



## **CHAPTER 4: ONLINE COMPETITION ROUND RULES**

GENERAL .....	4001
TIME RESTRICTIONS .....	4002
1. Competition Window	
2. Competition Period	
<b>COMPETITION AREA, SPACES, AND INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER TEAMS .....</b>	<b>4003</b>
REGISTERED COMPETITORS .....	4004
NO OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE .....	4005
SHARING OF COMPETITION IMAGES, SOFTWARE, AND INFORMATION .....	4006
ONE INSTANCE PER COMPETITION IMAGE AND SOFTWARE .....	4007
1. Instances of Different Images	
2. Shadowing	
3. Additional Compress (NOT UNZIPPED) Image Downloads	
4. Re-Opening Images	
5. Image Snapshots Prohibited	
INTERNET CONNECTIVITY TO COMPETITION SERVERS AND WEBSITES REQUIRED .....	4008
1. Mandatory Website Access	
2. Coach’s Dashboard	
3. Competing During a Network Outage	
4. Network Backup Plan	
OFFENSIVE ACTIVITY AND TAMPERING PROHIBITED .....	4009
RESOURCES .....	4010
1. Internet Resources	
2. Printed Material	
3. Electronic Media and Communication Devices	
4. Software Tools	
5. Posting or Publicizing Resources	
<b>SUPERVISION AND OVERSIGHT .....</b>	<b>4011</b>
INQUIRIES .....	4012
PENALTIES .....	4013
1. Minor Penalties	
2. Disqualification	
3. Other Penalties	
4. Replacement Teams	
EMERGENCY COMPETITION DATE .....	4014
SCORE CORRECTIONS .....	4015
APPEALS PROCESS .....	4016

**4001. GENERAL.** CyberPatriot operates under the premise that all coaches, mentors, team assistants, and competitors conduct themselves with the highest ethical standard. The following rules have been instituted to prevent the perception of misconduct that would jeopardize the integrity of the competition and ensure a fair and equitable competition between all teams. Coaches are encouraged to work with the CyberPatriot Program Office to resolve questions regarding these rules before the competition. The following rules apply throughout the CyberPatriot competition season, to include competitions and events outside of competition rounds that involve CyberPatriot images or tasks. Violation of any of the rules in this chapter may lead to penalties (see Paragraph 4013).

#### **4002. TIME RESTRICTIONS**

1. **Competition Round.** A competition round is defined as the scheduled contiguous dates the competition is held, in which the competition challenges are exactly the same. The competition round normally is conducted around a weekend. A competition round is further divided into windows and periods.

2. **Competition Window.** A competition window is the specified time that the competition is conducted during a competition round, specifically the hours where the server is turned on allowing teams to compete. There are normally several competition windows in each round. Teams shall not compete outside of the specified competition windows designated for each round.

3. **Competition Period.** The competition period begins when a team successfully opens their first image within a round's competition window and lasts for **six consecutive hours**, regardless of the image or team running time indicated on the image Scoring Report page.

The following rules govern the competition period. For CyberPatriot XIV, these rules apply to all teams to include teams with competitors competing from home or other facilities.

- a. A team shall have only one competition period (6 hours) to complete ALL challenges and tasks during an online competition round.
- b. A team's competition period shall not begin before a competition round begins or continue after a competition round ends.
- c. The six consecutive-hour period begins when a team's first image is opened in a VMware product. It does not begin when the Unique Identifier is entered.
- d. Teams shall begin their Cisco Networking Challenge and other challenges only after the first image is opened. Teams shall end all challenges and tasks before the end of the team's six consecutive-hour competition period.
- e. Teams are not allowed to open an image or competition challenge for any reason before they are ready to compete in the competition round. No "sneak peeks," or tests of

the competition software are allowed outside of downloading images, verifying their checksums, and using the provided connection test software.

f. The times on the Scoring Report page are for reference purposes only. It is the responsibility of the team to ensure that *ALL* work, including the Cisco Networking Challenge, is completed at the end of the six consecutive-hour period that begins when the *FIRST* image is opened.

g. Technical issues affecting a team's performance will not result in extra time unless the issue is competition-wide.

h. The coach is responsible for obtaining the team's Unique Identifier and Cisco Networking Challenge login credentials from the coach's dashboard at [www.uscyberpatriot.org](http://www.uscyberpatriot.org). If the coach's dashboard is not available, coaches must contact the CyberPatriot Operations Center to receive their Unique Identifier and login credentials. They will not be emailed as part of the competition emails. It is recommended that coaches secure this information as part of preparing for the round.

i. **Unique Identifier Required.** Entering a unique identifier in the Set Unique Identifier utility shall be the team's first action when opening an image after clicking the CyberPatriot Competitor's Agreement. The unique identifier used must be the one provided to a team on the coach's dashboard and shall be validated with the scoring server. The Unique Identifier is a 12-digit alphanumeric hash and is not the team number (i.e., not 14-XXXX). Unique Identifiers will not be part of competition emails to teams but will be found on the coach's dashboard at [www.uscyberpatriot.org](http://www.uscyberpatriot.org).

j. The coach is responsible for checking his or her team's tier at the beginning of each round to ensure that their team is using the correct images and completing the appropriate competition tasks.

**4003. COMPETITION AREA, SPACES, AND INTERACTIONS WITH OTHER TEAMS.** The competition area is the location where competitors of one or more teams compete (e.g., school, home, multipurpose room, computer lab). A competition space is a location where one team competes within a competition area. The competition space can be physical or virtual. During their competition periods, team members of different teams competing in the same competition area shall not communicate with members of the other teams. Independent observers monitoring the competition must not communicate with or interrupt the competitors, or otherwise threaten the integrity of the competition or safety of the competitors.

1. Teams or their team members, Coaches, or Mentors not competing may not observe other teams competing in physical or virtual competition spaces. This rule applies to teams that have already competed, are competing, or will compete later. In the case of a safety issue, where teams not competing must be in the same area as a competing team, Coaches must take

reasonable precautions to obscure from view and limit the hearing of discussions of the competing team.

2. Teams (competitors, coaches, and mentors) shall not attempt to learn another team's competition information from the other team's members, their communications, data, documents, or systems.

3. For CyberPatriot XIV, to give coaches flexibility due to COVID-19 safety concerns, teams may compete in the following locations.

- Teams may compete in person as a group in the same competition period.
- Team members may compete as a team distributed at homes or facilities in the same competition period.
- Teams may compete as a hybrid of in-person or distributed at homes or facilities in the same competition period.

**Note: In all cases, a team's competitors shall all compete in the same competition period.**

**4004. REGISTERED COMPETITORS.** Only the competitors REGISTERED with a team shall compete with that team.

1. Only teams that have been verified by their verification official and approved by the CyberPatriot Program Office are eligible to compete. Coaches who have not been verified and approved will not receive competition-related emails.
2. No fewer than two and no more than five competitors may compete at a time.
3. A team's sixth registered competitor may be substituted for any of the two to five competing competitors at the coach's discretion. Once a substitution is made, the competitor that has been removed from the competition may not return in that round. See Paragraph 4005 for rules concerning team members who are not competing.
4. Teams that do not have all of their competitors registered by the deadline will not receive competition-related emails for subsequent competition rounds.

**4005. NO OUTSIDE ASSISTANCE.** Competitors are responsible for their team's performance during the competition and may not receive or request assistance outside of their team's competitors. Once a competition period begins, coaches, mentors, team assistants, competitors on other teams, and other non-team members shall not coach, assist, collaborate, or advise competitors until the completion of the competition period.

1. Competitors on a team who are not competing (e.g., sixth member of a team, substitute, alternate) may observe the competition. They shall not advise or assist the team or be advised on the competition by coaches, mentors, or non-team members until the competition period has ended.

2. Outside assistance includes direct and indirect advice, suggestions, hands-on assistance, and electronic communication such as email, blogs, forums, Yahoo Answers, questions and answers websites, and other social media. That is, questions may not be posted to any website. However, pre-existing answers to questions may be queried to address issues encountered during the competition. Coaches, mentors, and team assistants may only assist teams with:

- a. Administrative issues before the image is opened.
- b. Entering the Unique Identifier and Cisco Networking Challenge login credentials.
- c. Timekeeping.
- d. Local area network outages and other connectivity issues that occur outside the competition image.
- e. Issues with the host system unrelated to the competition image itself.
- f. Dangerous or threatening situations that require adult intervention.
- g. Maintaining the team's saved scoring data at the end of the competition period.

**4006. SHARING AND ACCESSING OF COMPETITION IMAGES, SOFTWARE, DOCUMENTATION, AND INFORMATION.** Coaches are entrusted with competition round images, documents, and software and should treat them as examination material. Coaches shall control images, passwords, and other competition information so that competitors and others may use them only in the team's competition space or competition area.

For CyberPatriot XIV, Coaches may also distribute competition images, software, documentation, and information to their teams if the competitors are competing from home or other facilities. Coaches are responsible for controlling the distribution of images, software, documentation, and information directly to their team and shall not delegate the responsibility to the competitors.

Competitors shall share images and other information *only* with their team to avoid giving a competitive advantage to other teams. Furthermore, participants shall:

1. Structure a competition space or procedures in the competition area so that other teams' competitors may not gain useful information or a competitive advantage. In competition areas where competition spaces are in separate rooms, a team's competitors may not enter another team's room, except for competitor safety, health, or protection.

For CyberPatriot XIV, this rule applies when a team is distributed at a home or other facility. Coaches must ensure that their competitors' competition spaces meet this requirement if competitors from other teams compete in the same home or facilities.

2. For CyberPatriot XIV, teams are not required to have only a single connection to each image. Console logins, RDP, SSH, etc., may be used to connect to the image. However, teams having multiple instances of the same image open at the same time is not permitted.

3. Strictly limit distribution of CyberPatriot competition and practice images and software to their teams. Coaches shall ensure that the images and Cisco Networking Challenge materials

(e.g., Packet Tracer submissions, copies of quizzes) are deleted after each round per the competition email. For CyberPatriot XIV, Coaches may supervise the deletions of images and competition materials with the Competitor's Post-Competition Statement in Appendix XI. The statements will be collected by the team's Coach. If the CyberPatriot Program Office requests the statements, the Coach shall forward them to the CyberPatriot Program Office.

**Note:** All images distributed by the CyberPatriot Program Office are the property of the Air Force Association, not CyberPatriot participants.

4. Not share information about the competition images or challenges with anyone outside of their team.
5. This includes not sharing information with participants of other teams from the same school or organization.
6. Not transfer or cause to be transferred copies of images to persons who are not currently registered CyberPatriot participants. Transfer of the images to non-CyberPatriot participants is a violation of the End User License Agreement.
7. Work only on the images assigned to their team.
8. Ensure that images and passwords are not transferred outside of their team.
9. Not assist or provide an unfair advantage to teams that have not yet competed or are competing in a given round.
10. Not post, teach, email, store, or share answered or unanswered quizzes, questions, challenges, exercises, vulnerabilities, information from within images or competition websites (e.g., [www.netacad.com](http://www.netacad.com)), from the competition. This includes scenarios, web pages, readme.txt files, and other documents associated with images and challenges. Screenshots of the images or the Scoring Report are strictly prohibited.
11. When the round is complete, users shall delete the competition images, software (e.g., Packet Tracer) and ensure their competitors delete the competition images according to the guidance in competition emails.
12. Examples. Examples of image or information sharing violations are:
  - a. Passing vulnerabilities, information, or answers from a team that has competed or is competing to a team that has not yet competed in a given round.
  - b. Posting or re-posting information on or from images, competition software, or answers on social media, blog, or other website or through text or email -- even after a round of competition.
  - c. Using an image or software from the present or a prior competition round for training.
  - d. Requesting answers or other competition assistance on a blog or social media.
  - e. Teaching or briefing an image or task's vulnerabilities or answers to anyone who has not competed.

- f. Teaching or briefing an image or task's vulnerabilities to other teams that have competed even if they have the same coach or mentor.
- g. A team from one tier or division viewing or training on another's images or tasks.
- h. Assisting another team with their image or task.
- i. Posting a competition document or quiz with or without answers.
- j. Sharing screen captures of images or image contents.
- k. Discussing or sharing answers with other teams at the same school or organization.
- l. Conducting a "Hot Wash" for multiple teams during or after the competition round.
- m. Sharing audio, video, or photographic information from another team's competition periods.

### 13. **Control of the Competition Area**

a. **Coach Presence and Availability.** The coach or approved coach alternate of a team must be present (i.e., onsite) to administer all competition rounds where teams are competing in person as a group. For CyberPatriot XIV, coaches or approved coach alternates of teams that are distributed at homes or other facilities must be available for communication with their competitors for the entire competition period.

a. **Multiple Teams.** In cases where a competition area contains more than one team, coaches and mentors shall take appropriate action to ensure that no purposeful or inadvertent communication or collaboration occurs between teams. Examples of appropriate action include keeping teams as far away from each other as possible or in separate rooms, keeping the volume of discussions to a minimum, and ensuring that any written notes are only visible to individual teams.

14. **Approved Virtual Teams.** Approved virtual teams shall follow the same rules relating to sharing and accessing of competition images, software, and information as physical teams, to include the single connection to an image. Virtual team competition areas and spaces must meet the requirements of supervision and the requirements of physical competition areas and spaces.

**4007. ONE INSTANCE PER COMPETITION IMAGE AND SOFTWARE.** A team may open only one instance of each image or competition software at a time during a competition round. An instance is defined as each time a competition image or competition software is opened in a virtual machine player, Internet browser, or another software program. For CyberPatriot XIV, this rule also applies to teams competing distributed from homes or other facilities.

1. **Instances of Different Images.** If a competition round involves more than one image or other competition software, then only one instance of each distinct image or software may be opened at a time. Teams may have one instance of every distinct image open simultaneously.

**Example.** If a round has a Windows 10 and a Windows Server 2016 image, one instance of the Windows 10 image and one instance of the Windows Server 2016 image may be open

at the same time. The team may not have more than one instance of either image up at the same time.

2. **Shadowing**. Shadowing, following, parallel operations, training, or any other use of a second or more instance of an image or scoring client, online or offline, is NOT permitted.

3. **Additional Compressed (NOT UNZIPPED) Image Downloads**. Teams may place an additional *ZIPPED* download of each image in a given round of competition on other host computers. If the host computer fails or the original download is corrupted or deleted, the team may use this compressed image. Coaches shall ensure that the zipped images are deleted after the competition round.

4. **Re-Opening Images**. A second instance of an image may be opened if only the original image is corrupted or malfunctions. In this case, the original instance must be closed and deleted before the team opens another instance. If the original instance is not closed, the scoring engine will show multiple concurrent instances of the image, which is grounds for an inquiry and a penalty. The competition period time will continue regardless of the time required for opening a new image.

5. **Image Snapshots Prohibited**. Using image snapshots or similar capabilities is strictly prohibited. Snapshots include the use of host system file copy mechanisms to create a backup copy of an image. Snapshots or backups cannot be used to roll back to a previously known good state. If the competition image becomes corrupted or unusable, the team must start from the beginning with a clean image extraction from the zipped file.

**4008. INTERNET CONNECTIVITY TO COMPETITION SERVERS AND WEBSITES REQUIRED.** Teams are responsible for their own Internet connectivity for the entire time in which they compete. An image or competition challenge may not be worked offline without ever connecting to the competition server. An image or competition challenge without a valid Unique Identifier or login credentials will have a score without a matching history, which is possible grounds for disqualification for the team using it.

1. **Mandatory Website Access**. Internet access to [www.uscyberpatriot.org](http://www.uscyberpatriot.org) and its web pages is mandatory for the competition. A list of websites required for the challenges is located at <https://www.uscyberpatriot.org/competition/technical-specifications>.

2. **Coach's Dashboard**. Coaches should safeguard an up-to-date screen capture or printed copy of their team information on the coach's dashboard to mitigate a network or website outage.

3. **Competing During a Network Outage**. If a team experiences a network outage, the competitors should continue competing on their images while waiting for network restoration. The scoring engine will track the team's progress and report it when the network is restored.

4. **Network Backup Plan.** Teams should have a backup plan so that they can still compete in the event of a network failure. Backup plan examples include the pre-arranged use of a library or a private residence with sufficient adult supervision and deemed safe by the coach within the policies of the school or organization.

**4009. OFFENSIVE ACTIVITY AND TAMPERING PROHIBITED.** Participants shall not conduct offensive activity or tampering against other teams, competitors, the competition systems and servers, documents, tasks, or non-participants to gain a competitive advantage for them or others. Additionally, participants may not actively seek or exploit vulnerabilities in images, competition systems, competition software, or tasks at any time. Offensive activity includes:

1. Hacking.
2. Reverse engineering of CyberPatriot and Competition-related software.
3. Interference with another team's ability to compete.
4. Social engineering or posting of false information to platforms including the CyberPatriot Facebook page, Twitter, text, chat, email, etc.
5. Tampering with, copying, or modifying components of competition images, the competition scoring system, or other competition software or hardware. Copying an image in its entirety to be used as a backup is not permitted.
6. Changing or tampering with host systems, clients, or host timekeeping devices.
7. Tampering with or modifying documents belonging to other participants or the CyberPatriot Program Office.
8. Any other activity aimed at manipulating or deceiving other competitors, the CyberPatriot Program Office, or competition staff.
9. Posting or otherwise communicating vulnerabilities in an image or task except to the CyberPatriot Program Office.
10. Penetration testing competition images or competition systems or tasks.
11. Attempted or successful unauthorized entry into competition systems.
12. DDoS or DoS attacks on CyberPatriot participants, networks, or systems.

Warning: Unauthorized copying of competition scoring software components from the virtual machine may damage the systems to which they are copied.

#### **4010. RESOURCES**

1. **Internet Resources.** During competition rounds, Internet resources (e.g., FAQs, how-to guides, existing discussion forums, company websites, documentation, software, shell scripts, batch files, registry exports) are valid for competition use under the following conditions.

- a. The resource is **free**, and access has not been granted based on a previous fee, membership, employment, purchase, credit card, or other monetary instruments.
- b. No token, smart card, common access card, etc., is required to access it.
- c. The resource is publicly and reasonably available to all teams.
- d. The resource must **not** be specifically created for the CyberPatriot competition or any event using CyberPatriot software.
- e. The resource was **not** staged at an internet location by the team.

Resources located on [www.uscyberpatriot.org](http://www.uscyberpatriot.org) may be used during competition. Use of any resources created by other teams or by coaches, mentors, or team assistants is a violation of this rule.

2. **Printed Material**. Printed or handwritten reference materials (books, magazines, checklists, etc.) are permitted in competition spaces. Competitors shall choose and collect their team's printed material for the competition round *WITHOUT* the assistance of coaches, mentors, other teams' competitors, or non-competitors. Competitors are not required to reprint existing material.

3. **Electronic Media and Communication Devices**. Coaches shall ensure that their teams compete without outside assistance through electronic media or communication devices. The following stipulations apply to this rule.

a. **Electronic Media**. Because inconsistent Internet connections among teams may cause a competitive disadvantage, electronic media as defined below may be used in the online competition rounds under the following conditions.

(1) Permitted electronic media is defined as memory sticks, flash drives, removable drives, CD-ROMs, or other similar storage devices.

(2) Media must be prepared by a team's competitors. Coaches, mentors, other teams, and non-competitors shall not prepare a team's electronic media.

(3) **Authorized Patches, Updates, Documents, and Data**. Patches, updates, and other Internet resources and software tools authorized in the "Software Tools" paragraph in this chapter are permitted on electronic media.

(4) **Offline Copy of Online Resources**. A team may use an offline copy (on electronic media) of an otherwise freely available Internet resource, subject to the same definitions and restrictions as 4009.1 and its sub-parts.

b. **Communication Devices**. Cell phones, smartphones, and other wireless or wired devices are allowed in the competition space but shall be used to communicate only with team members, or in an emergency, they may be used to contact emergency services or appropriate people. The devices shall not be used to send, receive, post, share, or obtain competition information to and from people or sources outside of the team.

c. **Staging Resources**. Teams shall not stage or access unauthorized resources on the Internet, networks, systems, servers, storage devices, communications devices, etc. Emailing or otherwise transferring unauthorized tools, scripts, and data to the image host computer via another computer or device is prohibited. Secure FTP sites may not be used.

4. **Software Tools and Scripts**. Competitors shall set up and use software tools without outside assistance. Internet resource conditions also apply to software tools.

- a. The tool must be searchable on the public Internet with Google and Yahoo search engines. *ALL* Internet users have access to the tool(s).
- b. Competitors have access to and are authorized to use their Azure Dev Tools for Teaching accounts.
- c. WinMD5, 7-Zip, and VMware Workstation Player are competition software and are authorized for the online rounds of competition. Teams using other software tools that do not meet competition technical specifications compete at their own risk. (See Chapter 3.)
- d. Teams should not delete, disable, or tamper with anything in the CyberPatriot folder or the CyberPatriot Scoring Service on their images. Furthermore, they should ensure that any antivirus or antimalware software that is installed on competition images does not interfere with this folder or service.
- e. Scripts. For purposes of the competition, scripts created by the competitors of a CyberPatriot team are not considered software tools.
  - (1) Teams may use scripts at their own risk. Failure to gain points using a script will not receive consideration for score correction or appeal.
  - (2) Teams shall not use scripts or software created by members of other CyberPatriot teams, coaches, mentors, or team assistants.
  - (3) Teams from the same school or organization may **not collaborate** in the creation of scripts and may not share scripts with each other or other teams.
  - (4) Teams may not update scripts based on competition information provided by other teams.

5. **Posting or Publicizing Resources**. Publicly posting, distributing, or otherwise publicizing scripts, software, or other resources that were created for the CyberPatriot competition or events involving CyberPatriot software is prohibited.

#### **4011. SUPERVISION AND OVERSIGHT**

1. **Coach Supervision of Team(s)**. Coaches shall supervise their teams for the entire competition period. The minimal required supervision is:

a. The Coach is physically present when competitors are competing in person as a group.

b. If the Coach cannot be present, then a Coach Alternate must be requested by the Coach or verification official and approved by the CyberPatriot Program Office.

c. **CyberPatriot XIV Distributed Team Supervision Requirements**. During CyberPatriot XIV, the Coach or Coach Alternate is required to supervise their teams that compete from distributed locations. The minimal supervision required is:

(1) The team's Coach must **speak to each competitor** at least once during the competition period to check on their well-being and competition status via video or voice **at least once**. Chat, voicemail, or texting does not meet this requirement. It must be real-time verbal communication.

(2) The Coach is virtually present or available to teams distributed and homes and other facilities through digital, audio, or video means for the entire competition period.

(3) The competitors must provide the Coach with an **electronic or hard copy** of the **CYBERPATRIOT XIV COMPETITOR POST-COMPETITION ROUND STATEMENT** in Appendix XI before 11:59 pm Eastern Time of the last scheduled day of the competition.

(4) The team's Coach shall maintain the season's **COMPETITOR POST-COMPETITION ROUND STATEMENTS** until February 15.

2. **Oversight Visits to Competition Areas and Spaces**. Coaches shall allow the CyberPatriot competition staff and AFA officials to visit their competition areas and spaces so they may observe the conduct of the competition and fulfill their oversight role. An oversight visit does not relieve the coach of their authority and responsibilities for the team.

3. **CyberPatriot Competition Staff Entry into a Competition System**. During the competition, the CyberPatriot Program Office staff may request to view teams' systems for oversight, competition administration, and troubleshooting purposes. CyberPatriot staff will not change teams' systems. Teams shall allow the competition staff immediate access to their system(s) when requested.

**4012. INQUIRIES**. In cases of apparent violations of the rules in Paragraphs 4002-4009 or scoring or other irregularities, the National Commissioner may appoint a CyberPatriot staff member to conduct an inquiry. The following items may be part of an inquiry.

1. **Competition Materials**. Competition images, documents, software, and exercises that are involved in an inquiry require special handling by coaches.

a. **Security**. The coach of a team that is the subject of an inquiry or who has team members that are subjects of an inquiry shall secure and take measures to prevent access to the competition materials affected. They shall not be opened, modified, or otherwise tampered with unless requested by the investigator. Forensic analysis of images may be done during the inquiry.

b. **Transfer or Upload**. When required, the coach shall transfer or upload the competition images and other materials to a designated location.

2. **Interviews**. Interviews conducted in the course of the inquiry may be held in-person, by telephone, or by other means.

3. **Questionnaires**. The investigator may request that participants involved in an inquiry respond to a questionnaire concerning the inquiry.

**4013. PENALTIES**. A team or participant that does not cooperate in an inquiry may incur a penalty to include the disqualification, suspension, or ban of an individual or team as determined by the National Commissioner. Any and all of the penalties below may be applied for any violations of the rules in this document to include misconduct.

1. **Minor Penalties**. In the event of a minor rules violation, the National Commissioner may impose competition penalties on a team including:

- a. Score reduction.
- b. Time disadvantage in future competition rounds.
- c. Invalidation of a team's competition round score.

2. **Disqualification**. If the National Commissioner rules that a participant or team committed a major rules violation, they may be disqualified. Disqualified participants and teams are ineligible for awards and recognition to include sponsor scholarships and internships and are subject to:

- a. **Suspension**. The terms and time limit of a participant or team suspension from the competition are at the discretion of the National Commissioner.
- b. **Termination**. A participant or team is immediately terminated from the CyberPatriot Program for the entire season.
- c. **Ban**. A ban is the permanent disqualification of a participant or team from the CyberPatriot program. It is the most severe administrative penalty that can be imposed. Reinstatement is at the sole discretion of the National Commissioner.

3. **Other Penalties**. Other penalties invoked by the National Commissioner may affect a team's final score or advancement.

4. **Replacement Teams**. If a team that has advanced to the National Finals Competition is suspended, unable to compete, or banned, a replacement team may be chosen at the discretion of the National Commissioner. In the event the National Commissioner decides to designate a replacement team, the following criteria will be considered:

- a. **Open and Middle School Divisions** -- The team that would have next qualified but did not advance.
- b. **All Service Division** -- The team that would have next qualified but did not advance.
- c. Teams that did not compete in the Platinum Tier Round 3 for their respective category shall not be considered for the National Finals Competition.

d. If a designated replacement team does not respond with the information required for the competition or logistics when requested, the National Commissioner may revoke the designation of the replacement team.

**4014. EMERGENCY COMPETITION DATE.** Only coaches may request an Emergency Competition Date for a verified emergency. The CyberPatriot Program Office will determine the Emergency Competition Date for a round based on resource availability to support the date. The coach will submit requests via the procedures in the competition round StartEx email. It will typically be an online form. The form will go through the appeals process. Emergency Competition Dates are used only for:

1. Severe weather or other widespread emergencies that prevent teams from competing.
2. Unplanned hospitalization of a coach that causes a team not to compete.
3. Other requests due to extreme circumstances affecting the team's ability to compete will be considered by the CyberPatriot Program Office on a case-by-case basis.

The CyberPatriot Program Office will **not consider schedule conflicts** for Emergency Competition Date appeals.

**Deadline:** Emergency Competition Day requests at 4:00 PM Eastern Time, the first Tuesday after the scheduled round ends.

**4015. SCORE CORRECTIONS.** Only a Coach may submit a request to correct their team's scores. There are two ways to request score corrections

- Score Correction Request. A score correction request is an online form used by Coaches during the scheduled competition round to request a score correction for their team. A team's score correction due to an administrative, technical, or scoring error requires a coach to submit an online score correction request. The online score correction request form is found in the StartEx email.

- Preliminary Score Discrepancy Report. After the online round is complete, preliminary scores are published. At that time, only the Coach may submit an online Preliminary Score Discrepancy Report. The report is for a discrepancy in the preliminary scores only. Coaches may not use the report to report administrative, technical, or scoring errors during the online round. Discrepancies Coaches may note on the form include incorrect scores, penalties, team number mixups, overtime, and multiple instances. The online preliminary score discrepancy form is found in the StartEx email.

1. **Deadlines.** The deadlines for Coaches to request score corrections are:

- a. **Score Correction Request.** The deadline is **11:59 PM Eastern Time** on the day the scheduled round ends. Requests to correct scoreboard warnings and suspected scoring issues during the round will not be accepted after the deadline.

b. **Preliminary Score Discrepancy Reports**. The CyberPatriot Program Office will publish the deadline in the preliminary score email. Requests to correct scores will be accepted after the deadline.

2. **Documentation**. Score Correction Requests will be submitted online without supporting documentation. The CyberPatriot Program Office will request documentation as needed. However, coaches who document a scoring error may expedite the correction process and further their team's case. Valuable documentation includes the following.

a. **Scoring Files**. Scoring data stored on the Windows images (C:\CyberPatriot\ScoringData folder) and the Ubuntu images (/opt/CyberPatriot/) is the best documentation to prove a scoring error. The data may be copied from the image and emailed to the CyberPatriot Program Office. To ensure that an image is not damaged, coaches should copy the data and not remove or alter it.

b. **Full-Screen Capture of the Scoring Report Page**. If the scoring report page's screen capture is cut off or modified, it will likely not be considered. The screen capture should be easily readable and include:

- CyberPatriot Logo
- Report Generated Time
- Current Unique Identifier
- Known Issues Fixed
- Penalties Assessed
- Score
- Copyright Information
- Connection Status

\* Screen captures of the Scoring Report are to be submitted to CyberPatriot and then deleted before the next competition Round. It is a rules violation to keep a screenshot of the Scoring Report for reasons other than score discrepancy disputes.

c. **Competition Scoreboard Screenshot**. Complete screenshots are helpful, but not required.

**4016. APPEALS PROCESS**. The appeals process is a formal procedure that ensures competition fairness by considering unforeseen conditions that impact a team's ability to compete. The process is *NOT* a vehicle for a team to pursue advancement in the competition by other means. The following rules apply to appeals. The National Commissioner is the final decision authority on all appeals.

1. **Deadlines**. Unless otherwise published by the CyberPatriot Program Office, appeals must be received by the CyberPatriot Program office before 4:00 p.m. Eastern Time on the second day after the completion of the round. Coaches that cannot access the online form may email their appeals to [cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org).

2. **Originator**. Only the team's coach may originate a team's appeal.

3. **Emergency Competition Date Appeals**. Only the reasons in paragraph 4013 will be considered for an Emergency Competition Date appeal. Schedule conflicts will not be considered for Emergency Competition Date appeals.

#### **4. Grounds Not Considered for Appeals**

- a. Issues stemming from non-VMware virtualization software or VMware versions other than the version of VMWare Workstation Player as published on the technical specifications page on the CyberPatriot website.
- b. Failure to receive competition email
- c. Ignorance of the original competition round dates
- d. Failure to secure a coach alternate
- e. Failure to access the competition space
- f. Scheduling conflicts
- g. Internet connectivity issues that are not due to uncontrollable circumstances
- h. Failure to properly work out connectivity issues with the IT department (e.g., firewall exceptions, using the Connection Test software)
- i. Hot spot or air card failure
- j. Issues caused by changing default VMware Workstation Player settings (e.g., memory, processors).
- k. Coach or team-caused use of incorrect Unique Identifiers or Cisco Login Credentials after Round 1.
- l. Issues related to the use of non-Windows host systems (For compatibility issues, teams should have access to at least one Windows host computer that meets hardware and software technical specifications.).
- m. Issues related to Windows host computers and software that do not meet technical specifications listed in the Rules Book or competition email (e.g., no 64-bit system, virtual technology disabled, etc.)

5. **Scored Vulnerability Fixes or Remediation**. Any appeal concerning an alternative scored vulnerability fix or an alternative remediation method must be certified by the registered coach. The appeal must be first reported in the Score Correction Request or it will not be considered. If the appeal is determined to be valid, the coach certification will be in an online form provided upon request from the CyberPatriot program office. Failure to score points through the use of a script(s) will not be considered.

a. A statement certifying that the team members did not read, discuss, overhear, post, or otherwise receive, share, or publicize the vulnerability fix or remediation with any other team to include those in the same organization or school or those teams coached by the same coach.

b. A statement certifying that the team actually tried the fix or remediation that is the subject of the appeal

c. A description of how the team found out about the scored vulnerability.

d. A full and detailed description of the commands and actions taken to fix or remediate the vulnerability.

6. **Format and Documentation**. Appeals are submitted in an online form. All appeals must be supported with appropriate documentation, such as letters from school principals and news reports outlining school or organization closures. Documents that are not in links in the online form must be emailed to [cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org](mailto:cpoc@uscyberpatriot.org) before the deadline for appeals. If the online form is not available, the team's coach may submit the appeal in the email format found in Appendix VIII.

7. **Notification of Results**. The CyberPatriot Program Office will email the coach the results of their appeals.

