



Palmetto Cyber Defense Competition 2026

Enterprise Kick-Off Meeting

Wednesday, 19 November 2025



13th Year!



Scott Bell PCDC Director
Naval Information Warfare Center Atlantic (NIWC Atlantic)
Cyber Warfare Capabilities IPT Lead

For PCDC Planning Purposes Only



Title Sponsor

PCDC 2026

(presentation best viewed from slide show)




PCDC XIII is scheduled
for
11-13 April 2026



PCDC Goals



NIWC Atlantic, the Navy's East Coast Engineering Center, in collaboration with the South Carolina Lowcountry Chapter of the Armed Forces Communications Electronics Association (AFCEA) facilitates a cyber defense competition each spring. The goals are to:

-  *Overall goals are to teach, to learn, & to collaborate - all while having fun via:*
 -  *Outreach: Energize high schools, colleges, and their students to focus on the development of technical skills in the area of networking and cyber security that will help in preparation for exciting careers in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM).*
 -  *Workforce Development: NIWC Atlantic and our corporate partners collaborate and mentor in the areas of Red Teaming, Computer Network Defense, Cybersecurity & Network Development*
 -  *Recruitment: NIWC Atlantic and our corporate partners have been able to hire some of the regions' best and brightest new professionals through PCDC*

PCDC 2026 Approach

Intent: With the success of the last few year's venue setup and open e-sport style game center approach we are looking to use a very similar layout this year. We are once again poised to work with Amazon to deliver a cloud-based competition. We look forward to another successful year with our gracious hosts @ Trident Technical College.



PCDC 2026 3 Days, Invitation Only

▼ High Schools (Saturday)

- *Qualifying: Top 3 from previous year or top 6 in state in CyberPatriot, plus top ROTC team*
- *Mentoring on Cybersecurity, Networking, Operating Systems, Risk Mitigation, etc provided by teams of SSC Atlantic and corporate mentors working together*
- *Continuing to increase training resources available to schools/mentors*
- *90 minutes to secure network before hackers attack*



▼ Colleges (Sunday)

- *Qualifying: Top 3 from previous year or top 7 from SECCDC, reserve one slot for host and one external to South Carolina*
- *Q&A sessions provided*
- *30 minutes to secure network before hackers attack*






▼ Pro Day (Monday)

- *Mixture of DoD and industry partner teams (\$5K Diamond Sponsor)*
- *Q&A sessions provided*
- *15 minutes before hackers attack*
- *Two college students embedded on each team – has resulted in multiple hires*



The 13th Annual PCDC is scheduled for 11-13 April 2025

PCDC Gold Team 2026

-  Gold Team Leads: Welcome back Valerie Moran, Nikolas Heitzeg, Jan Rega and the rest of our fabulous Gold Teamers!
-  Gold team already holding meetings and working architecture
-  Scoring: Working on updating our scoring engine
-  Virtual users will VPN into a remote desktop
-  Always looking for additional volunteers



2026 PCDC Teams

Blue Team Mentors Lead: Bryan Haines	White Team Lead: Shiran Wijetunga	Orange Team Lead: Kate Sobus	Red Team Lead: James Jernigan
<p>The Blue Teams are the competitors challenged with protecting their systems. High School Mentors assist the teams from the area high schools to get ready for the competition.</p>	<p>The White Team serves as in competition judges and first line support. White team members answer questions and aid the Blue Teams throughout the competition while ensuring all rules are being followed.</p>	<p>The Orange Team serves as the business operations during the competition. This team plays the role of headquarters during the competition, inserting business problems into the scenario and generates voice and data traffic to keep the scenario realistic.</p>	<p>A group of ethical hackers, this team is there to wreak havoc on the competition network and try to disrupt and break into the competitors' systems before being noticed or blocked. Their official role is to train the competitors on how to recognize attacks and effectively block them.</p>

High Schools



TBD based on last year results and Cyber Patriot placement. Will update at future meeting.



Colleges



-  Automatic entries based on last year placement
-  Still planning on using SECCDC as qualifier (February)
-  Will update at next meeting

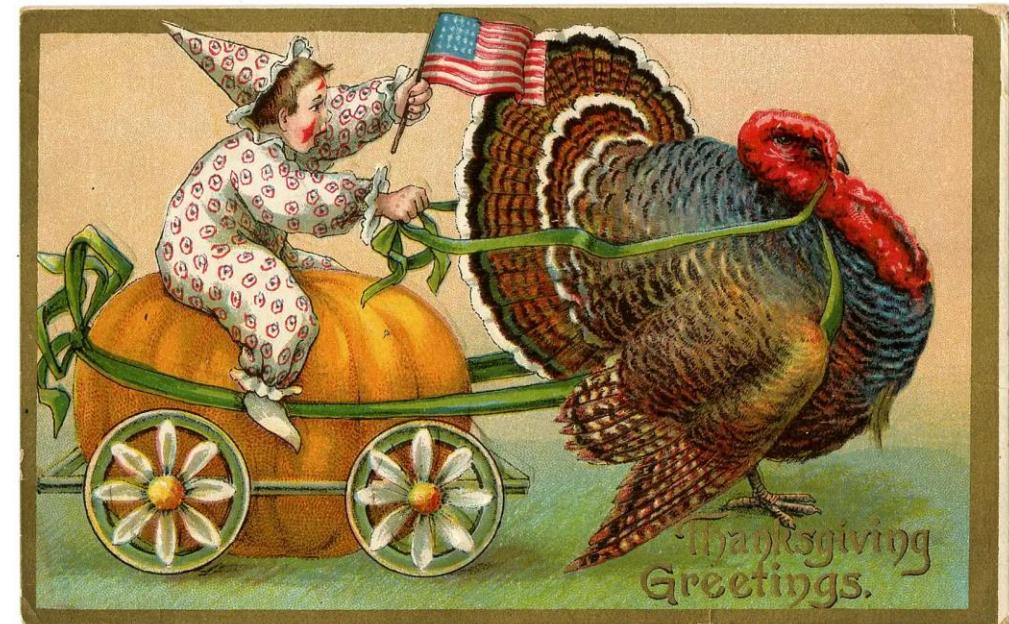


CHALLENGE ACCEPTED.



Professional

- PCDC TBD based on multiple factors – last year placement and sponsorship
- PCDC Looking at allowing team members to compete from multiple locations if virtual
- PCDC Willingness to travel is another factor for in-person vs virtual decision



2026 Pro Day Commitments

Government

TBD!

Corporate



Important Links

▼ PCDC Website: pcdc-sc.com

▼ PCDC Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/PalmettoCyberDefenseCompetition>

▼ PCDC Twitter: <https://twitter.com/PalmettoCyber>

▼ Cyber Patriot: <http://www.uscyberpatriot.org>

▼ AFCEA: <http://charleston.afceachapter.org/>

▼ #PCDC





PCDC 2026 Primary POCs

- ▼ Scott Bell, NIWC Atlantic, PCDC Director
757-309-6333, scott.h.bell.civ@us.navy.mil
- ▼ Jeff Sweeney, NIWC Atlantic, Deputy Director, 843-343-6055,
jeff.a.Sweeney.civ@us.navy.mil
- ▼ Nicky Shipp, SENTAR, Collegiate Coordinator,
703-731-1424, nicky.shipp@sentar.com
- ▼ Valerie Moran, NIWC Atlantic, PCDC Gold Team Tech Co-Lead,
843-218-xxxx, valerie.m.moran.civ@us.navy.mil
- ▼ Nikolas Heitzeg, NIWC Atlantic, PCDC Gold Team Tech Co-Lead,
nikolas.r.heizteg.civ@us.navy.mil
- ▼ Bryan Haines, NIWC Atlantic, Blue Team Mentor Lead, High School Coordinator
843-218-2635, bryan.j.haines.civ@us.navy.mil
- ▼ Greg Blackburn, AFCEA PCDC Lead, Capt USN (Ret)-Sponsorship Lead
410-507-6098, blackburng45@gmail.com
- ▼ Jacob Dustan, AFCEA Lowcountry President, jdustan@gmail.com
- ▼ Claire Torres, USAF, AFCEA Treasurer, claire.torres@us.af.mil



Wrap Up

▼ Big Ideas?
▼ Innovations?
▼ Questions?

