



## **NCFCA Proposal to Adjust Regional Qualifier Schedules**

At the 2016 National Championship, we announced several changes for the 2016-2017 competition season, including debate resolutions, dates and locations for National Open tournaments, and that we will be testing a new debate event (moot court) at National Opens and the National Championship next year. We also announced that the NCFCA Board is considering—but has not yet decided on—adjusting the tournament structure for regional qualifiers to allow for shorter, less stressful, more accessible tournaments without compromising the level of competitive excellence.

As we announced at the National Championship, we are currently soliciting feedback for this proposal and have already begun implementing your suggestions. In addition to sharing the amended proposal, this white paper serves to explain some of our reasoning behind the changes being considered. The Board is extremely interested in hearing your thoughts, suggestions, and concerns, and will consider this feedback as we prayerfully determine whether to move ahead with this new format. What we are asking of Affiliates is simple: honest, objective, thoughtful consideration of the proposal; mature, constructive discussion among families and clubs that addresses the proposal from a biblical worldview in a manner that glorifies God; and a willingness to participate in the decision-making process by sharing that feedback directly with NCFCA leadership in a respectful and helpful way.

The specifics of the proposed changes are below, along with comparisons of the adjusted proposal to the initial proposal announced at the National Championship. We invite you to share your thoughts with us over the next few weeks through the link on your NCFCA dashboard, and we will fully evaluate all submissions before reaching a final decision. The form will be available until **11:59 PM central time on Saturday, July 23<sup>rd</sup>**.

### **Proposal Specifics**

- The tournament schedule would be restructured at entry-level tournaments (regional qualifiers) to have the standard number of preliminary rounds (six debate and three speech), and would then move to a limited number of elimination rounds for both speech and debate.
- Speech rounds at regional qualifiers would move straight to a final round, whereas debate would move directly to semifinal and final rounds. Placings for top teams and speakers that did not advance to the elimination rounds would be determined by preliminary round competition results.
  - The original proposal was to base placings at entry-level tournaments (regional qualifiers) entirely on preliminary round competition, as opposed to having students advance through an elimination bracket.
- The total number of students advancing to the Regional Championship from each qualifier would remain unchanged. For example, if a tournament had 35 debate teams, the top 16 would still advance to the Regional Championship, just as in the current system. For speech, if a speech even has 40 participants, the top 16 participants would still advance to the Regional Championship.

- National Opens, Regional Championships, and the National Championship remain unchanged by this proposal.

### **Proposal Purposes and Goals**

- To make it easier for active families to compete in multiple tournaments over the course of the season by decreasing the cost for an additional night's stay at the end of the tournament, and potentially allowing them to attend their home churches more often.
- To make it easier for more parents to accompany their children to tournaments without giving up other responsibilities.
- To encourage growth in the NCFCA by allowing new families to have first tournament experiences that are not quite as overwhelming and stressful, while still upholding the standard of competitive excellence NCFCA has pioneered for homeschool students.
- To allow host facilities to more easily accommodate NCFCA (and thereby create additional opportunities for NCFCA tournaments) by allowing the host facilities to "reset" and prepare for Sunday worship services earlier on Saturday afternoons or evenings.
- To more clearly delineate between tournament levels by making regional qualifiers more easily identifiable as entry-level tournaments, while also increasing the value, appeal, and recognition of upper-level tournament competition.

### **Proposal Benefits**

- Reduces cost and time burden on families for most tournaments, allowing increased means to participate in more tournaments, including National Opens
- Requires fewer community judges for most tournaments
- Increased ability to attract potential facilities due to fewer difficulties with being able to vacate campus earlier on Saturday
- Reduced downtime for the vast majority of competitors at most tournaments
- Greater distinction between types of tournaments at the different levels of NCFCA's qualification structure
- Increases incentive to participate in National Open tournaments
- Maintains the ability for top students to experience elimination rounds, even at regional qualifiers
- Maintains the ability of younger and less experienced competitors to observe and learn from top students

## **Sample Proposed Tournament Schedule**

*Please note: Current regional qualifier schedules for the majority of the country generally run from approximately 7:30 AM to 10:00 PM on the three days of competition.*

<b><u>Proposed Schedule</u></b>	
<b><u>Day 1</u></b>	Check in
<b><u>Day 2</u></b>	
8:00 AM	Debate 1
10:00 AM	Speech 1A
12:00 PM	Debate 2
2:00 PM	Speech 1B
4:00 PM	Debate 3
6:00 PM	Speech 2A
<b><u>Day 3</u></b>	
8:00 AM	Debate 4
10:00 AM	Speech 2B
12:00 PM	Debate 5
2:00 PM	Speech 3A
4:00 PM	Debate 6
6:00 PM	Speech 3B
8:00 PM	Debate SemiFinal
<b><u>Day 4</u></b>	
8:00 AM	Speech Final
10:00 AM	Debate Final
12:00 PM	Lunch - clean up
2:00 PM	Awards

## **Potential Disadvantages to Proposal**

- Fewer opportunities to train administrative staff in elimination protocols
- Potentially fewer competitors experience elimination rounds at the qualifier level