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2019 SCRIPPS NATIONAL SPELLING BEE DECLARES FIRST-EVER GROUP OF CO-CHAMPIONS

NATIONAL HARBOR, Md. – In an unprecedented display of academic achievement, eight spellers have become co-champions of the 2019 Scripps National Spelling Bee, making history as the first group to share the coveted title in the 92 years of the storied event.

The eight spellers competed during a suspenseful 20 rounds of head-to-head competition Thursday evening.

“This is a night to celebrate the remarkable academic achievement of a group of the world’s most talented spellers,” said Paige Kimble, executive director of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. “These spellers have conquered the dictionary unequivocally with their ability, skill and command of the English language. It’s an incredible achievement, and we salute all the years of hard work and dedicated study that brought these intelligent young people to the world stage. We congratulate them all.”

Adam Symson, president and CEO of The E.W. Scripps Company (NASDAQ: SSP), awarded all the winners a championship trophy moments before ESPN signed off from its national broadcast of the 92nd Scripps National Spelling Bee. The eight champions each will receive a cash prize of \$50,000 as well as their own Scripps Cup.

“Once again, the Bee was a thrilling competition that showcased the young spellers’ vast knowledge of vocabulary alongside their poise and composure,” said Symson. “These winners are tremendous champions deserving of the prizes, opportunities and recognition coming their way. Scripps takes great pride in seeing the positive influence the Bee has on millions of children across the U.S. and the world, and tonight’s historic competition is an excellent example of this.”

The 2019 Scripps National Spelling Bee co-champions are:

- Erin Howard, 14, from Huntsville, Alabama. She is an eighth-grader at Mountain Gap P-8 School. Howard competed in 2016 (tied for 22nd place), 2017 (tied for 7th place) and 2018 (9th place). Her winning word: erysipelas.

- Rishik Gandhasri (Ri-shik Gun-duh-sree), 13, from San Jose, California. He is a seventh-grader at Chaboya Middle School. Gandhasri competed in 2018 (tied for 25th place). His winning word: auslaut.
- Abhijay Kodali (Uh-bee-jay Kuh-DAH-lee), 12, from Flower Mound, Texas. He is a sixth-grader from McKamy Middle School. Kodali competed in 2018 (tied for 3rd place). His winning word: palama.
- Shruthika Padhy (shroo-THEE-kuh PA-dee), 13, from Cherry Hill, New Jersey. She is an eighth-grader at Rosa International Middle School. Padhy competed in 2016 (tied for 22nd place), 2017 (tied for 7th place) and 2018 (tied for 10th place). Her winning word: aiguillette.
- Rohan Raja, 13, from Dallas, Texas. He is a seventh-grader at Coppell Middle School West. Raja competed in 2018 (tied for 10th place). His winning word: odylic.
- Saketh Sundar (SAH-keth sun-DAHR), 13, from Clarksville, Maryland. He is an eighth-grader from Clarksville Middle School. Sundar competed in 2016 (tied for 46th place), 2017 (tied for 12th place) and 2018 (tied for 19th place). His winning word: bougainvillea.
- Sohumi Sukhatankar (SO-hum SOO-kuh-tuhng-kuhr), 13, from Dallas, Texas. He is a seventh-grader at St. Mark's School of Texas. Sukhatankar competed in 2017 (tied for 23rd place) and 2018 (tied for 25th place). His winning word: pendeloque.
- Christopher Serrao (Suh-RAU), 13, from Whitehouse Station, New Jersey. He is a seventh-grader at Readington Middle School. Serrao competed in 2017 (tied for 41st place) and 2018 (tied for 34th place). His winning word: cernuous.

Bee Week took place in the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor. This year's competition totaled 20 rounds. Round-by-round results are available at spellingbee.com.

Each champion will receive a new trophy, designed exclusively for the Bee by Rookwood Pottery Company in Cincinnati, Ohio. In addition to the cash and trophy, each champion receives:

From Merriam-Webster: a \$2,500 cash prize and a complete reference library.

From Encyclopædia Britannica: reference works and three-year online membership.

As the Scripps National Spelling Champions, the group will begin first thing tomorrow a media tour on numerous national networks, entertainment programs and digital platforms including "Good Morning America," "Today Show," "New Day," "CBS This Morning," "Live with Kelly and Ryan" and "Jimmy Kimmel Live!"

The competition began Monday with 562 spellers, up from 515 in 2018.

Each year, the Scripps National Spelling Bee reaches more than 11 million students participating in spelling bees held in classrooms, schools and locally sponsored events around the country and in other parts of the world.

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About the Scripps National Spelling Bee:

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation's largest and longest-running educational program. The purpose of the Scripps National Spelling Bee is to help students improve their spelling, increase their vocabularies, learn concepts and develop correct English usage that will help them all of their lives. Visit spellingbee.com for more information about the Scripps National Spelling Bee, which is administered on a not-for-profit basis by The E.W. Scripps Company.

About Scripps:

[The E.W. Scripps Company](http://www.scripps.com) (NASDAQ: SSP) serves audiences and businesses through a growing portfolio of local and national media brands. With 52 television stations in 36 markets, Scripps is one of the nation's largest independent TV station owners. Scripps runs a collection of national journalism and content businesses, including [Newsy](http://newsy.com), the next-generation national news network; podcast industry leader [Stitcher](http://stitcher.com); the fast-growing national broadcast networks [Bounce](http://bounce.com), [Grit](http://grit.com), [Escape](http://escape.com), [Laff](http://laff.com) and [Court TV](http://courttv.com); and [Triton](http://triton.com), the global leader in digital audio technology and measurement services. Scripps runs an award-winning investigative reporting newsroom in Washington, D.C., and is the longtime steward of the [Scripps National Spelling Bee](http://spellingbee.com). Founded in 1878, Scripps has held for decades to the motto, "Give light and the people will find their own way."

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