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What are your options if you do not match in Neurosurgery?

You may choose to apply and interview for another specialty or for a general surgery internship-only year as a backup. If you match in another specialty the resulting contract is binding and you cannot be considered for any open positions in Neurosurgery until you have fulfilled your obligations for that contract or both parties agree to dissolve it. If you do not list any other specialties as a back up and you do not match to neurosurgery, you are eligible to participate in the Neurosurgery scramble. However, please be aware that most years, all programs fill their positions and there are no openings and hence no scramble. Over the past 10 years, 70-90% (av. 82%) of US seniors matched successfully. A total of 191 positions filled in 2009. If you match into an internship and participate in the match again the following year and obtain a neurosurgery position you may be required to repeat the internship year as part of the first year of your neurosurgical residency. A program director may request credit for **all or part of the surgery PGY1** year from the Board of Neurosurgery if the neuroscience rotations can be made up later in the training program, but this cannot be guaranteed. Another alternative is to obtain a laboratory or clinical research position for a year and re-apply for the neurosurgery match the following year. This has the advantage of building your resume and potentially enhancing your chances of success in the next match. In making these decisions you should carefully consider the strength of your CV and discuss your qualifications with a faculty mentor, as neurosurgery residency positions are highly sought after by very qualified candidates.

Please consult a member of the Neurosurgery Department faculty at your medical school for advice if you have additional questions or concerns.

Best wishes and good luck,

The Society of Neurological Surgeons Match Committee

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