

## ***Dallas Sports Commission Crowns Champions at 68th Annual Dallas Regional Spelling Bee***

*Finalists from Dallas and Collin County advance to the Scripps National  
Spelling Bee*

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**DALLAS** - The Dallas Sports Commission proudly crowned its three finalists today at the 68th Annual Dallas Regional Spelling Bee (DRSB), presented by the Dallas Sports Commission, held at WFAA studios in downtown Dallas.

Avishka Dudala, an 8th grade student at Lorene Rogers Middle School; Krish Manjunath, an 8th grade student from Coppell Middle School East; and Benjamin Pearson, a 7th grade student at Katherine Johnson Technology Magnet School, emerged as the top three spellers and will advance to represent North and East Texas at the prestigious Scripps National Spelling Bee, taking place May 26-28, 2026, in National Harbor, Maryland. Dudala and Manjunath were declared co-champions, while Pearson was named the third finalist to advance.

This year marked an exciting first for the Dallas Regional Spelling Bee, as Dr. Jacques Bailly, the official Head Pronouncer of the Scripps National Spelling Bee, presided over the competition. A 1980 National Spelling Bee Champion and associate professor of classics at the University of Vermont, Dr. Bailly brought his renowned expertise in Greek, Roman philosophy, etymology and ancient languages to the Dallas stage.

Twenty-seven contestants from 20 North and East Texas counties competed in this year's Bee. These students represent the top performers from approximately 100,000 students across more than 840 schools who participated in school-level competitions, showcasing the region's brightest scholars.

The competition concluded with co-champions after Dudala correctly spelled "resveratrol," while Manjunath followed with "socius," securing the shared title.

"It feels incredible," said co-champion Krish Manjunath. "I have spent all year studying words, languages, and roots, so winning feels like all that effort finally paid off. I am really grateful for my family, teachers, and everyone who supported me along the way. Looking forward to the National Bee."

For the ninth consecutive year, the Dallas Sports Commission will advance the top three spellers to the Scripps National Spelling Bee. Each finalist, along with a guardian, will receive an all-expense-paid trip to the national competition, with flights courtesy of Southwest Airlines.

"The Dallas Region continues to be recognized as one of the strongest in the country," said Monica Paul, Executive Director of the Dallas Sports Commission. "We are incredibly proud of all 27 students who competed today. Their dedication to language, learning and literacy is inspiring, and we know our three champions will represent North and East Texas with excellence on the national stage."

The Dallas Regional Spelling Bee will stream on WFAA+ on May 9. WFAA+ is available for free download on Apple TV, Roku and Amazon Fire TV devices.

This year's bee sponsors include Leon Capital Group, Southwest Airlines, and WFAA. Additional information about the Dallas Regional Spelling Bee can be found at [www.dallasspellingbee.com](http://www.dallasspellingbee.com). Details about the Scripps National Spelling Bee are available at [www.spellingbee.com](http://www.spellingbee.com).

#### **About the Dallas Sports Commission**

As a division of Visit Dallas, the Dallas Sports Commission (DSC) is passionately committed to generating economic impact and enriching the quality of life within our community through sports. The DSC attracts and hosts amateur, grassroots, collegiate, and professional championship events. Since 2014, the DSC has hosted over 614 events, welcomed more than 9.5 million attendees, and generated over \$5.4 billion in economic impact.

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