

NCFCA

2005

INDIVIDUAL EVENTS QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT RULES

I. TOURNAMENT ESSENTIALS

A. MISSION

The National Christian Forensics and Communications Association (NCFCA) believes that competitive forensics provides a means for homeschooled students to learn and exercise analytical and oratorical skills in addressing life issues from a Biblical worldview in a manner that glorifies God. NCFCA shall facilitate Qualifying Tournaments and host a National Tournament to provide this opportunity to homeschooled students.

B. RULES

Qualifying Tournaments must follow the rules in this document. Any additions or modifications to these regulations must receive prior written approval.

II. TOURNAMENT OVERVIEW

A. PRELIMINARY ROUNDS

1. Number of Rounds

- a. Qualifying Tournaments must hold at least three rounds in each event offered.
- b. If there are only seven participants in an event (minimum five participants in Level 1 tournaments), there shall be only three preliminary rounds. The lowest cumulative ranking score from the three rounds is the winner.
- c. If there are eight or nine participants in an event, the preferred choice is to divide into two panels and hold a final round; however, if there is a lack of either rooms or judges, the tournament director may opt to run the event with three preliminary rounds determining the winner.
- d. Tournaments with ten or more participants in an event shall hold at least two preliminary rounds and a final round in that event.
- e. The format for preliminary rounds (“prelims”) of one event shall be independent of other events at the same tournament, e.g., it is possible for the same tournament to offer three prelims in one event and two prelims and a final in another.

2. Grouping Participants

- a. Single Panel Events
In events with a single panel, all participants shall perform in the same room for the same judging panel in Round I. The group will proceed together to present for a new panel of judges for Round II and again for Round III. Speaker position shall be reordered for each new judging panel.
- b. Events with two or more panels
 - 1) Panels will be divided as evenly as possible.
 - 2) Participants are to be regrouped for Round II. For example, in a pool of twelve participants three from each of the two Round I groups would form the Round II groups.
 - 3) Grouping Method: Preliminary groupings are randomly selected.
 - 4) Speaker position shall be reordered for each new judging panel.
 - 5) Club Affiliation: Consideration may be given to club affiliation in the panel groupings.

B. SEMI-FINAL ROUNDS

1. Semi-Final Round Requirements

- a. Discretionary: In any event in which there are three or more rooms of competitors for preliminary rounds, the tournament is highly encouraged to hold a semi-final round for that event.
- b. Required: In tournaments with more than twenty-four participants in a given event, a semi-final

round is required.

2. Semi-Final Round Groupings

- a. Eligibility: Semi-finals are seeded according to participant performance in the preliminary rounds.
- b. Groupings Method: Competitors are placed in two equally balanced panels of five to eight participants.
- c. Ranking: All participants are ranked in order of their performance in the preliminary rounds. If the top fourteen participants advance to semi-finals, they are ranked from 1st through 14th place.
- d. Balance of Power: Each panel is given a balance of strong and weak competitors by “snaking.” Snake the number in the pool as follows: Speakers ranked 1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 12, 13, and 16 will go to Group A, while speakers ranked 2, 3, 6, 7, 10, 11, 14, and 15 are placed in Group B. (See example of snaking in Addendum.)
- e. Club Affiliation: Consideration may be given to club affiliation as long as the panels remain balanced in strength.
- f. Speaker Order: Speaker order in semi-finals shall be randomly determined.

C. FINALS

1. Single Panel Events

Events with only one panel of participants will not hold a final round. Instead they will run a third round which is equally weighted with the first two preliminary rounds.

2. Events going straight to finals

Events with twenty-three or fewer participants may choose to go straight to finals.

- a. If there are fourteen or fewer participants in the event, approximately 50% should advance.
- b. If there are fifteen or more participants in the event, eight should advance.
- c. If two participants are tied in rank, the top priority is to treat them equally. Either both should advance or neither should advance, even if it violates the above goals for # of participants to advance. Clean breaks in advancing are always preferred to breaking ties (for further info see tabbing rules).

3. Breaking to Finals from Semis

Equal numbers of participants will be chosen from each panel of semis. Or the highest ranking participants from semis will advance to the final round (see tabbing rules below).

4. Speaker order will be randomly determined in the final round.

Consideration may be given to those who have broken in more than one event.

III. TOURNAMENT TABULATION

A. METHOD OF TABULATION

Tournament tabulation may be done either by a computer program set up for tournament tabbing or by hand, individually recording each ballot. The procedure and method for advancing are the same for each. Many tournaments choose one method and do a back up check with the other.

B. RANKING PRELIMINARY ROUNDS

1. Determination of Cumulative Rankings

At the end of each round, the tab room will add the ranks given to each speaker by each of the three judges. A speaker receiving a rank of 1 from each judge will have a cumulative ranking of 3 for that round. A speaker receiving a 1, a 2, and a 3 will have a cumulative ranking of 6 for that round.

2. Options for Cumulative Rankings

Tournaments may choose either of the following options in determining the cumulative rank of competitors. The choice must be consistent throughout the tournament.

- a. Use Ranks to 8

Add the exact rank of the student from one through seven or eight depending on the number of students in the panel. In this method a student receiving a 3, 4, and 7 would have a cumulative rank of 14.

- 1) Tournaments using this method may choose to level out the results of uneven panels for fairness. That is, if one panel in the event has eight competitors and the other two panels have

seven, the final two places in the eight person panel are given the rank of seven for tabbing purposes.

b. **Use Only Ranks to 5**

In a panel of seven speakers, the results will be listed as 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 5, 5. In this method a student receiving a 3, 4, and 7 would have the 7 added as a 5 and would receive a cumulative score of 12 for that round. This is the default mode on many computer programs.

3. Determination of Room Ranking

Room rank is used for breaking ties only. It is determined by ranking the competitors from first to last in each room of each round. It can be done at the end of each preliminary round, or done only if needed when breaks to semis are being decided.

4. Impact of Cumulative Rankings

The participants with the lowest cumulative rankings from the preliminary rounds will advance to out rounds, either semi-finals or finals depending on the number of participants in the event. In a tournament with only one panel of participants, three equally weighted preliminary rounds will be held. The cumulative ranking from all three rounds will determine the final results.

C. ADVANCING TO SEMI FINALS

1. Cumulative Score

Advance the top ranking speakers until the semi final rounds are filled. The lowest cumulative score a competitor can have at the end of two rounds is 6 if every judge in the preliminary rounds ranked them 1st. Start with 6 (or 9 in a three round prelim) and move up through the cumulative scores until all of the spaces in the semi final rounds are filled.

2. Numbers

- a. Try to advance roughly 50 – 60 % of the original pool of competitors, up to 16 semi finalists (8 in each panel). Tournaments may decide to advance only 14 (7 in each panel) even in large events.
- b. Semi-final panels must be equal in size.

3. Criteria

- a. **Clean Break:** When breaking to semi-finals, you are looking for a clean break (a break with no ties) at the target number.
- b. **Clean Break:** If there is no clean break at the target number, look for a clean break anywhere within the top 10, 12, 14 or 16 highest-ranked speakers. In an event with 22 competitors with the following preliminary cumulative rankings (cumes) – 6, 8, 10, 10, 12, 14, 16, 16, 18, 19, 20, 24, 24, 28, 29, 30, 30, 30, 30, 30, 30, 30, – you would break through the 28 even though fourteen semi-finalists is over 50%. You must have even panels and to stop at the 20 rank creates an odd number of semi-finalists, and thus unequal numbers in each panel. Breaking ties between the 24's is a last resort. In this case, the 28 is a clean break.

4. Tie-Breaking

It is best to break rounds before or after a tie in the cumulative score. When necessary, ties will be broken in the following order:

a. **Room Ranking**

In the event that two or more speakers are tied, use the room ranking to break ties. This is achieved by ranking each room of preliminary competition in that event and adding the two room ranks for a total room ranking score. It's easiest to do this as each round is tabulated.

b. **Judges Preference in Head-to-Head Competition**

If both Speaker 1 and Speaker 2 have the same total cumulative and room ranking scores and they were in the same panel in one of the preliminary rounds, advance the speaker who won in head-to-head competition. Take care to check each round. The same two competitors may be in head-to-head competition in both preliminary rounds, in which case you must factor both.

c. **Decimal Conversion**

The decimal conversion is a technical way of determining which student ranked higher overall. It is built in to most computer programs. Hand tabulators will need to refer to the decimal conversion chart which is included in the tabulation documents.

(See Decimal Conversion Chart in Addendum.)

D. ADVANCING TO THE FINAL ROUND

1. From Semis

- a. Advance an equal number (3 or 4) of competitors from each Semi-Final panel.
- b. Advance the three or four competitors with the lowest cumulative score for the round in each room.
- c. Look for a clean break with no ties.
- d. If there are ties, break the ties using the following methods:
 - 1) Judges' Preference The participant who receives the better ranking from the greatest number of judges will be ranked higher.
 - 2) Preliminary standings in the event
 - 3) Decimal Conversion

2. From Preliminary Rounds

- a. Advance students with the lowest total cumulative rank in the preliminary rounds.
- b. Look for a clean break that advances 50 - 60% of the original pool of competitors.
- c. If there is a tie, break it using the following list in this order.
 - 1) Room Ranking
In the event that two or more speakers are tied, use the room ranking to break ties. This is achieved by ranking each room of preliminary competition in that event and adding the two room ranks for a total room ranking score. It's easiest to do this as each round is tabulated.
 - 2) Judges Preference in Head-to-Head Competition
If both Speaker 1 and Speaker 2 have the same total cumulative and room ranking scores and they were in the same panel in one of the preliminary rounds, advance the speaker who won in head-to-head competition. Take care to check each round. The same two competitors may be in head-to-head competition in both preliminary rounds, in which case you must factor both.
 - 3) Decimal Conversion

E. DETERMINING THE WINNERS

1. Cumulative Rank

Use the cumulative score from the final round to determine the rankings for final round placement. The lowest cumulative score gets first place, second lowest gets second, etc.

2. Ties

In the event that two or more competitors are tied, use the following methods for breaking ties, in the order listed:

- a. Judges' Preference
The competitor who receives the better ranking from the greatest number of judges will be ranked higher.
- b. Semi-finals head-to-head competition
If the tied participants competed in the same panel in the semi final round, the higher-ranking competitor would win in finals.
- c. Semi-finals cumulative rank
- d. Preliminary standings

3. Single Panel Events

In an event with only one panel of competitors, a third, equally weighted preliminary round will be held and the final ranking will be determined by the total cumulative score in all three rounds.

F. ADDITIONAL TAB ROOM GUIDELINES

1. To protect the integrity of the tab room and ensure the smooth running of the tournament, a minimum of two people are needed to staff the tab room. Four or more are better.
2. All close calls concerning breaks to outrounds should be made by at least two people, neither of whom has a vested interest in the participants involved.
3. When possible, each ballot should be entered by two people, one reading the results and the other entering them.
4. When possible, all results should be double checked by a person other than the one who recorded them in the beginning, especially breaks to outrounds.
5. Extreme care should be given to the accuracy of the results. Extra slots to the National Tournament are not awarded because a tab room made an error and awarded the slot to the wrong competitor.

6. Tournament Directors are strongly encouraged to make the tab results available to interested coaches.

IV. TOURNAMENT SPECIFICS

A. JUDGING INDIVIDUAL EVENTS

1. Triple-Paneling

Every round (preliminary, elimination, and final) of an NCFCA national qualifying individual events tournament must be triple-paneled for judging. In other words, there must be three judges per round

2. Re-Judging

Judges should not judge a speaker more than one time in the same event at a given tournament (the same judge *may* judge the speaker in a different event).

3. Final Round Panel

Tournaments are encouraged to have five or more judges for final rounds if judges are available. There must always be an odd number of judges in any given round.

4. Judge Qualifications

Judges must be at least eighteen years of age and not competing in NCFCA speech or debate during the qualifying season in which they are judging.

5. Additional Restrictions

Parents and coaches must not judge their own students.

6. Special Qualifications for Final Round Judges

Final round judges should be individuals with some experience in speech, debate, theatre arts, political science, or communication in general.

7. Judges' Orientation

Each qualifying tournament will conduct a Judges' Orientation in which judges receive rules governing the specific events offered in the tournament and balloting instructions.

B. TIMING EVENTS

1. Limited Preparation Events

- a. Tournaments are required to provide a separate (non-judge) person with a digital timer or stopwatch (no sweep secondhands on watches) to give time signals for Impromptu, Impromptu Apologetics and Extemporaneous.
- b. The timekeeper will call out the prep time (for Impromptu and Impromptu Apologetics) at 30-second intervals.
- c. The timekeeper will give hand or card signals during the speech at one minute intervals, then 30 seconds remaining, then "TIME."
- d. The timekeeper should **not** call out any signals during the speaker's presentation.
- e. The timekeeper will report the speech time to the judges.
- f. Judges should never interrupt the speaker, even if he or she exceeds the maximum time, unless the overage seriously threatens timely completion of the round.

2. Prepared Events

- a. Each competition room will be given a digital timer or stopwatch.
- b. If possible, time will be kept by someone in the room other than the judge. If not, one of the judges may keep the time.
- c. The timepiece is kept running during the speech, but NO hand signals are to be given.
- d. The timekeeper will report the time to the judge.
- e. Judges should never interrupt the speaker, even if he or she exceeds the maximum time, unless the overage seriously threatens timely completion of the round.

C. EXTEMP ROOM RULES

1. Speaker Prep Time

The extemporaneous ("extemp") speaker will report to the Extemp Prep Room at the appointed time. A late arrival will result in less prep time. All extemp speakers must speak on time. There are no exceptions to this rule.

2. Room Supervision

The extemp room must be supervised by a responsible adult at all times students are present.

3. Prep Time Clock

A clock or timer should be visible to the speaker throughout his or her prep time.

4. In and Out Privileges

Extemp speakers may not come and go from the Extemp Prep Room. Speakers should leave the prep room only when on the way to deliver their speeches, allowing for practice time along the way.

5. Talking in the Prep Room

There should be no talking in the Extemp Prep Room. Students may not ask each other for help. Talking should be kept to a minimum.

6. Labeled Files

All individual and club boxes should be labeled.

7. Sharing Files

NO ONE is allowed to use another club or individual's box without the written permission of the coach of that club or the parent of the individual involved.

D. PREVIOUSLY QUALIFIED TOURNAMENT PARTICIPANTS

1. Generally

Participants who have already qualified for the National Tournament must be allowed to compete in subsequent tournaments. Previously qualified competitors will not reduce the number of participants a subsequent tournament may qualify.

2. Grouping

Previously qualified participants should be seeded into separate groups. In other words, if there are two qualified participants in an event, they should be placed in separate groupings for each preliminary round so that no other contestants will meet both of them in the same group. (This is an exception to the rule above, concerning random selection.)

3. Advancement to Elimination Rounds

Previously qualified participants should be allowed to advance to elimination rounds and finals.

4. Winning an Event

Previously qualified participants may win an event.

5. Effect on Nationals Qualification

If a previously qualified participant wins an event at a national qualifying tournament, the qualifying slot will be awarded to the highest-ranking unqualified participant. For example, if both first and second place in an event with fourteen participants have previously qualified for Nationals, the third and fourth place winners are now eligible to participate in the National Tournament.

E. AWARDS

1. Type and Number

The type and number of awards given is to be determined by the organization hosting the tournament.

2. Award Considerations

All participants qualifying for the National Tournament should receive an award. Though not required, awards may be considered for the following:

- a. At least first place in each event.
- b. The top 20% of competitors in any given event.
- c. Sweepstakes Awards for the best overall speakers who are multi-entered.
- d. Club Awards for the forensics club or group with the best overall tournament performance record.
- e. Certificates of participation.

V. TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR AUTHORITY

A. GENERALLY

1. Responsibility

The Tournament Director is responsible for ensuring that the tournament is run in accordance with the NCFCA Rules and Mission.

2. Authority

The Tournament Director has authority to make decisions which affect the overall running of the tournament including:

- a. Make final decisions regarding appropriate tournament attire and dress code compliance.
- b. Resolve problems that threaten either the integrity or operation of the tournament, including disqualifying participants and ejecting disruptive parties from the tournament site.

c. In cases where participants or observers related to a participant (i.e., family members, coaches, close friends, etc.) attempt to influence the judge before, during, or after the round, the tournament director may impose one or more of the following penalties:

- 1) Forfeiture of the round.
- 2) Reduction of ranking for that round.
- 3) For serious offenses, disqualification of the participant.

B. TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS SHALL NOT

- 1. Overturn these or NCFCA guidelines without express written approval obtained in advance of the tournament.**
- 2. Refuse NCFCA representatives, including regional directors, governing Board members and executive officers, access to any tournament area.**

C. APPEALING TOURNAMENT DIRECTOR'S DECISIONS

The Tournament Director shall appoint an Oversight Committee.

1. Membership

- a. An Oversight Committee of not fewer than three (3) members shall be appointed prior to the start of Tournament Competition.
- b. In the case of a conflict with one of the committee members, the Tournament Director shall appoint a replacement.

2. NCFCA Representation

Any league officials present at the Tournament should be invited to serve on the Oversight Committee if they are interested in serving. League officials include Board members, Regional Directors, State Representatives, and NCFCA Committee Members.

3. This Committee Shall:

- a. Make final decisions regarding appropriate tournament attire and dress code compliance.
- b. Resolve problems that threaten either the integrity or operation of the tournament, including disqualifying participants and ejecting disruptive parties from the tournament site.
- c. In cases where participants or observers related to a participant (i.e., family members, coaches, close friends, etc.) attempt to influence the judge before, during, or after the round, the tournament director may impose one or more of the following penalties:
 - 1) Forfeiture of the round.
 - 2) Reduction of ranking for that round.
 - 3) For serious offenses, disqualification of the participant.

4. The Oversight Committee shall adjudicate all matters of alleged ethics violations.

VI. TOURNAMENT DISPUTE RESOLUTION

NCFCA is committed to Biblical conflict resolution and the Peacemakers Pledge (www.HisPeace.org). All disputes related to NCFCA Qualifying Tournaments or the National Tournament shall be resolved in accordance with the principles and guidelines established by the Institute for Christian Conciliation.