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Dear Academic Decathlon® Community:

I am writing this letter to apologize unconditionally for a scoring mishap that affected the results of last week's national finals in Minneapolis—and to begin detailing how we will move forward from here to reduce the risk of something like this happening again.

First, I should clarify a few important points about the causes and consequences of the current issue.

1. The answer keys for the Honor and Varsity competitors in the Super Quiz™ Relay were mistakenly inverted.
2. The primary impact was on the results of the Super Quiz™ overall team score.
3. Because Super Quiz™ only counts toward a team's total score, no Decathlete's individual score was affected.
4. Most overall team placements were also unchanged: in Division 1, the top 3 teams remain the same, with the originally announced 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> place teams switching places; in Division 3, the top 6 teams remain the same.
5. Unfortunately, the impact was greater in Division 2, where the originally announced third place team should have been announced as the first place team, pushing the announced first and second place teams into second and third place, respectively.

Our hearts go out to every student impacted: those who were not recognized in person for the achievements they had fairly earned, and those whose very real achievements must now feel arbitrarily diminished. We cannot stress this enough: an incremental drop in position could never take anything away from the honor and joy you have brought to your schools, families, and communities—nor could an incremental increase possibly make anyone prouder of you than they already are.

USAD is reviewing all processes to prevent any such occurrences in the future. We promise to make needed changes methodically and transparently. Steps we are considering include:

1. Inviting a state director and/or non-participating expert coaches to review (and “reality check”) all scores prior to the awards ceremony.
2. Reviewing with state directors the inclusion of the Super Quiz™ in the overall team score.

Please do not hesitate to email your own suggestions and other feedback to [national@usad.org](mailto:national@usad.org). USAD understands that no one knows this program better or cares about it more than those who organize and participate in it all around the country; it is a community whose trust we are determined to deserve.

I must also add how impressed I have been to watch that community come together around everyone who was affected by this scoring mishap. There has been anger, of course, and deservedly, but there has also been humor, empathy, and grace. Congratulations again to every one of you, not just for your championships, but for your sportsmanship.

I am grateful for the chance to help lead such a program.

Sincerely,

Les Martisko, CEO