

American College of Physicians
North Carolina ACP Doctor's Dilemma® Competition 2026
Rules for Competition
Rules Adapted from the National ACP Doctor's Dilemma® Official Rules

Playing ACP Doctor's Dilemma®

Arrival

Teams should arrive 15 minutes before the start of the game (scheduled for Saturday, February 21, between 5:30pm and 6:30pm). Any changes in schedule will be informed to you a few days ahead of the event via email.

Game Start

Each team is given assigned seats and set of buzzers. Once the participating teams are seated, the moderator will review the rules of the match. Following introductions, the game board is displayed. Games consist of five categories with five questions in each category with a total of 25 questions.

A coin toss will be performed at the beginning of the match to determine which team chooses first.

Answering Questions

Once a team selects a question by category and amount, the moderator will read the question and it will be displayed.

At that point, any team can buzz in to answer the question. The team, which buzzes in, first is given the opportunity to answer the question. Once recognized by team name, that team will have 10 seconds to answer, and the team members may confer during that time period. **The teams will each designate one person to deliver ALL answers for that team for the entire round.** At the end of the 10 seconds, the timekeeper will say, "Answer please." The team must begin to give their answer within 2 seconds of this phrase. **The response must be in the form of a question.** If the team does not begin to give their answer at this point, the question will be counted as incorrect, and the point value for that question will be deducted from that team's score.

- If the answering team answers correctly, they retain control of the game board and will be asked to select the next question.
- If answering team answers incorrectly, points equaling the value of the missed question will be deducted from their score, and the other teams will allow an opportunity to

answer. Again, once one of the remaining teams is called upon, the team will have 10 seconds to answer the question, and the same protocol as delineated above will be followed. This process continues until the correct answer is given, all teams answer incorrectly, or until a total of 10 seconds has passed without an answer from a team.

- Each team will receive one warning per match if their answer is not in the form of a question. When they answer in a non-question form, the moderator will say, “Can you provide that in the form of a question?” **On subsequent cases of not providing the answer in the form of a question, the team will be penalized by the number of points for their question regardless of whether the answer is correct or not.**
- As each team will have a spokesperson who will deliver the answer, only answers delivered by that person will be used to determine if the answer is correct or incorrect.

Game Scoring

Games consist of five categories with five questions in each category, for a total of 25 questions. The question values run from 10 points to 50 points in each category, and the level of difficulty increases with the point values.

The team that answers the question correctly will be awarded the point value of the question. Questions answered incorrectly will have that point value deducted from the team score.

Final Dilemma

After the 25 questions game board has been played, teams with positive point values are invited to play the “Final Dilemma” question, which is a wager-based question.

Each team is given a wager sheet and a final answer sheet. When the “Final Dilemma” category is announced, teams indicate a wager based on their knowledge of the category. The wager sheets are then collected and given to the scorekeeper.

After the moderator reads the question and the question is displayed, teams have 35 seconds to confer and to write an answer on the final answer sheet. After 35 seconds, the answer sheets are collected and given to the moderator.

Teams answering the questions correctly will have their wager added to their total score.

Teams answering incorrectly will have their wager deducted from the total score.

About the Game Judges

In each game, 2-3 game judges are present. Judges are ACP members who are practicing physicians. They receive the game questions and answers ahead of time.

If a team's answer does not match exactly with the moderator's answer sheet, the moderator and game staff will confer to arrive at a decision. The judges determine if an answer is acceptable. **All judges' decisions are final.**

Challenges to questions should be submitted prior to the end of the match in closest proximity to the contested question.

A panel of board-certified audience members will be identified at the beginning of the match to help resolve any disputes.

Game Conduct

No cheating of any form is allowed. This includes cellular telephones or any means of external data acquisition. Audience members may not provide aid of any sort to the teams who currently engaged in a match. If this occurs, the audience member will be asked to leave the competition, and the question will be thrown out.

This competition is meant to be a fun and collegial affair, and ultimately, this competition allows our medical students to show us how much they know and how hard they have worked.