



Final Rounds of Scripps National Spelling Bee To Be Broadcast Live on ABC During Primetime

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CINCINNATI, April 27 /PRNewswire-FirstCall/ -- Live television coverage of the 2006 Scripps National Spelling Bee will be moving to primetime this year on the ABC Television Network.

ABC will broadcast the final championship rounds of the bee in high definition from 8 p.m. to 10 p.m. EDT on Thursday, June 1. Good Morning America anchor Robin Roberts will host the ABC broadcast.

Preliminary championship rounds of the bee will air live earlier in the day on ESPN, which has televised the final rounds of the bee in their entirety since 1994. The ESPN broadcast is scheduled for noon to 3 p.m., EDT. SportsCenter anchor Chris McKendry will host the ESPN broadcast.

"ABC's decision to move the Scripps National Spelling Bee to primetime affirms for us how deeply this unique event is engrained in the American psyche," said Kenneth W. Lowe, president and chief executive officer for The E. W. Scripps Company. "Now, with a wider national network television audience, more people than ever before will have an opportunity to share in this extraordinary celebration of academic excellence and experience the remarkable intensity of competitive spelling."

"We are proud to bring the Scripps National Spelling Bee to ABC for the first time in its storied, 79-year history," said Andrea Wong, ABC's Executive Vice President, Alternative Series. "It's exciting for us as a network to bring this competition of some of America's brightest young minds to a broader audience."

The Scripps National Spelling Bee, the nation's largest and longest running educational promotion, is administered on a not-for-profit basis by Scripps and 268 local sponsors. The majority of local spelling bee sponsors are daily and weekly newspapers. The purpose of the Scripps National Spelling Bee is to help students improve spelling, increase vocabularies, learn concepts and develop correct English usage that will help them all of their lives.

"The ABC primetime broadcast is the latest in a series of high-profile acknowledgments that the bee is growing in stature," said Paige P. Kimble, director of the Scripps National Spelling Bee and 1981 national spelling champion. "The bee has been the subject of an Academy Award-nominated documentary, has served as backdrop to two critically acclaimed feature length films and has inspired a Tony Award-winning play that's currently running on Broadway and is now touring the United States. For the championship spellers who gather in Washington every year, the attention focused on their high level of academic achievement is well-deserved."

The Scripps National Spelling Bee is central to the storyline of *Akeelah and the Bee*, a feature-length film that is being released by Lions Gate Films, 2929 Entertainment and Starbucks Entertainment on Friday, April 28. The film, starring Laurence Fishburne, Angela Bassett and Keke Palmer, is a fictional account of an African American girl from Los Angeles who overcomes adversities to win the national spelling bee championship. The movie is being promoted in Starbucks Coffee locations nationwide.

In 2002, the Scripps National Spelling Bee was the subject of the documentary film, *Spellbound*, which was nominated for an Academy Award by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Also, spelling bees inspired the Tony Award-winning Broadway play, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*.

The Scripps National Spelling Bee, which is held each year in Washington D.C., will begin on Wednesday, May 31, featuring top spellers from across the U.S. and including competitors from Europe, Guam, Jamaica, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, The Bahamas, American Samoa, Canada and New Zealand. The opening rounds of the bee on May 31 are not televised, but real-time results are provided via the Internet at the bee's official Web site, spellingbee.com.

About 275 champion spellers, ranging in age from 9- to 15-years-old, will be competing this year for the National Spelling Bee Championship. Spellers participating in the national competition qualify by winning locally sponsored spelling bees in their home communities.

About Scripps

The E.W. Scripps Company (NYSE: SSP) is a diverse and growing media enterprise with interests in national cable networks, newspaper publishing, broadcast television stations, electronic commerce, interactive media, and licensing and syndication.

The company's portfolio of media properties includes: Scripps Networks, with such brands as HGTV, Food Network, DIY Network, Fine Living, Great American Country and HGTVPro; daily and community newspapers in 18 markets and the Washington-based Scripps Media Center, home to the Scripps Howard News Service; 10 broadcast TV stations, including six ABC-affiliated stations, three NBC affiliates and one independent; leading online search and comparison shopping services, Shopzilla and uSwitch; United Media, a leading worldwide licensing and syndication company that is the home of PEANUTS, DILBERT and approximately 150 other features and comics; and Shop At Home, which markets a growing range of consumer goods directly to television viewers in roughly 57 million U.S. households and online through shopathometv.com.

SOURCE The E. W. Scripps Company

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