageable for the host school during the actual competition.
6. All team members will be members of the American Society of Agronomy and/or Soil Science Society of America in the year in which they complete in the national contest. Membership will not be required for participation in regional contests. However, the regional chair will provide the Society offices with a full roster of student participants in the regional contest, including contact/email information, within 30 days of the end of the contest.

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IV. Location

- A. The National Collegiate Soils Contest shall be rotated from region to region in consecutive years according to the following sequence:

2015 – Region 4
2016 – Region 5
2017 – Region 3
2018 – Region 2
2019 - Region 6&7¹
2020 - Region 1
2021 - Region 4
2022 - Region 5
2023 - Region 3
2024 - Region 2
2025 - Region 6&7¹

¹ Regions 6 and 7 are combined only for purposes of hosting National Collegiate Soils Competitions and shall remain combined for this purpose unless three or more institutions regularly participate in each region.

- B. The National Collegiate Soils Contest regions shall be as follows:

Region 1: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Hampshire, Ohio, Maine, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Maryland, New York, Vermont

Region 2: Alabama, North Carolina, Tennessee, Florida, Puerto Rico, Virginia, Georgia, South Carolina, West Virginia, Kentucky

Region 3: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin

Region 4: Arkansas, Mississippi, Texas, Louisiana, Oklahoma

Region 5: Iowa, Missouri, North Dakota, Kansas, Nebraska, South Dakota, Minnesota

Region 6: Alaska, California, Nevada, Arizona, Hawaii, New Mexico

Region 7: Colorado, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Utah, Wyoming, Montana

- C. Any region can change position in the rotational sequence with any other region by mutual agreement.
- D. The institutions in the host region for the National Collegiate Soils Contest shall be responsible for selecting a host institution from that region.

V. Time

- A. A National Collegiate Soils Contest shall be held in the spring with a minimum conflict between the schools involved. The date will be set by the host school in consultation with other schools involved.
- B. The host school for each of the regional contests shall notify the chair of committee AS425 and the faculty chair of the host school for the National Collegiate Soils Contest of the placings of all teams entered in their regional soils contest. This should be done within ten days after the regional soils contest is held using the results form developed by the national committee.

VI. Contest Procedures

- A. The host institution shall be responsible for all details for the contest.
- B. A committee, consisting of both students and faculty members, should be appointed at the host institution to aid the contest host.
- C. The National Collegiate Soils Contest shall consist of two judging events occurring over two days. The judging for one event is done on an individual basis, and the judging for the other event is by group or team.
1. The individual judging portion of the contest shall consist of three pits/sites to be evaluated by the individual contestants.
 - a. The individual judging event shall occur on the first day of the two contest days. (This provision allows the host school additional time to grade individual scorecards.)
 - b. Teams with more than four students must identify the participating team members for the individual judging event at least 24 hours prior to the start of the individual judging portion of the contest (ideally at the coaches meeting).
 2. The group judging portion of the contest shall consist of two pits/sites to be evaluated by all eligible team members, including students that did not participate in the individual judging portion.

D. Score Card and Interpretation Sheets

1. The host institution may make minor changes necessary to adapt the score card and instruction sheets to local conditions.
 - a. The host institution shall send to all participating institutions and/or regions a copy of the score card and interpretation sheets at least two months prior to the National Collegiate Soils Contest.
 - b. Written materials that will be allowed in the contest must be indicated to all participating institutions at least one month prior to the contest.

E. Coaches Meeting

A coaches meeting shall occur at least 24 hours prior to the start of the individual judging portion of the contest. The host institution and representatives for the official judges shall address questions related to contest content, scoring, and logistics.

F. Team Scoring

1. The individual team score will be the sum of the top three individual scores at each pit/site in the individual judging event.
2. The group team score will be the sum of the group score at each pit/site in the group judging event.
3. The total team contest score will be the sum of the individual and group team judging event scores.
4. The contest manual shall include provisions for handling tie-breakers. They shall not be used except to break ties between teams or individuals. The normal procedure is as follows: The clay content of a third horizon at one of the individually-judged sites will be used to break ties in total team and individual scores. In order to break a tie in total team scores, the mean clay content will be calculated from

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the estimates provided by all members of a given team. The team with the mean estimate closest to the actual value will receive the higher placing. If this does not break the tie, the next deeper horizon will be used in the same manner. The clay content of the tie breaker horizon will be compared to that estimated by the individual in order to break a tie between individuals. If this does not break the tie, the next lowest horizon will be used in the same manner. In order to break a tie in the ranking of teams for group judging, the team estimate of the clay content of a specified third horizon at one of the group-judged sites will be compared to the actual value. The team with the estimate closest to the actual value will receive the higher placing. If this does not break the tie, the next deeper horizon will be used in the same manner. If a different system for tie breakers is used, it must be clearly specified in the contest manual.

F. Conduct

1. At the discretion of the host institution, coaches may be permitted in the area of the pits during the contest. Coaches will be permitted to examine the pits after the contest.
2. No communications between team members or with the coach shall be allowed while the individual judging is underway.
3. During the individual judging event, no more than one contestant from each team shall be permitted at a given pit/site at the same time.
4. During the group judging event, communication between team members is expected. However, communications between the team members and the coach(es) is not permitted.
5. In addition to the score card, contestants may utilize any written materials deemed appropriate by the host institution (provided to institutions one month before the contest, see D3 above). Abbreviation sheets must be provided by the host institution during the contest.
6. Any infraction of the rules by any team or member of a team shall make that team ineligible to receive awards, and shall place them last automatically.

G. Results

Results shall be announced by the host institution as soon as practical after the contest, and will be final.

H. Rules

1. A set of these National Soils Contest Rules shall be sent to each participating institution (or to each region) by the host institution at least two months prior to the contest.
2. A region may develop specific rules for its regional contest. However, all teams and team members in the National Collegiate Soils Contest must meet the eligibility requirements as set forth in the rules of the National Collegiate Soils Contest.

VII. Awards

The winning team will receive the large traveling trophy. This trophy was designed and obtained for future national soils contests by Dr. Orville Bidwell (Kansas State) and David Reising at the 8th National Collegiate Soils Contest hosted May 9 and 10, 1968, by Kansas State University. Permanent trophies or plaques will be provided for the first five teams in overall team scores, the top five teams in the group judging competition, and the top ten individuals.

VIII. Qualification for the International Soil Judging Competition

In years when the International Soil Judging Competition is held, the National Collegiate Soils Contest will be used to determine the students and coaches nominated to represent the United States as members of the U.S. National Soils Teams.

1. Coaches of the first and second place institutions in the total team competition will be selected to coach the U.S. Team A and Team B, respectively. In case the qualifying coaches cannot participate, the third place coach will be offered the opportunity, and so on, until two coaches have been selected.
2. Two teams composed of 4 students each will be selected from the participants in the National Collegiate Soils Contest. The top eight ranked participants chosen for the U.S. National Team will be nominated based on their ranking in the individual competition. No more than two members from the same institution and no more than four members from the same region shall be nominated. In case the qualifying students cannot participate, the ninth place individual will be offered the opportunity, and so on, until eight students have been selected. Up to two alternates can be selected to participate at the discretion of the international contest coach(es), but they must be selected using the same criteria as the other team members.
3. In cases where coaches or individuals nominated for the national team are not eligible or choose not to compete, the next highest ranking eligible coach or individual is nominated.