



NEWS AND TIPS FOR THE 2025 CHICAGO VARSITY NATIONAL LIFESMARTS CHAMPIONSHIP

National LifeSmarts Championship 2025: Edition 2 ***Information for Coaches & Teams***

Focus: Deadlines, quick places to eat, tour ideas and more!

Dear Coaches and Team members,

We are so excited to see you Chicago, April 24-27, 2025 competing in the 31st Varsity National LifeSmarts Championship! Each week leading into Nationals, we will share special updates with you through this *Chicago ChitChat* newsletter. We want to keep you in the know... about Chicago... *and* assist you and your team in preparing for Nationals by providing helpful information, timely updates, and reminders.



Thanks so much to everyone who attended the first coach zoom.

For those who did not attend the first session, Coach Zoom 2 is scheduled for Tuesday.
Here are the details:

- Tuesday, March 18, 2025 at 3:00 PM Eastern Time
<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/88460097010?pwd=BxX3VMdb1rlozdVkaA7b90bUI6sbiEb.1>
 - Meeting ID: 884 6009 7010
 - Passcode: 659866

Several questions were asked that we wanted to share with the entire group:

1. Can you nominate more than one student for student of the year and do they have to be in the 12th grade? Yes, you can nominate more than one student, but they will be in the same applicant pool. This year we will allow 11th and 12th grade students to be nominated for Student of the Year.
2. What is the competition format of the National Championship: See page 16 of the National Coaches Memo. We will also cover this on the Coach and Captain Orientation Video.
3. Can you help us understand the challenge cards? See the explanation on the next page.

LifeSmarts Challenge Procedure

Quick version:

Once per match a team may challenge a Challenge Question (the open-ended questions that are worth 10 points). They may challenge when they are not awarded points for an answer they have given. The Referee will throw out the question and select a new question to be read. The new replacement question is open to the team or teams that were eligible to answer the question that was thrown out by the challenge. If a team issues a challenge at a time when they were the only team eligible to answer the original question, they will be the only team eligible to answer the replacement question. Regular challenge question rules apply; students must buzz in if they wish to be called upon to answer, and there is no conferring between team members.

Teams that wish to challenge a question will follow these procedures:

- Teams may challenge the judges' ruling once per match
- Team may only challenge *Challenge Questions* (10 points questions where the buzzers are used)
- A challenge results in the question being thrown out and replaced with another question
- To indicate a challenge to a question for which their team was not awarded points, a player on the team must raise a challenge card immediately after the Question Master or Head Judge says are not awarding points for the answer provided (any student may issue the challenge)
- The Referee will note that the team has used its challenge for the match. The question will be thrown out and the Referee will select a new question to replace the original question
- The students who were eligible to buzz in to answer the question that has been challenged are eligible to buzz in and answer the replacement question
 - If both teams were eligible to answer the original question, students on both teams are eligible to try to buzz in to answer the new question
 - If only one team was eligible to answer the question, only students on that team may buzz in and answer the replacement question (this means the other team already had an opportunity to answer the question and gave an incorrect answer)
- Teams may not challenge
 - Once the Question Master has begun re-reading the question for the other team
 - Once the Question Master has begun reading a new question
 - An answer given by the other team
- Challenges do not accumulate; if a challenge is not used during a match, it is no longer available to the team
- LifeSmarts has its challenge procedure in place to allow students to advocate for themselves when they believe they have given a correct answer that was not awarded points



REMINDER: If you have not sent your Team photo for social media– Please send ASAP!

Thanks to everyone who has already submitted their team photo for social media. Hopefully, you and your team are following us online as we have already begun posting these. *Just a note:* We will take photos during the registration process at Nationals with and without the team coach(es). We prefer these social media photos to include just the students. Thank you!



Reminder about Guests:

The National LifeSmarts Championship is a **closed** event. Teams and coaches have earned their right to be here. Only registered coaches/ assistant coaches, competitors, alumni volunteers, adult volunteers, sponsors, state coordinators, invited LEAP members, and the LifeSmarts/ NCL/ Conference team are allowed to participate. Parents are only allowed to attend if serving as a Coach, Assistant Coach or for medical assistance to their child. Admission to all LifeSmarts events will be monitored. Thank you for understanding.



Other Important Information:

Sarah Weinberg Memorial Scholarship – Deadline Extended - NOW Due March 18

Coaches may nominate one graduating Senior for the Sarah Weinberg LifeSmarts Memorial Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded annually to a LifeSmarts participant who demonstrates a commitment to volunteer service work, like Sarah did. Scholarship nominations are due March 18. One \$750 scholarship will be awarded. Students do not have to be members of teams competing in the National LifeSmarts Championship. For additional information, [click here](#). Nominate your student [here](#).



Room Share

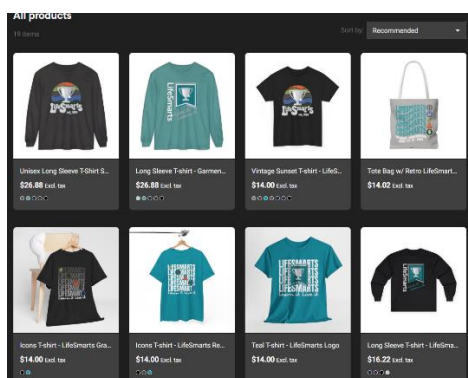
Save on expenses! Have an odd number of male or female students on your team? Or would you be interested in sharing a room as a coach or assistant coach? Share your needs or extra room space in the [LifeSmarts Coaches Group](#) on Facebook. We know of several teams and coaches who are interested in sharing. Thank you for your help!



Don't Forget! Order Your LifeSmarts Merch!

Check out our **new** [LifeSmarts online store](#)! We have LifeSmarts branded T-shirts, Long-sleeved t-shirts, pullover sweatshirts, zip hoodies, baseball caps and tote bags. If you want to purchase merch, you will need to pre-order so that the items can be shipped to your home or school prior to the event. Cristina Counts and our LEAP panel have done a terrific job arranging for this, and we can't wait to share their efforts with you. Get your LifeSmarts merch today! Feel free to share the link with anyone who would like to order:

<https://lifesmarts.printify.me/>



Nearby Teen Friendly Food

Our fantastic event company, BDI, put together a list of quick grab n'go type restaurants that are all within the block to the hotel. There are many more, so these are just a few of the choices. There are also a variety of regular restaurants for the adults, but they selected these more as 'teenager food.'

Off Rush Street Lobby Entrance of Hotel:

- Sugar Factory Chicago River North
- Potbelly Sandwich Shop
- Goddess & the Baker (Coffee Shop)
- Pizzeria Uno
- Eataly
- Shake Shack

Off Michigan Avenue Lobby Entrance of Hotel:

- Ed Debevic's (50's Style Diner)
- Real Starbucks (located in the Intercontinental)
- Chick Fil-A
- Lou Malnati's Pizzeria (2 Blocks away but a Chicago Staple!)

Inside our hotel, these choices (and price options for you to know) are available:



PIZZA

Three Meat Pizza 16
Pepperoni, House-Made Italian Sausage, Bacon

Four Cheese Pizza 14
Tomato Sauce, Mozzarella, Parmesan, Asiago, Provolone

SNACKS

Local Honey-Sriracha Wings GF 12

Hand-Breaded Buttermilk Chicken Tenders 12

Hand-Cut Fries GF 6

Crispy Tortilla Chips & Salsa GF 6

Cheese Quesadilla 10.50
Chihuahua cheese, spices, onions, peppers, salsa, crema

Baked Mac and Cheese 14
House-made pasta, parmesan herb breadcrumbs

SWEETS

Cupcakes 5.75
Vanilla | Chocolate | Seasonal

Cobbler 7.50
Apple Cranberry

Cinnamon Roll 7.00
Signature sweet dough, Cream cheese icing

Seasonal Loaf 7.00

Danish 5.50
Rotating flavors - see pastry case for selections

Scones 5.75
See pastry case for flavor varieties

Giant Cookies 5.50
See pastry case for flavor varieties

Brownie 5

Blondie 5

Tarts 8
Rotating flavors - see pastry case for selections

RUSH STREET PANTRY

DAILY

SERVED DAILY FROM 11:00AM-11:00PM

SOUPS & SALADS

Soup of the Day 7

Greek Salad GF 13
Mixed Greens, Olives, Feta, Tomato, Cucumber, Red Onion, Red Wine Vinaigrette

BBQ Chicken Cobb Salad GF 15.50
Ranch dressing, tomato, bacon, egg, blue cheese crumbles

Caesar Salad 13
Romaine, Croutons, Parmesan Cheese

+Grilled Chicken 10 +Seared Salmon 15

COLD SANDWICHES

Classic Italian 15
Capicola, genoa salami, pistachio mortadella, provolone, garlic aioli, shredded lettuce, tomato, Italian roll

House-Smoked Turkey Sandwich 16
Dijonnaise, bacon, lettuce, tomato, wheat bread

Vegetarian Wrap 12
Pickled carrot, cucumber, chickpeas, beet hummus, goat cheese, greens, spinach tortilla

HOT SANDWICHES

Chipotle Chicken Panini 15
Grilled Chicken, Cheddar, Onion, Chipotle Mayo

Provolone Cheese, Country Bread

RSP Burger 19
House-ground beef, aged Wisconsin cheddar, port biatche bun

Add Bacon 2

Impossible Burger LF 14
Plant Based, lettuce, tomato, onion, burger bun

The Chef's Perfect Grilled Cheese 14
Fresh Mozzarella, basil pesto, ripe tomatoes on toasted spindlers

ENTREES

Herb-Roasted Chicken Breast LF GF 18
Green beans, herb-roasted potatoes, chicken jus

Chicken Pot Pie 15
Free range chicken, peas, carrots, biscuit crust

Seared Atlantic Salmon Grain Bowl LF 20
Ferro, roasted root vegetables, walnut pesto

Southwest Chicken Bowl 16
Free range chicken, rice, black beans, corn salsa, southwest sauce

BEVERAGES

COLD PRESSED JUICES

Youth Juice 10.00

TEA BEVERAGES

	TALL	GRANDE	VENTI
Full-Leaf Brewed Tea	4.25	4.50	5.00
Shaken Iced Tea	4.25	4.50	5.00
Iced Tea Lemonade	4.50	5.00	5.50
Chai Latte	5.50	5.95	6.45
Matcha Latte	5.50	5.95	6.45
Refreshers	5.75	6.25	6.85

COFFEE BEVERAGES

	TALL	GRANDE	VENTI
Fresh Brewed Coffee	4.75	5.00	5.25
Iced Coffee	4.25	4.75	5.00
Cold Misto	5.00	5.25	5.75
Cold Brew	5.25	5.95	6.45
Nitro Cold Brew	5.75	6.05	
Hot Chocolate	4.75	5.25	5.75

ESPRESSO DRINKS

	TALL	GRANDE	VENTI
Café Latte	5.50	6.25	6.50
Vanilla Latte	6.15	6.85	7.00
Cappuccino	5.25	5.75	6.25
Café Mocha	5.75	6.25	6.75
White Chocolate Mocha	5.50	5.95	6.45
Café Americano	4.75	5.15	5.50
Caramel Macchiato	6.00	6.50	6.95
Shaken Espresso	6.05	6.75	7.00
Espresso	SOLD	4.00	COFFEE 4.75

BLENDED BEVERAGES

	TALL	GRANDE	VENTI
Mocha Frappuccino*	6.45	6.95	7.50
Caramel Frappuccino*	6.45	6.95	7.50
Vanilla Bean Frappuccino*	6.45	6.95	7.50

ADDITIONS

Syrup ... 0.50 | Shot ... 1.00 | Alternative Milk ... 0.80

Fun things to do!

Museums

- [The Field Museum](#)
- [The Art Institute of Chicago](#)
- [The Griffin Museum of Science and Technology](#)
- And many more museums! Visit our [Microsite](#) and the [Choose Chicago](#) website

Other fun places!

- [Navy Pier](#)
- [The Bean](#)
- River sightseeing tours – Many companies offer this. Visit our [Microsite](#) and the [Choose Chicago](#) website for information

Found a great place? Share it with us to share with the group!



Dates and Deadlines:

- Team photo for social media due! Please submit **now**! Email to [Cheryl Varnadoe](#)
- **NEW** TBA – LEAP Mentor Meetings – Optional Zoom meetings for team members with our LifeSmarts LEAP panel to meet new friends and ask questions.
- March 1 – April 7: Competition 1 – [Educational TikTok or Instagram Reel](#) due. Details in Coach memo.
- March 12: State Winning Coach Zoom 1 at 5:00 PM EST (Coaches **required** to attend one of the two Zooms)
- March 15: [Team Registration Due](#) online
- March 15: [Team Consent forms due](#) (if not already completed for your State LifeSmarts Championship)
- March 15: Sarah Weinberg Memorial Scholarship [Applications Due](#)
- March 18: State Winning Coach Zoom 2 at 3:00 PM EST (Coaches **required** to attend one of the two Zooms)
- March 25: [Hotel Reservation](#) Deadline
- March 24: [Anti-counterfeiting digital poster team entry due](#) – Optional for stipends
- March 28: Poster Finalists Notified
- April 1: Deadline to upload [Team Roll Call / Introduction Video](#)
- April 3: Optional Online Topic Quiz Session 1
- April 4: [Pin Design Contest](#) Entries Due
- April 7: [Stipend Request form](#) due
- April 7: Optional Online Topic Assessment Session 2
- April 7: Deadline for first 10 Meta reports submitted to do debrief before Nationals
- April 7: [Deadline for OTC Medicine Safety Scholarship Application](#)– Optional for individual entries
- April 5: Recorded Coach and Captain orientation shared
- April 11: [LifeSparks Team Achievement Award](#) Due
- April 15: [Lisa Hertzberg LifeSmarts Legacy of Leadership Scholarship Applications Due](#)
- April 15: Deadline for [Student of the Year](#) nominations
- April 15: Deadline for [Coach of the Year](#) nominations
- April 24-27: National LifeSmarts Championship – Chicago, IL



Resources

- More information is available in the [National LifeSmarts Championship 2025 Team Information Center](#)
- Be sure to review the [State Champion Coach Memo](#)
- If you have any questions, please email us: [Cheryl Varnadoe](#).



Next week: More exciting updates!

Until next week,
The LifeSmarts Team

P.S. Be sure to follow us on Instagram and FB for competition topics and question clues!

