PSRC Student Sputum Bowl 2026

Dear RT Program Directors,

The PSRC invites you to participate in the Student Sputum Bowl Competition, taking place on April 17th 9:30AM -12:30PM at Community College of Philadelphia, 1700 Spring Garden Street, Philadelphia, PA 19130. The Sputum Bowl will be held in the Klein Cube, 2nd Floor, Pavilion Building (Located above the cafeteria). This year's competition promises to be an unforgettable experience as teams exhibit their knowledge and skills on stage.

Due to physical and time limitations associated with a single elimination format, we must cap participation at 8 teams. The first 8 places will be reserved and confirmed for teams based on the receipt of all completed application forms. Applications received after 8 teams have been confirmed will be placed on a waiting list. There is a limit of two (2) teams from an individual RT program.

The 2026 Student Sputum Bowl Rules and all required forms can be found on the PSRC website. Please review the rules carefully and ensure that all team members do the same.

Team registration will open on Friday, March 20th, and registrations will be confirmed once we receive a completed application, and an accurate roster. Registration will not be confirmed if any part of the process is incomplete. Confirmed registrations will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis from completed applications.

We look forward to celebrating the Sputum Bowl and seeing you at Community College of Philadelphia!

Sincerely,

Melissa Ash, MBA, RRT, RRT-ACCS, RRT-NPS, RRT-SDS, CPFT, AE-C
Chair, PSRC Sputum Bowl Committee 2026
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PSRC Student Sputum Bowl 2026

The Pennsylvania Society for Respiratory Care

Sputum Bowl

Rules of Competition

The prime objective of the Sputum Bowl is to stimulate interest in the current knowledge and practices of respiratory care.

The competition shall be held in a spirit of professionalism and good sportsmanship.

There are no losers in this contest. All should gain from this experience a greater understanding of respiratory care and themselves.

1. **Team Composition**
   A. A team must have between three (3) and four (4) Respiratory Care student members. NOTE: Only three members may compete as the core team in any given match, but team members can rotate between matches, or the fourth member may act as the team's expert
   B. Member Eligibility
      - An individual may be a member of only one team entered into the competition.
      - Each Student Sputum Bowl team member must be a current student in a Respiratory Care educational program
      - An individual must be in good standing with their current program
      - This student status must be verified for every team member, validated by the student's program director, on the Student Sputum Bowl roster, which must be submitted to the PSRC by April 3rd.

2. **Submission of Teams**
   A. Any team consisting of eligible players can register to compete in the Sputum Bowl
   B. Each team must submit the following:
      - A completed application for admission to the contest prior to the deadline noted in these rules
      - A completed roster of eligible team members prior to the deadline noted in these rules.
   C. Confirmation of a team's acceptance at the event will not be provided until all the above is received and complete.
   D. Registrations are confirmed on a first-come, first-serve basis and based on those that are fully completed

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3. Team Eligibility

A. Teams must meet all requirements of a Sputum Bowl team as set forth in these rules.
B. An educational program may have up to two (2) teams competing
C. Teams can include members from different undergraduate levels, provided all other eligibility rules are met.

4. Format for Competition

A. Preliminaries will be held prior to the Finals.
B. Preliminaries will be held in a single elimination format and follow a pre-created game bracket.
C. Preliminary bracket play will occur until only 2 teams remain. The remaining 2 teams will advance to Finals.
D. Team matches will be paired using a randomization program

5. Moderators

A. A moderator shall be familiar with the profession's terminology and appointed by the Sputum Bowl Committee Chair
B. The moderator shall have the power and option to accept or reject an answer without asking for a judge's ruling
C. The Committee Chair and moderator shall be responsible for the physical setup of the contest site, the proper functioning of all equipment, questions, and all other necessary arrangements to ensure a smoothly run game
D. During game play, the moderator is in charge. He/she must control the actions of the teams, judges, scorekeeper, timekeeper, and audience
E. The moderator shall review all questions prior to the competition to determine the limits of acceptable alternate responses to each question and determine sets of questions for use during each round of play

6. Judges

A. The judges shall be qualified individuals in their respective fields
B. Judges must not have any direct familial relation to or teach any team members participating in a contest
C. The judges impaneled for the competition shall rule on the response to any question when asked by the moderator and indicate whether they accept or reject a team's answer. All decisions shall be final, and no challenges will be accepted based on the judges' prior ruling

7. The Competition

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A. Preliminaries
   - A game will consist of:
     1. Two teams of up to three members each competing at a time
     2. Ten (10) minutes in length
     3. The team scoring the most points at the end of ten minutes is the winner of that game
     4. A team will be eliminated when losing one game during the preliminary competition
   - **When a team fails to take their seats within one minute of being called to the stage at the time of their game, they shall forfeit that game and be given a loss.**

B. Finals
   - A game will consist of:
     1. Two teams in competition
     2. Fifteen (15) minutes in length for the Finals match.
     3. The team scoring the most points at the end of each game is the winner.
   - The winner of the championship game will be awarded first place. The loser of the championship match will be awarded second place.

C. The moderator shall signal the beginning of each game.

D. The timekeeper shall time the length of play and announce the end of play.

E. The scorekeeper shall maintain a running score visible to all participants and audience and record the verbal portion of all match play.

F. The moderator will ask the pre-selected questions. Anyone may answer a toss-up question. The element of **"Risk/Reward**" will exist throughout the entire game. If a team buzzes in to answer before the moderator has finished reading the question, the moderator will stop at that point in the question and indicate to that team that they are "**At Risk."** The team then has ten (10) seconds to begin an answer. Team members have the liberty to confer during this time period. If the answer is correct, they are "Rewarded" with a point. If the answer is incorrect, a point will be deducted from their score. The moderator will then turn to the opposing team, re-read the question, and give that team ten (10) seconds to begin an answer. If that team is correct, they score a point. If they are incorrect, a point will not be deducted from their score. The moderator will judge the first answer given by any team as to its correctness, and if correct, indicate so to the scorekeeper.

G. A team will never be "At Risk" if they respond to a question after the moderator has finished reading it.

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H. If they wish, each team, once per game, may use a lifeline called "Ask the Expert." This lifeline becomes "Call Your Posse" during the Finals competition.

I. "Ask the Expert/Call Your Posse"

- In ***preliminary*** competition, each team must submit the name of the "Expert" to the Sputum Bowl Committee prior to the start of each game. The team may choose whomever they wish except anyone on the Sputum Bowl Committee or any judge who is presiding during the round. When a team responds to a question and wishes to use the lifeline, they will announce to the moderator that they would like to ask their "Expert." The time clock will then be set to ten (10) seconds. The "Expert' must be readily available to join the team for the single question; upon joining the team the clock will start counting down from 10 seconds. The team will have ten (10) seconds total to begin an answer. If the time to answer the question has passed, the moderator may move on to the opposing team and re-read it. If both teams have been read the question, the moderator will proceed on with the round. "Risk/Reward" will apply when using your expert.
- In ***Finals*** competition, each team will compose 2-4 people for their posse prior to the evening's contest. The "Posse" will sit at the tables reserved for the teams at the front of the auditorium. The "Posse" will be responsible for answering the question without consultation with their team. "Risk/Reward" will apply when using your "Posse." Once a team decides to "Call the Posse" the game clock will be stopped. When the "Posse" has been identified, a separate clock will be sued to time the Posse's answer period. The Posse will have ten (10) total seconds to begin to answer. Once the "Posse" gives an answer or when their answer time runs out, time on the original game clock will be restarted and regular game play will continue.
- If neither team responds to a question within ten (10) seconds after the moderator has completed its reading, the question will be set aside, and questioning will continue.
- Each correct answer to a question will have a value of one point.

After the 2:00 minute mark (or 3:00 minute mark in Finals), no slide questions will be asked nor will any "Ask the Expert/Call the Posse" lifelines be allowed

J. Bonus/Penalty Phase

- There will be a Bonus Phase during the last two minutes of preliminary play and during the last three minutes of Finals play. A team who buzzes

in first with a correct answer will receive 2 points (bonus). A team that buzzes in first with an incorrect answer will have 1 point deducted (penalty). IF the first team that buzzes in is incorrect, that team will lose a point and the second team will then receive an opportunity to answer the question. IF correct, the second team will earn 1 point. If incorrect, no points will be deducted.

K. If, due to moderator error, a question must be thrown out after Team A has already missed it and before Team B has had a chance to answer, the very next question will be read to Team B who shall then have ten (10) seconds to respond within the rules. Examples in which the situation mentioned may occur could be a poorly worded question read by the moderator that elicited an incorrect answer from Team A due to the wording or if the moderator recognizes that the question has already been presented. The moderator will state the question is being thrown out and instruct the scorekeeper how to adjust the score, if needed, and the timekeeper when to resume the time. Any points lost by Team A on the first question (penalty phase) shall stand and Team B shall earn points on the next question based on their correctness. The moderator at all other times shall have the freedom to select questions in the order he sees fit and to throw out questions at any time as deemed necessary.

L. Tie games at the end of regulation play shall be resolved by a sudden death playoff. The first team to score three points shall be declared the winner. "Risk/Reward" will apply but not "Ask the Expert/Call the Posse" during the sudden death playoff.

M. Any question begun prior to the end of regulation play shall be completed in accordance with the above rules if either team has responded prior to the end of play. (Elapsed time to 0:00 as determined by the timekeeper)

8. Questions

A. The questions used in the competition will be of both the traditional oral and visual types. They will be reviewed and selected by the Sputum Bowl Committee prior to competition

- The questions will represent the level of didactic and clinical proficiency the respiratory care practitioner is expected to possess.
- The questions will not be of either the true/false or multiple-choice format.
- The questions will be referenced to the list specified in Appendix A.
- The categories of questions for competition will be used:
    1. Anatomy & Physiology
    2. Diagnostics

3. Pathology
4. Mechanical Ventilation
5. Neonatal/Pediatrics
6. Airway Management
7. Pharmacology
8. Gas Therapy
9. Acute/Critical Care
10. Humidity/Aerosol
11. Microbiology
12. Chemistry/Physics
13. Patient Assessment
14. Bronchial Hygiene
15. Patient Safety
16. Cardiopulmonary Rehab
17. Home Care/Long Term Care
18. History

9. Challenging the Competition

A. Team captains are asked to wait at the contest site for **two minutes** after the completion of their game to learn of any protests relative to that contest

B. Protests will only be accepted for review if the protest will affect the outcome of the game and the protest is based on moderator error. Any protests concerning questions the judges have already ruled on will not be accepted. The judges' rulings are final.

C. A team member may submit a protest form within two minutes of the game's completion. The team captain is required to get the protest form from the Sputum Bowl Chair. The form must be completed and returned to the Sputum Bowl Chair by the team captain by the end of the following match.

D. Any Sputum Bowl Committee references are on-site for use by the Committee and judges only.

E. The Review Committee shall consist of:
   - Scorekeeper
   - Moderator
   - Timekeeper
   - Judges

F. Review shall consist of:
   - Team captains stating discrepancy and any or all supporting material or statements (limited to 5 minutes).
   - Any rebuttal from the opposing team captain (limited to 5 minutes)

- Committee meeting and reviewing all material pertinent to the proceedings
- Final decision voted upon and decided by the majority of the Review Committee **within 10 minutes of the completion of that match**

G. A team which won a game in regular play cannot be declared the loser of that game due to a protest. Teams, which lose a game in regular play and because of the remedy applied to a successful protest would not lose, will play their opponent in a sudden death playoff per the rules contained in 7.L

H. All other issues relating to the Student Sputum Bowl competition will be governed by the rules and contained here. Student Sputum Bowl context, structure, and resources will be provided by the PSRC Sputum Bowl Committee, including question bank, moderators, and judges

10. Competition Decorum

A. Participants are expected to display a professional and ethical decorum throughout the competition.

B. **Participants must comply with all competition rules and refrain from any actions that violate the integrity of the competition, including but not limited to recording the games or providing assistance to on-stage competitors.**.

C. No alcoholic beverages of any kind are permitted at the competition table during game play.

D. Participants violating these rules may be disqualified from the competition.

E. Assistance from audience members, coaches, or other individuals (including but not limited to mouthing answers, verbal cues, or non-verbal signaling) is strictly prohibited. Committee members will monitor the audience throughout the competition. If a violation is observed, the associated team will receive one warning. A second violation will result in immediate removal of the team from the competition.

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Appendix A
Pennsylvania Society for Respiratory Care
2025 Student Sputum Bowl Competition
Reference List

American Academy of Pediatrics. (2021). Textbook of neonatal resuscitation (8th edition). American Academy of Pediatrics.

American Association for Respiratory Care. (2023, November 20). Evidence-based clinical practice guidelines. Clinical Practice Guidelines. https://www.aarc.org/resources/clinical resources/clinical-practice-guidelines/

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2020). 2020 Focused updates to the asthma management guidelines: A report from the national asthma education and prevention program coordinating committee expert panel working group. https://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/resources/2020-focused-updates-asthma-management-guidelines

Walsh, B. (2022) Neonatal and pediatric respiratory care (6th edition). Saunders.

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Appendix B

Due Dates

Please submit your completed application, questions, and roster no later than the listed due dates. These deadlines are the dates on which the information must be received in the PSRC.

Teams are accepted on a first come first served basis. A maximum of 8 teams will be accepted.

Requirement	Deadline
Team Application	March 27th
Team Roster	April 3th
Roster Revisions	April 9th

If you have any questions, please feel free to call or email:

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Thank you for your cooperation and best of luck to everyone!