

OFFICIAL RULES
5th ANNUAL YOUTH HOOP DANCE CHAMPIONSHIP

Revised: July 2026
Museum of Indian Arts & Culture
Santa Fe, NM

NO PURCHASE IS NECESSARY TO ENTER OR WIN. A PURCHASE OF PAYMENT OF ANY KIND WILL NOT INCREASE YOUR CHANCES OF WINNING. THIS CONTEST IS NOT OPEN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC. TO ENTER TO WIN, YOU MUST BE AN ELIGIBLE ENTRANT (EACH AS DEFINED BELOW).

This annual Youth Hoop Dance Championship celebrates the empowerment of Native youth through dance and culture. In this safe environment, new and experienced youth dancers come together to encourage and challenge each other through the sharing of their individual interpretation of the hoop dance while educating the local community of Santa Fe about their rich culture and heritage.

The championship will take place at Milner Plaza outside the Museum Indian Arts & Culture in Santa Fe, New Mexico on Saturday, August 1, 2026 and Sunday, August 2, 2026. These rules are the same official rules from the Heard Museum World Championship Hoop Dance Contest that have been developed with the input of North America's leading experts on Hoop Dance to ensure a fair and competitive event and will be posted on the event website: lightningboyfoundation.com/hoop-dance-competition.

Participation in this championship constitutes Eligible Entrant's full and unconditional agreement to and acceptance of these Official Rules and the decisions of the Lightning Boy Foundation, 31 Turtle Circle, Santa Fe, NM 87506, which are final and binding in all aspects of this Championship. These Official Rules must be adhered to in order to be eligible to participate and win cash awards.

I. THE CONTEST EVENT

Eligible Entrants will be required to appear at Milner Plaza, Museum Indian Arts & Culture on Saturday, August 1, 2026 and Sunday, August 2, 2026, in accordance with the rules outlined in Section VI, in order to enter the Championship. The 2026 Championship will take place at the Museum Indian Arts & Culture on Saturday, August 1 and Sunday, August 2, 2026. The Contest will be an in-person event, with an audience in attendance. The Foundation may also present the Championship via online channels, which could include

Facebook and YouTube. Cash prizes will be awarded to the top scoring competitors in each age division as outlined in Section III: Youth, Teen, Collegiate. Tiny Tots entrants will each receive an evenly split \$300 cash award. Tiny Tots will not be judged competitively. Online registration will be available on the event website :

lightningboyfoundation.com/competition-registration until 11:59pm on July 31, 2026. In-person registration will begin at 7:30 am MST on Saturday, August 1, 2026 in the Meem Building and end at 8:30 am on Saturday August 1, 2026. No registrations will be accepted after 9:00 am MST on Saturday, August 1, 2026.

Eligible Entrants are encouraged to register online on the Lightning Boy Foundation Website in advance of the competition in order to expedite the registration process. Eligible Entrants who have registered online may pick up their dancer packets during on-site registration in the Meem Building. All Eligible Entrants must complete all required fields of the Registration Form in order to be eligible to enter the Contest. This includes providing tribal affiliation (see Section VI for details on eligibility).

II. ORDER OF EVENTS

There will be a meeting of Eligible Entrants, judges, and staff in the Meem Building/dancer's green room from approximately 8:30 am MST – 8:45 am MST on Saturday, August 1, 2026 before Grand Entry at approximately 9:00 am MST. Rules will be reviewed and questions regarding the Championship are welcomed during the meeting. **ALL ELIGIBLE ENTRANTS ARE REQUIRED TO ATTEND THIS MEETING!** Lineup for Grand Entry will begin immediately following the meeting. Grand Entry for the Contest begins promptly at 9:00 am MST on both days of the Contest. Competition begins immediately following Grand Entry. Participation will be verified by Eligible Entrant numbers, which are provided in the registration package. Following Grand Entry on Saturday, elimination rounds will begin for Youth, Teen and Collegiate Division Eligible Entrants. All Eligible Entrants will be called in random order regardless of registration order. The order and timing of competition rounds may vary based on event circumstances or as judges deem necessary and appropriate. The expected order of competition is as follows:

Day 1 – Saturday: First Rounds, All Divisions

Tiny Tots Division (0-5 years): All Eligible Entrants dance simultaneously. Awards given at end of round. Youth Division (6-12 years): All Eligible Entrants will dance individually. 5 minute limit.

Teen Division (13-18 years): All Eligible Entrants will dance individually. 5 minute limit.

Collegiate Division (19-26 years): All Eligible Entrants will dance individually. 7 minute limit.

Day1/Day 2 – Sunday: Second and Final Rounds, All Divisions

Tiny Tots Division (0-5 years): All Eligible Entrants dance simultaneously.

Youth Division (6-12 years): 2nd & Final Rounds. Eligible Entrants will dance individually. 5 minute limit. Teen Division (13-18 years): 2nd & Final Rounds. Eligible Entrants will dance individually. 5 minute limit. Collegiate Division (19-26 years): 2nd & Final Rounds. Eligible Entrants will dance individually. 7 minute limit.

Depending on the number of Eligible Entrants or other relevant factors, judges have the discretion to determine that a Second Round in any division may not be required.

The rankings and winners of Final Rounds will be announced at an award ceremony following the completion of the competition for all divisions. Eligible Entrants whose ranking qualifies them for a cash award may pick up their prize in the Meem Building following the award ceremony.

III. COMPETITION PROCESS & SCORING

Three judges evaluate the Eligible Entrants during the competition. Each judge is required to provide a score for each of five judging categories (see section IV, “Judging Criteria”). Within each of the five categories, scoring will be based on a ten point scoring system. **One** is the lowest score given and **Ten** is the highest possible score that can be awarded by a judge in a particular category. The maximum possible score from each judge is 50, and the total maximum possible combined score from all three judges is 150.

Round 1 – 150 possible points

Tiny Tot Division – Open category – no scores awarded

Youth Division – The top **ten** Eligible Entrants advance to Round 2

Teen Division – The top **ten** Eligible Entrants advance to Round 2

Collegiate Division – The top **six** Eligible Entrants advance to Round 2

Round 2 – 150 possible points

ALL FINALISTS BEGIN WITH A CLEAN SCORE CARD. Points will not be carried over from Round 1. Youth Division – The top **six** Eligible Entrants advance to Final Round

Teen Division - The top **six** Eligible Entrants advance to Final Round

Collegiate Division - The top **three** Eligible Entrants advance to Final Round

Final Round – Championship Round – 150 possible points

AGAIN, ALL FINALISTS BEGIN WITH A CLEAN SCORE CARD. Points will not be carried over

from Rounds 1 or 2. Final rankings will be determined during this final round of competition.

Youth Division – The **six** finalists will compete to determine final rankings

Teen Division – The **six** finalists will compete to determine final rankings

Collegiate Division - The **three** finalists will compete to determine final rankings

Songs for Eligible Entrants will rotate between the Northern and Southern drums for the first two rounds. You may select either the Northern or Southern drum in the final round or Eligible Entrants can elect to provide their own singer.

Points and Score Sheets

The Score Sheets for each round represent the total tallies of the judges' scores for each division and are considered public information. Each Eligible Entrant may view his or her score after each round. Eligible Entrants are not allowed to view individual judges score sheets.

Ties and Tiebreakers

Tied scores in Rounds 1 and 2 do not need to be broken, unless the tiebreaker would determine which of the tied Eligible Entrants would advance to the next round. When tied scores must be broken to determine which Eligible Entrant will advance, the lowest judge's score will be dropped and the scores will be recalculated. The Eligible Entrant with the highest aggregate score based on the four highest scores will be considered the winner of the tie-breaker. Should the scores remain tied after dropping the lowest score, the judges will convene and select the winner of the tie-breaker via secret ballot – each judge will vote for one Eligible Entrant. In the event of tied scores during the Final Round of competition, the tie must be broken to determine the final rankings. The tie will be broken using the same method described above, except when a tie is between 1st and 2nd place. Should the top-placing Eligible Entrants in any division during the Final Round receive tied scores, the winner will be determined by Dance Off. In a Dance Off, the tied Eligible Entrants will perform again and the judges' scores from the Dance Off will determine the final rankings.

Cash Prizes

Cash prizes for this Contest will be awarded in the following amount in each competitive division:

Youth Division

1st Place: \$750 2nd Place: \$500 3rd Place: \$250 4th Place: \$200 5th Place: \$150 6th Place: \$100

Teen Division

1st Place: \$900 2nd Place: \$600 3rd Place: \$300 4th Place: \$200 5th place: \$150 6th Place: \$100

Collegiate Division

1st Place: \$1,000 2nd Place: \$750 3rd Place: \$500

IV. JUDGING CRITERIA

It is important for all Eligible Entrants to remember that this is an event to celebrate and honor the heritage and individuality of Native Youth. The Contest's judges hope that Eligible Entrants will consider their routines from this perspective. Eligible Entrants are encouraged to give careful thought – in attire, personal style, and performance – to the traditions and values represented by this important event. Eligible Entrants are artists and can respectfully express their culture and style through their dance.

Following are the five categories from which Eligible Entrants will be evaluated:

1. Precision:

- a) Each Eligible Entrant must pass through each hoop they bring into the arena at least one time.
- b) Hoops should not unintentionally fall to the ground.
- c) Once a design is complete, it should not fall apart.
- d) Eligible Entrants must catch hoops when they are thrown in the air or spun.

2. Timing/Rhythm:

- a) This is a Hoop "Dancing" Contest. Feet should continuously keep time to the drum.
- b) Eligible Entrant's movement is essential.
- c) Bells, tinklers or deer hooves help the judges assess your rhythm and, therefore, are required.
- d) Transitions between movements should be smooth.

3. Showmanship:

- a) Presentation should be directed to audience.
- b) Degree of difficulty will be taken into account.
- c) If routine is finished and music continues, Eligible Entrants should dance to the end of song.

4. Creativeness/Originality:

- a) Points accumulate with more designs.

b) Points accumulate with designs originated by an Eligible Entrants and not previously presented.

5. Speed:

a) This category is related directly to rapid drum and dance coordination.

Eligible Entrants will be penalized for going over the time limit. There is NO penalty for going under the time limit. A large time clock will be visible in the arena.

The judges' decision will be final! Good sportsmanship is expected and appreciated.

V. ELIGIBLE ENTRANTS

Name of Tribal enrollment on the registration form is requested to share in order to participate in this competition.

The Championship is open only to individual entrants who are legal residents of, and physically located within, the United States or Canada, and who is a verified member of a recognized Native community that is located in the United States or Canada (each, an "Eligible Entrant").

VI. GENERAL RULES

- All Eligible Entrants must participate in Grand Entry on Saturday of this Contest. Eligible Entrant numbers will be checked against the registration list to ensure participation.
- Eligible Entrants will NOT be allowed to preset hoop formations or designs before routine begins – this means you cannot preset hoop formations or designs of any kind before you begin your routine. You must have all the hoops you will be using in the arena when you start your routine.
- No taped or mechanical props will be allowed – this means you will not be able to tape your hoops together in any way, shape, or form. You will not be allowed to use streamers, balls, clamps, etc. You will be required to dance using ONLY the hoops you bring into your immediate dance area.
- No drugs or alcohol – this means any Eligible Entrant using drugs or alcohol to "enhance" their performance will be immediately removed from the competition and from the grounds of the Museum of Indians Arts & Culture, Milner Plaza and Museum of International Folk Art. Any violation of the above rules will disqualify you from the entire Contest.

VII. MISCELLANEOUS

Odds. The odds of winning the Contest will depend on the number of eligible entries received and the

Contest winners will be selected based on skills, not at random.

Publicity. By entering the Contest, each Eligible Entrant agrees that the Sponsor (or a party acting on its behalf), may capture photographs, video content, and audio content which includes Eligible Entrant's name, image, likeness, voice, actions, or other identifying characteristics (collectively, "Content") as part of the Contest, and each Eligible Entrant agrees that the Sponsor (or a party on its behalf) shall have the right, but not the obligation, to edit, remove, modify, publish, license, print, transmit, display or otherwise use such Content, via all forms of media now known or hereafter devised worldwide, in perpetuity, without notice, attribution or compensation to Eligible Entrant, his/her successors or assigns, or any other entity, except where prohibited by law. Eligible Entrant waives any retained rights of attribution, privacy, publicity, withdrawal, integrity or other moral or personal rights in the entry and other related materials. All entries and other submitted materials become the property of the Sponsor and will not be returned to any Eligible Entrant. If Sponsor requests the Eligible Entrant's cooperation in promoting the Contest, the Eligible Entrant agrees to reasonably be available for such promotional activities. By accepting any cash prize, each winner consents to the use of his/her name and all accompanying personally identifiable information winner submits, via all forms of media now known or hereafter devised worldwide, in perpetuity, without notice, attribution or compensation (other than the cash prize described herein) to winner, his/her/its successors or assigns, or any other entity, except where prohibited by law.

Release and Limitations on Liability. By participating in the Contest, each Eligible Entrant agrees, to the extent permitted by law, to release and hold harmless Sponsor, Facebook, YouTube, and their respective subsidiaries, affiliates, sales representatives, distributors, licensees, agents, advertising and Contest agencies, and all directors, officers and employees of any of the foregoing entities (collectively, the "Released Parties") from and against any claim or cause of action arising out of participation in the Contest, or receipt or use of any prize, including, but not limited to: (a) unauthorized human intervention in the Contest; (b) technical errors related to computers, servers, providers, or telephone or network lines; (c) printing errors; (d) lost, late, misdirected, incorrect, garbled, or incompletely received entries; (e) errors in the administration of the Contest or the processing of entries; (f) injury or damage to persons or property which may be caused, directly or indirectly, in whole or in part, from Eligible Entrant's participation in the Contest or acceptance, receipt, use, or misuse of any prize; or travel to any Contest-related events; and (g) any claims based on publicity rights, copyright/trademark infringement, intellectual property rights, defamation or invasion of privacy and merchandise delivery. In the event that Eligible Entrant breaches any of these Official Rules, Released Parties shall be entitled to and may seek indemnification, to the extent permitted by law, from Eligible Entrant for

recovery of all legal fees, damages, costs, claims and other expenses that may be incurred by Released Parties as a result of the aforementioned breach. Eligible Entrant further agree to release the Released Parties and their designees and assigns from any liability whatsoever, and waive any and all causes of action, for any claims, costs, injuries, losses and damages of any kind arising out of or in connection with the Contest or acceptance, possession, or use of any prize (including, without limitation, attorneys' fees, claims, costs, personal injuries, losses and damages related to personal injuries, death, damage to or destruction or property, rights of publicity or privacy, defamation or portrayal in a false light, whether intentional or unintentional), whether under a theory of contract, civil liability, tort (including negligence), warranty or other theory. Sponsor is not responsible if any prize cannot be awarded due to travel cancellations, delays or interruptions due to acts of God, acts of war, natural disasters or weather.

Sponsor. The Sponsor of this Contest is Lightning Boy Foundation, Inc. 31 Turtle Circle, Santa Fe, NM 87506. Eligible Entrants shall not use the trademarks of Sponsor or falsely associate themselves with Sponsor during or after the Contest.

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