# Bruhat Soma Wins 96th Scripps National Spelling Bee in Dramatic Spell-Off



The 96th annual Scripps National Spelling Bee concluded on May 30, 2024, at the Gaylord National Resort and Convention Center in National Harbor, Maryland. Bruhat Soma, a 12-year-old seventh-grader from Tampa, Florida, emerged victorious after a tense "spell-off" tiebreaker, correctly spelling 29 words versus Faizan Zaki's 20. Bruhat's win earned him a trophy and more than $50,000 in cash and prizes.

The competition, which began with over 11 million participants, had narrowed down to eight finalists: Rishabh Saha (Merced, California), Shrey Parikh (Rancho Cucamonga, California), Aditi Muthukumar (Westminster, Colorado), Bruhat Soma (Tampa, Florida), YY Liang (New Windsor, New York), Ananya Rao Prassanna (Apex, North Carolina), Faizan Zaki (Allen, Texas), and Kirsten Tiffany Santos (Richmond, Texas).

The finals involved frequent commercial breaks, allowing spellers to confer with coaches and supporters. Unusually, the "spell-off" tiebreaker was initiated without an additional conventional round. Bruhat spelled an impressive array of challenging words, including "brouette" and "mnyctalopia," securing his win. Faizan, a crowd favorite, graciously accepted his runner-up position.

Bruhat’s spelling success extends beyond this event, having won three consecutive prior bees. His coach, former speller Sam Evans, highlighted Bruhat's exceptional work ethic and command over the dictionary. Faizan, known for his enthusiasm and empathy, endeared himself to the audience during the competition.

The competition's final phase began with the hopeful eight, but progressed through rigorous rounds, eliminating participants based on the accurate spelling of complex words. The event culminated in a spell-off, the second in Scripps history, providing an electrifying conclusion to the prestigious event.