

Florida Forensic League, Inc. Civility Code (Updated Fall 2023)

This document provides guidelines to coaches, judges, contestants, observers, and others regarding decorum at league tournaments and meetings. Our goal is to foster an environment which encourages a full and fair discussion of material issues; any activity or behavior in contravention of this goal is discouraged and may be sanctioned in accordance with Article IX of the bylaws of the league. Anything not covered explicitly in Article IX is hereby covered by Article IV, Section IV.

Meeting Decorum

1. Speakers are permitted to deliver their comments without interruption with the caveat that members of the Board of Directors may object to the relevance of the information provided by the speaker by asking the meeting chairperson (normally the president) only to rule on the relevancy of the information provided.
2. Speakers should focus on relevant issues, not on politics, personalities, or matters that are not relevant to the issue at hand.
- 2a. Speaking on politics, personal issues, or matters will result in a verbal reprimand. Failure to comply a second time will result in removal from the meeting being held.
3. Speakers must provide printed copies of any documents they wish to be considered as evidence to the Secretary. This evidence must be presented at least 2 days in advance. Evidence presented the day of will not be accepted as the Board of Directors will not make hasty rulings on evidence. The Secretary will not return the copies. This may also happen electronically via a google form to be set up at a time to be determined later.
4. Discussions by audience members while others are speaking are not permitted during the Board meeting. These discussions are to be held elsewhere so as not to be disruptive to the conduct of business at the meeting.
5. Any member head coach or named assistant on submitted FFL paperwork may speak on any issue, provided that the remarks of the speaker remain relevant to the issues before the Board of Directors and/or the membership.
- 5a. Coaches and Assistant Coaches must be listed on membership paperwork in order to participate at FFL Meetings.
6. Only the person recognized by the chairperson has the floor. A person who wishes to speak on a matter should raise his/her hand to be recognized by the chairperson. All speakers should identify themselves for the record.
7. Speakers shall not speak to items not on or substantially related to the official agenda. This is to respect the limited time allotted to each meeting.
8. Every speech ought to be delivered with respect to those who are present.
9. The use of language that is abusive, threatening, obscene, or slanderous, including using profanities, insults, or other disparaging remarks or gestures will not be tolerated.

Tournament Decorum

1. Respect shall be shown to all persons and property, especially host school facilities.
2. The *Head Coach*, *Assistant Coach*, and/or the person designated by the principal to function as supervising adult of a school at a tournament shall be responsible for the conduct of his/her students, judges, and observers affiliated with the school. This person must be on campus at all times during the tournament and available to answer questions from the tournament staff. Only these persons may speak on behalf of a school, either for raising questions/concerns, filing protests, or responding to protests.
3. Protests relating to evidence in debate rounds must be staked in the round and must be started in round- protests started outside of the round in question may not be considered. This procedure is different to speech given that disclosure happens in debate.
4. Protests relating to speech rounds are required to be filed within one hour of the round in question ending. Tournament staff will maintain a google form to submit protests and will contact individuals as your protest is being considered pursuant to FFL Bylaws. Additionally, protests submitted to the Ombudsperson on paper form will be accepted.
5. No person at a league tournament shall audio tape or videotape any round or performance.
6. No coach or judge shall ask a student to reveal the name of his/her school. Similarly, students should not reveal the name of their school to anyone except a tournament official.
7. All questions and concerns should be brought to the Tournament Ombudsperson, who will be stationed in an area accessible to coaches and judges. The tabulation room is not the proper venue for initial concerns. The Ombudsperson, who shall have no other responsibilities during the tournament, will bring relevant issues to the attention of the tournament staff and/or league officers.
8. Formal protests must be submitted on an official form provided by the Ombudsperson and in a timely manner as defined by the governing documents of the league. Unwritten and untimely protests will not be entertained. Coaches shall refrain from participation in gossip and hearsay regarding protests.
9. Requesting that a judge divulge his/her decision/rankings in a round, the questioning of a judge's decision, and/or the harassment of a judge is unacceptable behavior. Contestants and coaches with concerns about a judge should bring that information to the attention of the Ombudsperson.
10. The use of language that is abusive, threatening, obscene, or slanderous, including using profanities, insults, or other disparaging remarks or gestures will not be tolerated.
11. No person with access to information about tournament results shall divulge those results to others.
12. No person shall provide coaching assistance to contestants from the time that a round begins to the time that a round ends, including the period after a contestant has drawn his/her question in extemporaneous speaking events and during prep time in all debate events.

Email, Social Media and Meeting Conduct

1. The use of language that is abusive, threatening, obscene, or slanderous, including using profanities, insults, or other disparaging remarks or gestures will not be tolerated.
2. Use of social media that uses the FFL logo without express written permission is a violation of intellectual property. Use of the FFL logo outside of express written consent by the President of FFL is hereby prohibited. Member schools may use the logo for the purpose of promoting student achievement in attending the Varsity State and/or Novice State Championship. You may email the league president at flforensicleague@gmail.com for an official logo in HD quality.
3. Institutions and employees should refrain from using social media as a platform to disparage other institutions or individuals affiliated with those institutions.. For the purposes of this document, disparage is to mean “language that unduly harms the reputation of any individual coaching or competing with an FFL member institution”. This standard will also be applied to students competing under FFL member schools.
4. FFL will engage in email correspondences with the coaches of record for member school (Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches) as well as school admin. This is to maintain a clear chain of communication and to not allow emails to be misinterpreted due to various email chains. Any emails from students will be redirected to the head coach for clarification.
5. FFL takes ethics violations seriously. If a member school would like to file an ethics violation, they may do so. The head coach of record is requested to contact the President of the league, provide a detailed account of the violation, and attach any supporting documents. The Executive Board will conduct an investigation. If a violation exists, the Executive Board will take appropriate action. However, if the ethics-related misconduct allegations are proven on the preponderance of the evidence to be made as a personal attack or strongly without merit, it will result in actions being taken against the individual or program that filed the violation. The results of any investigation by the panel (as established and consistent with FFL bylaws) shall be made available to the FFL member head coaches.