



NCFCA Tournament Rules

I. NCFCA Mission Statement. 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, addressing life issues from a biblical worldview in a manner that glorifies God. To provide these opportunities to homeschool students, NCFCA shall facilitate qualifying tournaments throughout the country and host an annual National Championship.

II. Sanctioning

A. Process

- 1. Scheduling.** Tournaments that are part of the NCFCA Qualification System must be applied for through each Region's Leadership Team, which consists of the Regional Coordinator and State Representatives in each region. Appropriate applications should be submitted to the NCFCA Sanctioning Committee by December 1 for the upcoming competitive season.
- 2. Rule Changes/Modifications.** NCFCA Sanctioned Speech and Debate Tournaments must follow the requirements included in these Tournament Rules, the NCFCA Qualification System, the NCFCA Tabulation Guidelines, and other documents published on the NCFCA website. Change requests must be specified in writing when the Tournament Host Application is submitted, and any requested additions and modifications to these requirements must be approved in writing by the Sanctioning Committee.

B. Participation

- 1. Eligibility.** A qualified competitor will be an NCFCA Affiliate in good standing. Specifics regarding qualifications for eligibility may be found on the NCFCA website. (www.NCFCA.org/Eligibility)
- 2. Limitations**
 - a. Debate**
 - i.** A debater may participate in both Lincoln Douglas Value and Team Policy Debate over the course of the competitive season.
 - ii.** A debater may only register for one debate event per tournament. It is not possible for a debater to register for both Lincoln Douglas and Team Policy Debate at the same tournament, nor is it possible for a debater to participate in Team Policy with two different partners at the same tournament.

- iii. Competitors qualified for either their Regional Invitational or the National Championship in both Team Policy and LD Value Debate will be required to choose a style of debate in which to participate at the next level Tournament (either their Regional Invitational or the National Championship).
- iv. Team Policy debaters may compete and qualify with different partners over the course of the competitive season, but must choose one partner with whom to participate at the next level tournament (either their Regional Invitational or the National Championship).

b. Speech

- i. A competitor may participate in a maximum of five events at any given tournament except for the Regional Invitational, where the competitor may compete in all events for which he has earned a qualification.
- ii. A competitor may only register once in each event at any given tournament. (For example, a student may not register for Duo Interpretation twice, with two different partners, or register twice for Illustrated Oratory with two different speeches at the same tournament.)
- iii. A Duo Interpretation participant may compete and qualify with different partners during the competitive season, but must choose one partner with whom to participate at the next level tournament (either their Regional Invitational or the National Championship).
- iv. At the Regional Invitational or the National Championship, a competitor must perform the same piece that he performed when the original invitation to compete at that tournament was awarded. In other words, it is both the piece and the person that is awarded an invitation to the higher level of competition. Minor revisions to the piece are allowed.

3. Dress Code. The spirit of the Dress Code is modesty and professionalism with the intent to glorify Christ. The goal is to minimize the focus on the body or outward appearance and maximize the focus on the development of ideas and communication skills. Competitors must be professional, clean and well groomed. The letter of the Dress Code is as follows:

- a. **Gentlemen:** Gentlemen shall wear suits or sport coats with dress slacks, together with a tie.
- b. **Ladies:** Modesty is the key and may include suits, dresses, and skirts with hemlines to the bottom of the knee. Tight-fitting/low-cut clothing is inappropriate. Midriff must remain covered when gesturing in speeches.

4. **Special Needs Students.** No exceptions to the rules may be made for students with special needs and/or circumstances. From an administrative standpoint, providing for exceptions is not possible. The ultimate purpose for participating in competitive forensics is to improve communication skills. Special needs students have shown much improvement in this environment.

C. Tournament Authority

1. The National Board of Directors has final authority over all NCFCA Sanctioned Tournaments.
2. The Regional Leadership Team (RLT) is responsible to ensure that all Regional Qualifying Tournaments are run in accordance with the currently published NCFCA rules, guidelines, policies, procedures, and Mission Statement. To help meet this goal, the RLT is responsible for approving key tournament administrative positions such as Tournament Director and other administrative staff (including but not limited to Tabulation, Judge Orientation, Ballot Distribution, Ballot Return and Extemp Prep). The RLT is also responsible for ensuring that the tournament staff is adequately trained in NCFCA rules, guidelines, policies, and procedures so that any tournament issues which may arise are handled appropriately, thoroughly, and consistently from tournament to tournament.
3. The Tournament Director, working with the Regional Coordinator (if at a Regional Qualifier) and the Judge Orientation Director, will:
 - a. Adjudicate matters of alleged rules and ethics violations.
 - b. Make decisions regarding appropriate tournament attire and dress code compliance.
 - c. Resolve problems that threaten either the integrity or operation of the tournament in order to maintain a safe, educational environment for tournament participants.

D. Adjudication Procedures

1. Dress Code Violations

- a. If a judge finds that a competitor has violated the dress code, the Tournament Director will validate the complaint and ensure that the competitor's team shall be awarded a loss for the round (Debate) or drop the competitor to the bottom of the room for the round (Speech) and give the competitor a chance to change into appropriate attire.
- b. If a tournament official finds that a competitor has violated the dress code, the Tournament Director may either give the competitor a warning and chance to change into appropriate attire or award the competitor a loss for the round (Debate) or drop the student to the bottom of the room for the round (Speech) and give the competitor a chance to change into appropriate attire.

- c. If a competitor does not heed the warning to change into appropriate attire, the Tournament Director may disqualify the competitor from the tournament.
 - 2. **Competitive Event Rule Violations.** In the event that a potential Debate or Individual Event rule violation is identified or observed, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Judge Orientation staff, who will work with the Judge Orientation Director and Tournament Director (and Regional Coordinator, if at a Regional Qualifying Tournament) to determine the validity and consequences of the violation.
 - 3. **Behavioral or Ethical Issues.** In the event that a potential behavioral or ethical issue is identified or observed, the matter shall be brought to the attention of the Judge Orientation staff, who will work with the Judge Orientation Director and Tournament Director (and Regional Coordinator, if at a Regional Qualifying Tournament) to determine the validity and consequences of the situation.
- E. 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 Championship shall be resolved in accordance with the principles and guidelines established by the Institute for Christian Conciliation.

III. Judges

- A. **Judge Philosophy.** Information on judge recruitment and the NCFCA Judge Philosophy is covered extensively in documentation published on the NCFCA website. (www.ncfca.org/MissionandPhilosophy)
- B. **Judge Eligibility.**
 - 1. **Age.** A judge must be at least 18 years old, must not have been eligible to compete in any NCFCA event during the current season, and must not be currently enrolled in high school.
 - 2. **Relationship.** Judges must be completely unrelated to the competitors they are assigned to judge.
 - 3. **Re-Judging.** Judges should not judge a speaker more than one time in the same Individual Event or on the same side of a debate round in any given tournament. The same judge may judge the speaker in a different event.
- C. **Training.** Each judge should attend the appropriate Judge Orientation presentation before judging.
- D. **Decisions.** All judge decisions are final as they apply to assessment of the round. However, adjudication determinations by NCFCA officials resulting from issues regarding dress code or rule violations or behavioral or ethical matters supersede judge assessments.

IV. Debate

A. Style

1. **Conduct.** With respect to general behavioral constraints, participants, coaches, and parents are reminded that NCFCA debate is a formal event done for the glory of the Lord. Conduct should reflect respect for our Lord Jesus Christ, other participants, the debate activity, and the Mission Statement. Judges have the option of giving a double loss in a round in which neither team argues in a manner consistent with these standards.
2. **Delivery.** Eloquence invigorates content. Delivery should be civil and comprehensible. Conversational style debate is valued.
3. **Content.** Content of NCFCA debate rounds should be appropriate for general audiences. Content should enhance the judge's understanding of the topic and should not be included for shock value. Gratuitous vulgarity and explicit material is never acceptable. Discretion should be exercised by students, parents, and coaches when determining material for competition.
4. **General Argumentation**
 - a. **Reasoning.** Arguments should be supported with what a general listener would consider "good reasons." Analysis, explanation, and appeals to common sense are considered appropriate argumentative strategy.
 - b. **Evidence.** Use of evidence and support adds validity to the advocate's arguments. Debaters should be prepared to provide the full citation of sources, source qualifications, and publication dates to enable clash over evidence quality. During the round, evidence may be requested and reviewed by the opposing team. At the end of the round, the judges may request to review evidence presented during the round. Debate is a verbal activity; visual aids are not permitted. Further guidelines regarding evidence and ethics are in the NCFCA Evidence and Ethics Guidelines posted on the NCFCA website.
(www.ncfca.org/EvidenceStandards)

B. Structure

1. **Speaker Order/Times.** NCFCA Debate rounds shall adhere to the structure outlined in the NCFCA Timer Schedules for Team Policy and Lincoln Douglas Value Debate, found on the NCFCA website. (www.ncfca.org/DebateTiming)
2. **Tag Teaming.** A debater should rely upon his or her own reasoning while speaking in the round. Communicating with his or her partner in any way while at the podium (i.e., "tag teaming") is not allowed.
3. **In and Out Speaking.** In Team Policy Debate, the 1AC speaker shall deliver the 1AR; the 2AC delivers the 2AR; the 1NC the 1NR; and the 2NC the 2NR. Partners switching order in the middle of the round (i.e., "in and out speaking") is not allowed. Each speaker shall participate in his respective cross-examination role, both asking and answering questions.

4. **Time Keeping.** Tournaments are required to provide an additional (non-judge) person with a digital timer to give time signals for each speech and prep time. No team or individual is allowed to take prep time immediately before cross-examination. Prep time is deducted from the team who speaks next. Complete instructions for timing debate can be found on the NCFCA website. (www.ncfca.org/DebateTiming)
5. **Audience Influence.** In instances where observers related to participants (i.e., family members, coaches, close friends) attempt to influence the outcome of the round before, during or after the round, the following penalties may be imposed:
 - a. Loss of the round
 - b. Reduction of speaker points for the affected round by up to 50%
 - c. Disqualification of the team from the tournament

V. Individual Events

- A. **Individual Event Rules.** All Individual Event rules will be followed at all NCFCA Sanctioned Tournaments. The rules for each event may be found on the NCFCA website. (www.ncfca.org/IEEventRulesandDocuments)
- B. **Script Submission.** Scripts will be submitted for all Platform and Interpretive events at all NCFCA Sanctioned Tournaments. Relevant scripts must be submitted before a competitor will be allowed to compete. The Script Submission Guidelines and Script Submission forms may be found on the NCFCA website. (www.ncfca.org/ScriptSubmissions)
- C. **Timing Individual Events**
 1. **Limited Preparation Events**
 - a. Tournaments are required to provide an additional (non-judge) person with a digital timer to give time signals for Apologetics, Extemporaneous, and Impromptu. Complete instructions for giving appropriate time signals can be found on the NCFCA website. (www.ncfca.org/IETiming)
 - b. The timekeeper will report the length of the speech to the judges once the speech has ended.
 - c. 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 possible, one of the judges may keep the time.
 - c. The timepiece is to be kept running during the speech but NO hand signals are to be given.

- d. The timekeeper will report the length of the speech to the judges once the speech has ended.
- 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.

D. Extemporaneous (Extemp) Prep Room

1. **Timing.** The Extemporaneous (Extemp) speaker will report to the Extemp Prep Room at the appointed time. A late arrival will result in less prep time for the speaker. All Extemp speakers must speak at their allotted speaking time.
2. **Supervision.** The Extemp Prep Room must be supervised by a tournament official at all times students are present and the room must be locked between rounds. Complete instructions regarding supervision of the Extemp Prep Room may be found on the NCFCA website.
(www.ncfca.org/TournamentAdministrationDocuments)
3. **Access.** Extemp speakers may not come and go from the Extemp Prep Room. Speakers should leave the Extemp Prep Room only when going to deliver their speeches. Speakers may return to the Extemp Prep Room briefly to reorganize their Extemp boxes after they have finished speaking, taking care not to talk or distract other speakers.
4. **Assistance.** There should be no talking in the Extemp Prep Room. Students may not ask each other for help. Students may not use electronic devices during prep time.
5. **Files.** All individual and club boxes should be labeled. 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. Written permission must be provided to the Tournament Director before the tournament begins.

VI. Tournament Administration

- A. **Script Submission.** Judge Orientation staff will collect required scripts at the beginning of each tournament.
- B. **Judge Orientation.** A Judge Orientation will be available before every round of an NCFCA sanctioned tournament. All Judge Orientations will utilize the PowerPoint presentations on the NCFCA website.
(www.ncfca.org/TournamentAdministrationDocuments) Judge Orientation staff will also handle any inquiries regarding rules that may arise during a tournament.
- C. **Ballot Distribution.** Ballot Distribution staff will distribute ballots to the available judge pool in a manner consistent with the NCFCA Judge Philosophy
(www.ncfca.org/MissionandPhilosophy) with consideration given to balancing the judge panels between various types of judges.

- D. Ballot Return.** At the end of every round, Ballot Return staff will collect ballots from all judges, checking for accuracy and completion before sending the ballot packets to be tabulated.
- E. Tabulation.** Tournament tabulation will be performed using NCFCA's *C-TaP* software and spreadsheets and must follow NCFCA Tabulation Guidelines and Appendices, all available on the NCFCA website. (www.ncfca.org/DebateTabulation and www.ncfca.org/IETabulation) All scores must be tabulated at least twice independently and then the results verified for accuracy.

VII. Tournament Resolution

- A. Awards.** The type and number of awards given is to be determined by the Regional Leadership Team for each Regional Qualifying Tournament and the National Tournament Director for each national level tournament. Consideration should be given to the level of tournament. Awards for the Regional Qualifying Tournaments should be simple and inexpensive. More prestigious awards are best reserved for upper level tournaments (Regional Invitationals, National Opens and the National Championship).
- B. Results**
 - 1. Recognition.** All competitors participating in elimination rounds will be recognized during the Awards Ceremony. Normal protocol at Regional Qualifying Tournaments is to announce placings for the top half of students participating in elimination rounds of the tournament (e.g., Finalists). Other students breaking to elimination rounds are recognized alphabetically within the event (e.g., SemiFinalists). Exceptions may apply.
 - 2. Confidentiality.** Tabulation data is kept confidential except for tournament results that are publicly announced during the awards ceremony.
 - 3. Posting.** Tournament results announced at the tournament may be posted to the NCFCA website following the tournament.
 - 4. Contest Period.** Tournament results are subject to review and consideration of any appeal properly filed with the Tournament Director within 72 hours after the completion of the Awards Ceremony. Appeals regarding potential ethics violations are not constrained by the 72 hour window. Any and all appeals filed must include complete name and contact information of the appealing party along with a brief description of the alleged violation(s) and any relevant documentation.
- C. Validation Process.** NCFCA tournaments are fully sanctioned once all tournament reports have been submitted and results are verified and finalized at the National level. Extreme care should be given to ensure accuracy of results. NCFCA will not honor slots awarded in error or award extra slots to compensate for a tabulation or administrative error. All slots awarded at the Awards Ceremony are contingent upon tournament verification and are not considered valid until tournament results are finalized.

1. Report submittal

- a. **Department Approval.** Following the tournament, the Tabulation Director will complete the Tournament Results Report and submit it, along with all tabulation files, to the Tournament Director. The Judge Orientation Director will complete the Tournament Incident Report and submit it to the Tournament Director (www.ncfca.org/SanctioningDocuments)
- b. **Director Approval.** The Tournament Director will verify and approve the Tournament Results Report, Tournament Incident Report, and tab files and complete the Tournament Certification Form. The Tournament Director will forward these documents to the State Representative.
- c. **Regional Approval.** The State Representative and then the Regional Coordinator will approve and submit all documents to the NCFCA National Office.
- d. **National Approval.** The National Office will verify and approve results and documentation. Valid invitations to the Regional Invitational and/or National Championship are contingent upon National verification and approval of tournament submittals.

2. Timeline

- a. All tournament documentation is due in the NCFCA Office within one week of the completion of the Awards Ceremony. All tournament documentation must be submitted to the NCFCA Office at least two weeks prior to the start of the Regional Invitational, even if that means less than a week would elapse between the Awards Ceremony and submittal to the NCFCA Office.
- b. If tournament documentation is submitted on time, NCFCA may take up to one month following tournament documentation submittal to verify standings before results are considered final. If tournament documentation is submitted later than one week after completion of the Awards Ceremony, NCFCA will verify standings at its convenience but before the beginning of the Regional Invitational.