



## OFFICIAL 2009 CHAMPIONSHIP RULES

### **Solving Categories**

Before the competition begins, each contestant will have chosen one of three skill categories -- Beginner, Intermediate, or Advanced -- based on his or her perceived skill and the prize the contestant would like to compete for.

For the age bonus round, each contestant will be in one of the following categories: 10 years and under, 11-12 years, 13-14, 15-16, 17-18, 19-20, 21-23, 24-26, 27-29, 30-32, 33-35, 36-38, 39-41, 42-44, 45-47, 48-50, 51-53, 54-56, 57-59, 60-62, 63-65, 66-68, 69-71, 72-74, 75-77, 78-80, and 81 and older.

For the geography round, each contestant will write on the sudoku booklet the town and state in which he or she currently resides.

For the preliminary rounds, solvers will be seated according to their skill category. For the bonus rounds, solvers will be seated according to their age category.

### **Preliminary Rounds**

The main contest consists of three preliminary rounds of sudoku puzzles on which all contestants compete, and three playoff rounds -- one playoff for the three winners of the preliminary rounds in each skill category.

Each preliminary round will have three sudoku puzzles and a time limit of 30 minutes. To win a round, a solver must complete all three puzzles within 30 minutes. Everyone will begin rounds at the same time.

If a contestant finishes a round early, the contestant should raise his or her hand to signal a spotter to mark the time on the contestant's paper, after which no further work by that person will be allowed.

Before marking the time, the spotter will signal to the judge that the contestant is finished. A runner will go from the judge's station to the contestant and record the contestant's order of finish. The runners will pick up the first 40 puzzles in each round for scoring. (Spotters will also write the solving times on the puzzles after the first 40, but these papers will not be scored.)

Solvers who finish early must remain seated and silent until the round is over.



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### **Playoffs**

In each skill category, the first contestant to finish a preliminary round correctly in the allotted time will qualify for the playoff.

A contestant can qualify for the playoff only once. Thus, if the person who wins the first round also wins the second round, the second-fastest solver in the second round will qualify for the playoff. Three different contestants will qualify for the playoff in each skill category.

The playoff rounds will be held in this order: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced.

In each playoff, each of the three contestants will stand before a large dry erase white board containing a single sudoku puzzle to be solved while the audience watches. The contestants will wear headphones to block outside sounds.

Each playoff will have a time limit of 20 minutes. The winner will be the first contestant to finish the puzzle correctly. If no contestant finishes within the time limit, the contestant who has the most accurate solution at the end of 20 minutes will win. Accuracy will be determined by the number of correct digits the contestant has filled in minus the number of incorrect digits filled in.

### **Bonus Rounds**

In addition to the main competition, two bonus rounds will be held to determine the winners in the age and geography categories.

Each bonus round will have two sudoku puzzles and a time limit of 20 minutes. The first contestant in each category to finish the puzzles perfectly will win. If no one in a category finishes both puzzles perfectly within the time limit, the contestant with the most correct digits (minus incorrect digits) filled in will win.

Contestants will be seated by their age for the first "age category" bonus round. Contestants should remain in the same seats for the geography round, which will take place immediately following the age round. At the conclusion of the geography round contestants will place their puzzles in bins by the first letter of their city of which they currently reside.

### **Miscellaneous**

To be considered correct, a solution must have every square filled with the proper number. Solving aids and outside help are not permitted.

At the Championship director's discretion, a contestant will be disqualified for any violation of the Championship rules. The decisions of the Championship director on all matters are final.



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**Eligibility:** The Philadelphia Inquirer 2009 Sudoku National Championship (the “Championship”) is open to all ages. Due to liability restrictions, no one under the age of 18 will be permitted to participate in the Championship without providing Philadelphia Newspapers, LLC (“PN”) with an executed copy of its form of consent of a parent or guardian. In addition, a parent or guardian of entrants under the age of 18 must remain on the premises at all times during which the minor child is participating in the Championship. There will be NO exceptions. Foreign Sudoku enthusiasts are welcome to compete in the championship. If they were to win, they get the \$10,000 grand prize, but couldn't represent the U.S. at the World Sudoku Championship. That honor would have to go to the highest-placing American. The Beginner and Intermediate champions must advance to the next level the following year. A winner of the Beginner final must play in Intermediate the following year and the Intermediate round winner must play in the Advanced round. Late arrivals may be refused the opportunity to compete, if the judges determine that seating a late arriving entrant would disrupt the Tournament, in whole or in part. All contest materials are the property of The Philadelphia Inquirer. The Tournament is a game of skill, and not a game of chance. Your odds of winning depend upon your skillfulness solving the Sudoku puzzles presented during the Tournament and the skills of other entrants.

**Publicity:** By entering, you allow PN to use your name, city, state, likeness and/or voice for purposes of advertising, promotion and publicity without additional compensation as well as the right to use your name and address for mailing-list purposes. Winner(s) will be required to sign a statement of eligibility, and may also be required to sign a liability release, as a condition to prize delivery. Winner's names may be published in The Philadelphia Inquirer and on Philly.com.

**Limitation of Liability:** Each Entrant, or if a minor, their parents or legal guardians, agrees that neither The Philadelphia Inquirer or Philadelphia Newspapers, LLC nor their respective parents, subsidiaries, affiliates, directors, officers, employees and agents (collectively, “Releasees”) are liable for any and all claims for injury, loss, liability or damage of any kind resulting directly or indirectly from participation in the Tournament, from admittance to the Tournament venue or from acceptance, possession, use or misuse of any prize that may be awarded. Releasees are not responsible for technical, computer, mechanical, printing, typographical, human or other errors relating to or in connection with the Championship, including, without limitation errors which may occur in the administration of the Championship. Entrants agree that the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania will govern any and all disputes. Taxes are solely the responsibility of the winner(s). Employees of The Philadelphia Inquirer, Philadelphia Newspapers, LLC and their respective affiliates and their immediate family members are not eligible. Decisions of the judges regarding contest entries and winners are final and binding. Void where prohibited by law.