



Emmy Award-winning ESPN analyst Mina Kimes to host the 2026 Scripps National Spelling Bee

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10-time Emmy-winner Michael Davies to produce the broadcast on ION

CINCINNATI, May 05, 2026 (GLOBE NEWSWIRE) -- Nationally acclaimed ESPN senior writer and Emmy Award-winning analyst Mina Kimes will bring her passion for storytelling to the 2026 Scripps National Spelling Bee as host of its televised semifinals and finals – May 27 and May 28 – on ION.

Also new this year, the iconic competition kicks off its next century of spelling with a refreshed broadcast vision from Embassy Row, the award-winning production company led by 10-time Emmy winning television producer Michael Davies.

A three-time school spelling bee champion herself, Kimes is an NFL analyst, senior writer, podcast host and television contributor for ESPN and has built a career bringing audiences sharp analysis and compelling human stories from some of sports' biggest moments. As a business journalist, Kimes' work has appeared in ESPN The Magazine, Bloomberg News and Fortune.

"I could not be more excited to host this year's Scripps National Spelling Bee," said Kimes. "Coming from the world of sports, I see these contestants as elite competitors; I can't wait to see their preparation pay off on such an illustrious stage. Growing up, this really was the Super Bowl for kids like me, and I'm honored to play a role in what's sure to be an unforgettable week."

"Mina shows over and over how cool it is to be smart, making her a natural fit for the Bee," said Corrie Loeffler, executive director of the Scripps National Spelling Bee. "Her insight and enthusiasm, not to mention her own experience as an elementary school spelling bee champion, will help create moments that bring audiences closer to the spellers, to the language and to one another."

Embassy Row, founded by Davies, has produced some of television's most iconic quiz and talk formats, including "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?", "Whose Line Is It Anyway?", "Watch What Happens Live with Andy Cohen" and "Good Morning Football." Davies also executive produces Sony Pictures Television's iconic quiz show "Jeopardy!".

"From 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire?' to 'Jeopardy!' in all its forms, I've had the privilege of producing some of the world's most enduring and beloved quiz shows," said Michael Davies, president of Embassy Row. "At Embassy Row, we're all so excited to bring that experience to the Bee. Our goal is to honor its legacy while presenting it in a fresh, modern way, focusing on the enormous stakes of this historic competition and sharpening the spotlight on these incredible spellers."

Adam Harman, Scripps' senior vice president of programming, says that under Davies' leadership, the Bee's 2026 telecast on ION will create new opportunities to spotlight spellers.

"With Embassy Row, we're beginning the next chapter of storytelling around America's most beloved educational live competition – the Scripps National Spelling Bee," said Harman. "Michael Davies has taken popular, legacy formats like 'Jeopardy!' and elevated them in new ways while preserving what makes them iconic. His ability to build tension and character within a live production is world class. We're committed to giving audiences a premium viewing experience, and Michael and his team will do just that – highlighting one speller, one word, one moment at a time."

Two-night ION special event:

- The semifinals broadcast will air from 8-10 p.m. ET on ION on Wednesday, May 27. (The live semifinals will be streamed on [spellingbee.com](https://www.spellingbee.com) from 2:30 to 6:30 p.m. earlier that day.)
- The finals broadcast will air live in primetime on ION from 8-10 p.m. ET on Thursday, May 28.

The Bee, the nation's longest-running educational competition, began in 1925 and has inspired generations of students with its mission to promote literacy and learning. The E.W. Scripps Company (NASDAQ: SSP) serves as steward of the competition and owns ION, which reaches 128 million households across pay television, connected TV platforms, free ad-supported streaming services and over-the-air broadcasts.

Learn more: <https://www.spellingbee.com/>.

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About the Scripps National Spelling Bee:

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is the nation's largest and longest-running educational program, having launched in 1925. By inspiring the exploration of words, the Scripps National Spelling Bee illuminates pathways to lifelong curiosity, celebrates academic achievement and enriches communities. Visit [spellingbee.com](https://www.spellingbee.com) for more information about the Scripps National Spelling Bee, which is administered on a not-for-profit basis by [The E.W. Scripps Company](https://www.scripps.com) (NASDAQ: SSP).

About Scripps

[The E.W. Scripps Company](https://www.scripps.com) (NASDAQ: SSP) is a diversified media company focused on creating connection. As one of the nation's largest local TV broadcasters, Scripps serves communities with quality, objective local journalism and operates a portfolio of about 60 stations in 40 markets. Scripps reaches households across the U.S. with national news outlet Scripps News and popular entertainment brands ION, Bounce, Grit, ION Mystery, ION Plus and Laff. Scripps is the nation's largest holder of broadcast spectrum. Its Scripps Sports division serves professional and college sports leagues, conferences and teams with local market depth and national broadcast reach of up to 100% of TV households. Founded in 1878, Scripps is the

steward of the Scripps National Spelling Bee, and its longtime motto is: "Give light and the people will find their own way."

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