

FLORIDA FORENSIC LEAGUE



STANDING RULES
Updated October 2025

Rule 1: Sanctioned Events

- A. Regional Qualifying Tournaments (if held, will take place the first weekend of February) and the State Championship Tournament will provide competition in the following events:
 - 1. Lincoln Douglas Debate
 - 2. Public Forum Debate
 - 3. Congressional Debate
 - 4. International Extemporaneous Speaking
 - 5. United States Extemporaneous Speaking
 - 6. Original Oratory
 - 7. Humorous Interpretation
 - 8. Duo Interpretation
 - 9. Dramatic Interpretation
 - 10. Program Oral Interpretation
 - 11. Informative Speaking
 - 12. Impromptu Speaking
 - 13. World Schools Debate
 - 14. After Dinner Speaking
- B. The Novice State Tournament may include Declamation and Mixed Extemporaneous Speaking.
- C. The Board of Directors shall maintain updated ballots for all of the above events.
- D. Use of Technology
 - 1. Competitors will be permitted to use the Internet at all FFL Sanctioned Tournaments when internet access is publicly available. Publicly available is defined as, WiFi Internet access is available to all students competing, or all competitors will have access to desktop computers with internet availability.
 - 2. In Extemporaneous Speaking, students can access information on jump drives, which will be screened by a tournament official/extemp prep room proctor.
 - 3. The use of laptop computers shall be permitted in all debate events (other than World Schools Debate) at all FFL tournaments.
 - 4. Per the NSDA's "Guidelines for Use of Internet-Enabled Devices in Debate Events," during rounds, students may not use the internet to gain help from coaches, other students, or any person, such that it would prevent the speech from being the original work of the competitor. During rounds, Internet access, use of e-mail, instant messaging, or other means of receiving information from sources outside the debate round is prohibited. This applies to all debate events (Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Public Forum Debate, World Schools Debate), as well as to Congressional Debate and Extemporaneous Speaking.
 - 5. If internet access cannot be made available to all competitors, or its availability is inconsistent, contestants shall be prohibited from the use of any electronic retrieval system (recording or information retrieval system) now known or to be invented during any round in any event at any FFL tournament including the Extemporaneous Speaking preparation room(s), except that electric or electronic devices that are incapable of sending or

receiving information between persons may be used for the sole purpose of keeping time.

6. Contestants electing to use computers are responsible for providing their own computers, batteries, extension cords, and all other necessary accessories. Tournament hosts shall not be responsible for providing computers, printers, software, paper, or extension cords for contestants.
7. Contestants choosing to use laptop computers and related equipment accept the risk of equipment failure or limited/no Internet connectivity. No special consideration or accommodations, including no additional prep time or speech time, will be given by judges or contest directors should equipment or Internet connectivity failure occur.
8. By choosing to use laptop computers in the round, debaters are consenting to give tournament officials the right to search their files. Debaters who do not wish to consent should not use computers in the round.
9. Sanction: Contestants found to have violated Provision #4 above shall be disqualified from the tournament and shall forfeit all rounds.
10. The League will make accommodations for students with disabilities in regard to the use of technology. Documentation of the disability must be provided ten calendar days prior to the Regional Tournament and State tournament. The documentation must be available for review by the Executive Board.

Rule 2: Double Entry

- A. Students may double enter at League tournaments in the following events unless otherwise stipulated in the tournament invite due to host site logistical incompatibility:
 1. International Extemporaneous Speaking
 2. United States Extemporaneous Speaking (but not both IX and UX; IX must enter another IE event, UX must enter another IE event)
 3. Original Oratory
 4. Duo Interpretation
 5. Program Oral Interpretation
 6. Dramatic Interpretation
 7. Humorous Interpretation
 8. Declamation
 9. Original Oratory
 10. Humorous Interpretation
 11. Informative Speaking
 12. Impromptu Speaking
 13. After Dinner Speaking
- B. Students in the following events may not double-enter: Public Forum Debate, Lincoln Douglas Debate, World Schools Debate, and Congressional Debate.
- C. Students may not double-enter in multiple Limited Prep (Extemporaneous Speaking and Impromptu) Events. They would still be allowed to double-enter in one Limited Prep event and any other Interpretation or Public Address event.
- D. No student may compete in more than two events at any League tournament. This prohibition includes Returning State Champions who return to compete at State Championships the following year (see Rule 7).

Rule 3: School-Sanctioned Adults

- A. Each school attending an event sanctioned and/or sponsored by the League must be a member of the League and the *Head Coach* and/or *Assistant Coach* whose name appears on the member's application must attend the event along with other students and adults.
- B. If the *Head Coach* and the *Assistant Coach* are unable to attend an event sanctioned and/or sponsored by the League with their students, the *Head Coach* must send a letter from a school administrator on official letterhead designating an adult to be responsible for the group. This school-sanctioned adult must be at least 21 years old and out of high school. The Regional Director (for a Regional Qualifying Tournament) or the President (for any State Tournaments) must receive this letter five calendar days before the start of the tournament.
- C. Members that fail to submit this documentation may be excluded from competition at the discretion of the Regional Director (for a Regional Qualifying Tournament) or the Executive Board (for any State Tournaments). Emergency circumstances may warrant an exception from this rule; the Regional Director (for a Regional Tournament) or the Executive Board (for any State Tournaments) shall have the authority to grant exceptions on a case-by-case basis.

Rule 4: Judging Responsibilities

- A. At all League tournaments, at least one adult from each school must be available to judge all events for the entire tournament.
- B. Judges for all tournaments sanctioned by the League are required in the following ratios:
 - 1. One (1) judge per two (2) entries or fraction thereof in Lincoln Douglas Debate.
 - 2. One (1) judge per two (2) entries or fraction thereof in Public Forum Debate.
 - 3. One (1) judge per five (5) entries or fraction thereof in Speech/IE events/ Congressional Debate.
 - 4. One (1) judge per two (2) entries or fraction thereof in World Schools Debate

When coaches who do not hold elected positions within the League are asked to help at a State Tournament, the League will allow for one "covered" judge spot for the coach if they cannot supply an additional judge; however, the coach cannot list themselves in any debate pool in order to cover that obligation.
- C. All judges need to be trained prior to judging at League tournaments. Coaches are responsible for rating their judges (A, B, C, D) on the tournament registration website and will answer questions about prior experience to help with judge placement.
 - 1. A - Excellent. This rating is reserved for individuals with extensive national and local experience judging high school debate competitions. They can flow and have a deep understanding of the criteria, are deeply knowledgeable in the field, and consistently provide insightful and constructive RFDs.
 - 2. B - Good. This rating is for individuals with considerable experience in judging local high school debate competitions, although not as extensive as those receiving an "A" rating. They may be able to flow and have a deep understanding of the criteria, are highly knowledgeable in the field, and consistently provide insightful and constructive RFDs.
 - 3. C - Fair. This rating is for individuals with moderate experience in judging local high school debate competitions. They may have participated in a few competitions and understand the criteria well. They can make comments and follow the round, but are not flowing the round. While their feedback may lack

the depth and insight of more experienced judges, they still provide constructive comments to help participants improve.

4. D - Novice. This rating is for new judges with limited experience in judging high school debate competitions - typically, two or fewer competitions. They are still learning the ropes and may not have a firm grasp of the criteria or the ability to provide extensive feedback. However, they are able to offer their observations and contribute to the evaluation process.
- D. At the Novice State Tournament, judges may be high school juniors and seniors with at least 250 NSDA points or equivalent experience. At the Middle State Tournament, judges may be high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors with at least 250 NSDA points or equivalent experience. Verification of student points and grade levels via printouts of NSDA rosters must be sent to the President or a designee prior to the tournament, or brought to registration; the President shall designate a member of the Board of Directors to review the verification forms. A \$10 administrative charge will be assessed for each instance in which league officials must verify student points because the school did not provide documentation at registration.
- E. Failure to provide trained judges, or providing the correct number of qualified judges, shall result in the requisite number of students from that school being eliminated from the tournament. This includes if coaches enter student judges who are the wrong grade level or do not have the minimum requisite NSDA points on record. Missed judge calls or refusal to accept a judging assignment may also result in the requisite number of competitors from that school being eliminated from the tournament.
- F. At their discretion, each Tournament Director of a tournament sanctioned by the League may impose a \$25 penalty for any no-show judge that results in the reassignment of a ballot in any round. Hidden judge drops at a State Championship Tournament will incur a fine of \$250 plus the \$25 fine per round they were assigned and missed. At the State Championship Tournament, judge drops at registration will incur a fine of \$200.
- G. There shall also be a \$10 penalty for each judge name change made at a tournament registration.
- H. At a Regional Tournament, the Regional Director shall be responsible for enforcing judge requirements; at a State Tournaments, the Executive Board is responsible for this task.
- I. The Board of Directors shall conduct a brief judge instruction session before the first round judge call at State Tournaments. Regional Directors may elect to hold a similar session for their respective Regional Tournament. The Board of Directors will be responsible for determining and publishing via the tournament invitation what level of (unqualified) judges would be required to attend a unified judge training during the first competitive round of a tournament.
- J. If any coach in or out of the judge pool refuses or fails to pick up an elimination round ballot, their school shall be fined \$50, and the school of the person who judges the round shall be credited \$25.
- K. In paneled debate rounds, judges shall not confer with each other or give any oral feedback before all ballots have been submitted.
- L. In the event that a school changes or drops a judge after the strike sheet for debate has been published, the school making the change shall be required to pay a "Hired Judge" fee of \$225.

Rule 5: Alternates & Drops

This rule is only applicable if Regional Tournaments take place during years when the State Championship is not set in advance by the Board of Directors as an "Open State" Championship Tournament.

- A. An alternate is the next-place contestant/team/group from a Regional Qualifying Tournament who did not advance to the State Championship Tournament. The alternate contestant/team/group may be invited to participate at the State Championship Tournament if one of the qualifiers withdraws. In each event at all Regional Qualifying Tournaments, a First Alternate and Second Alternate shall be designated. The names and school affiliations of the alternates must be included in the Regional Director's report to the President.
- B. It is the philosophy of the membership of this organization that Regional Qualifying Tournaments are not a venue for students to practice. Only students who are willing and able to attend the State Championship tournament should attend their Regional Qualifying tournament. A school's entry fee for the State Championship shall be computed on the basis of the number of students who qualify to the State Tournament, even when a coach communicates in advance that their students will not attend the State Championship. The Head Coach for a member shall immediately report drops to the President, who shall then invite the alternates to compete in the order designated in the region's report.
- C. If one of the members of a two-person event cannot compete at the State Tournament after winning at the Regional Tournament, that team shall drop, and the alternate team shall be invited to compete.
- D. If more than one-third of the members of a Regional Tournament qualifying World Schools Team cannot compete at the State Championship Tournament, that team shall drop and the alternate team shall be invited to compete.
- E. If a qualifying student moves to another school within or outside the boundaries of their previous FFL district, if the student's new school is a member of the FFL, they will be permitted to compete. Situations that arise because of emergencies can be appealed to the Executive Board of the League on a case-by-case basis.

Rule 6: Number Advancing to the State Championship

This rule is only applicable if Regional Tournaments take place during years when the State Championship is not set in advance by the Board of Directors as an "Open State" Championship Tournament.

- A. The number of entries to the State Championship Tournament shall be determined by the following formula:
 - 1. Determine the total number of schools at all Regional Qualifying Tournaments in the previous year.
 - 2. Divide the number of schools at each Regional Qualifying Tournament by the number from #1 above.
 - 3. Multiply the number from #2 above by 36 and round the resulting decimal down to the nearest whole number.
- B. The whole number gained from #3 above is each Region's number of qualifiers.
- C. In the event that the total number of qualifiers under this plan is less than 36, the Executive Board shall award one additional qualifying spot to the Region(s) with the highest decimal (closest to earning another qualifying spot) until the total number of qualifiers is 36.
- D. A Region may qualify the same number of entries in all events regardless of the number of entries in each event.

Rule 7: Returning State Champions

This rule is only applicable if Regional Tournaments take place during years when the State Championship is not set in advance by the Board of Directors as an "Open State" Championship Tournament.

- A. A State Champion from the previous year who is still eligible (has not graduated from high school) may elect to compete in the State Championship Tournament in the same event without going through the Regional Qualifying Tournament process.
- B. In multiple-person events, all participants from a State Championships team/group must be returning from the previous year in order to receive a bye through the Regional Qualifying Tournament. No substitutions are permitted.
- C. Rules for limits on double entry still apply to *Returning State Champions*.

Rule 8: Eligibility for the State Championship and Novice State Competitors

- A. State Championship
 - 1. This section is only applicable if Regional Tournaments take place during years when the State Championship is not set in advance by the Board of Directors as an "Open State" Championship Tournament.
 - 2. In order for a student to qualify to attend the FFL State Championship Tournament they must physically attend and compete in every round required for their event at the Regional Tournament, or the competitor will be disqualified. If the competitor is part of a team or group event, failure to compete in all required rounds will disqualify the entire team or group.
 - 3. This rule supersedes ALL other rule conflicts in Rule 18.
- B. Novice State
 - 1. In order to compete at the Novice State Tournament, students must meet all of the following requirements:
 - i. The student must not have competed at any previous Novice State Tournament.
 - ii. This is the first year of competition as a high school student (grades 9-12). If the student has competed in a total of two or fewer tournaments in previous high school years, that student would/shall still be considered a Novice competitor.
- C. Middle School State
 - 1. A Middle School student may attend for all 3 of their enrolled years (6-8).

Rule 9: Tournament Protests

- A. A protest is a formal, written complaint alleging that a violation of event and/or tournament rules took place during a round of competition.
- B. All protests must be submitted on an official *Protest Form*. This form can be either a hard copy or an online document. The challenger must be identified on the document, and they must sign it. The alleged inappropriate behavior must be described, and the rule or bylaw in question must be cited and quoted verbatim.
- C. Challenges must be submitted promptly. After the infraction has been observed/discovered, the protest must be filed in a timely manner. A timely manner is defined as within one hour of the end of the round in which the infraction occurred, unless a specific rule specifies otherwise. Exceptions to this time limit rule will be granted only when the violation occurs in or after the rounds previously specified.

Egregious violations after the start of the fourth round will be considered at the discretion of the Protest & Appeals Committee.

- D. Protests must be submitted to the designated official at a Regional Qualifying Tournament. At State Tournaments, protests must be submitted to the Ombudsperson. Protests will be reviewed by the tournament's Protest & Appeals Committee.
- E. The League shall incorporate a 3-person protest council from outside the state to evaluate and rule on protests. The Executive Board would still vote on recommended action based on the suggested ruling of the outside council. The League would also establish a procedure that requires the Board to review previous protests of a similar variety for consistency, as well as track and publish redacted/anonymized protest decisions.

Rule 10: Awards for Students

- A. The League will award trophies, plaques, or medals, to the qualifiers in each event at a Regional Qualifying Tournament.
- B. At the State Championship Tournament, a *State Champion Eagle* trophy shall be presented to the State Champion in each event. The number of additional trophies and awards to be presented will be posted in the official tournament procedures, based on per-event entry numbers.
- C. At the Novice State and Middle State tournaments, the number of awards to be presented will be posted in the official tournament procedures, based on per-event entry numbers.
- D. At the State Tournaments in Lincoln Douglas Debate and Public Forum Debate, speaker awards shall be presented to the top five debaters.
- E. At the State Tournament, 1st and 2nd place teams in World Schools Debate will each be awarded a trophy.
- F. Other awards may be presented at the discretion of the Executive Board.

Rule 11: Coach of the Year and Administrator of the Year Award

- A. Coach of the Year
 - 1. Each Region will select a *Head Coach* or *Assistant Coach* as its *Regional Coach of the Year*. The League will also recognize one of the regional winners as the State Coach of the Year. The criterion for the selection of these individuals shall include, but not be limited to, dedication to students, enthusiasm for the activity, professionalism, length of service, leadership, innovation, and success in competitions.
 - 2. Each Regional Director shall ensure all coaches from their Region receive a ballot listing all eligible regional coaches by February 1. Members that are affiliated (see Article III, Section I) get only one vote. A member may not vote for one of its own coaches. Any *Head Coach* or *Assistant Coach* receiving two or more votes will be placed on a Regional runoff ballot, and additional runoff voting shall take place until a nominee receives a plurality of the votes. That coach will be declared the Regional Coach of the Year. The Regional Director will forward the winner's name to the President. If a Region fails to submit a nominee, or if there is a tie in voting, the Board of Directors shall select a winner from the Region no later than February 15.
 - 3. Each regional winner will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire. The Board of Directors will review the questionnaires and select the State Coach of the Year. In the event that a member of the Board of Directors was selected as a

regional winner, they shall not participate in the deliberations. The State Coach of the Year will be announced at the State Championship Tournament awards ceremony; that person shall be ineligible for regional and/or state recognition for the five (5) school years following their selection.

4. A Regional Coach of the Year who is not selected as State Coach of the Year during a given year will remain eligible for ballot consideration by the Executive Board for a maximum of three years after being nominated. They shall be removed from consideration before that time if they are selected State Coach of the Year, are no longer coaching high school speech and debate, move out of the state, or are deceased.
 5. Recognition: The Vice President/Operations is responsible for overseeing trophy orders for all League tournaments, including appropriate awards for the regional and state winners. Their names shall be publicized to the media, their schools, and on the League website.
- B. Administrator of the Year
1. All members of the League are eligible to nominate a school administrator for consideration of Administrator of the Year by February 15 of that year. An administrator is an individual and/or a certified educator whose job is to direct and manage daily operation of all programs or individual programs in an individual school. Eligible candidates include personnel employed by central educational offices who work at the local school level, such as principals, assistant principals, or head masters.
 2. Members may send the President a statement of no more than 250 words explaining why their administrator is worthy of such recognition. The criterion for the selection of these individuals shall include, but not be limited to, encouraging membership, maintaining outstanding standards to run a team at a public/private school, supporting the maintenance and development of the team, and is especially supportive of the program's coach(es).

Rule 12: Fees

- A. Regional Qualifying Tournaments: There is no school fee. The entry fee, which includes lunch, shall be \$25-\$35 per student, with the amount being at the discretion of the Regional Director. The first \$7 of the fee is owed to the League. The next \$10 of the fee is owed to the host school for the provision of lunch and hosting expenses. The remaining amount is for discretionary use by the Regional Director in covering the expenses of the tournament. Public Forum Debate and Duo Interpretation teams pay two student fees. World Schools Debate teams pay a fee for each member of the team. A student who is double-entered pays only one fee.
- B. State Championship, Novice State and Middle School State tournaments: Each student that is entered shall pay a fee of \$50 per event in which they are entered. Public Forum Debate and Duo Interpretation teams pay two student fees. A student who is double-entered pays two fees.
- C. The FFL Board of Directors is authorized to increase fees for Varsity State if it is an "Open State" tournament; otherwise, fees will remain the same if a member school is hosting. Fee information would be included in the tournament invitation.
- D. Pre-ordered meals will also be available for coaches, judges, parents, etc at all tournaments sanctioned by the League. Additional lunches at Regional Qualifying Tournaments will be available at a cost determined by the host location and approved by the Board of Directors. At State Tournaments, extra meals for judges will be \$20 for the weekend. Schools will be charged fees automatically for meals for judges based on the number of required judges shown on the tournament registration website. The

- amount for extra meals at the State Tournaments may be reversed if the host wishes to serve a more elaborate lunch and a more simple dinner, provided that the Board of Directors approves such a change.
- E. Regional Directors shall determine the manner in which fees are collected at their Regional Qualifying Tournament. For the State Tournaments, all fees owed by a school will be payable in one check made out to *Florida Forensic League, Inc.* The League shall reimburse the host school for all pre-ordered meals at the end of the tournament.
 - F. At the discretion of the Board of Directors, a fully refundable “guarantee fee” system may be implemented for the State Championship Tournament to ensure that qualifiers from a Regional Qualifying Tournament actually attend the State Championship.
 - G. The Tournament Director of any League tournament may charge drop fees at their discretion if those fees are published in the invitation.
 - H. Schools are already required to provide script information at League Tournaments. Any school that fails to enter script information on registration software programs by the advertised deadline will be fined \$10 per instance.

Rule 13: Tabulation Software

The State and Regional tournaments tabulation staff are required to use a tabulation software program approved by the Executive Board.

Rule 14: Ballots & Forms

The Board of Directors shall publish and maintain all forms and ballots necessary to operate the League. Those forms and ballots shall be a part of this standing rule and may be altered by the membership through the normal voting process (see Article 6, Section III).

Rule 15: State Championship Sweepstakes

- A. There will be four categories of events at the State Championship tournament:
 - 1. Debate Events (LD, PFD, WSD)
 - 2. Limited Prep (IX, USX, SC, IMP)
 - 3. Interpretation Events (HI, DI, POI, DUO)
 - 4. Platform Events (ADS, OO, INFO)
- B. Sweepstakes points will be awarded to any school with one or more entries advancing to elimination rounds, as follows:
 - 1. Debate Events (LD, PFD, WSD):
 - i. Non-advancing Octo-Finalists (8): 3
 - ii. Non-advancing Quarter-Finalists (4): 6
 - iii. Non-advancing Semi-Finalists (2): 12
 - iv. Finalist, Runner-Up (1): 14
 - v. Finalist, State Champion (1): 16
 - 2. Limited Prep Events (Minus SC), Platform Events and Interpretation Events
 - i. Non-advancing Semi-Finalists (6): 3
 - ii. 6th place (1): 6
 - iii. 5th place (1): 8
 - iv. 4th place (1): 10
 - v. 3rd place (1): 12
 - vi. Finalist, Runner-Up (1): 14

- vii. Finalist, State Champion (1): 16
 - viii. If a 7th finalist is advanced to finals they would also earn 6 points
- 3. Congressional Debate:
 - i. Non-placing Finalists (6): 3
 - ii. 6th place (4): 6
 - iii. 5th place (4): 8
 - iv. 4th place (4): 10
 - v. 3rd place (4): 12
 - vi. Finalist, Runner-Up (1): 14
 - vii. Finalist, State Champion (1): 16
- 4. The points awarded for multiple-person events (PFD, DUO, WSD) will be the same as the points awarded for single-person events
- 5. In the unlikely circumstance that in any event additional elimination rounds are held, or fewer elimination rounds are held than those prescribed above, sweepstakes points for those rounds will not be awarded.
- 6. Sweepstakes points will not be awarded to an entry if they do not actually participate in the round in which they were eliminated (For example, if someone concedes a round or does not perform they will not receive points but that will not negatively affect their opponents), except in cases where two debaters from the same school are scheduled to debate but the coach chooses to advance a winner, in which case points will be awarded.
- 7. If an entry is disqualified at any point during the tournament, their team will forfeit any accrued sweepstakes points by that disqualified entry.
- C. The League shall present six sweepstakes awards, with each award using a different set of criterion as follows:
 - 2. State Championship Program Award
 - i. Eligibility: All schools at the State Championship tournament and have attempted to qualify entries in 3 of the 4 genres.
 - ii. Awards: Top school is State Championship Program, with Eagle for school. Plaques for 2nd and 3rd place schools.
 - 3. Small Team Commendation
 - i. Eligibility: Any school with a total of six (6) or fewer entries. Every 5 years, the Executive Board will take the mean of the lower quartile of the State Championship school entries for the last 5 years and adjust the total number of entries as needed.
 - ii. Award: Plaques for top 3 schools.
 - 4. Excellence in Debate Commendation
 - i. Eligibility: Any school with entries in 2 or more of the 4 events in the debate category.
 - ii. Award: Plaques for top 3 schools.
 - 5. Excellence in Limited Prep Commendation
 - i. Eligibility: Any school with entries in 2 or more of the 4 events in the limited prep category.
 - ii. Award: Plaques for top 3 schools.
 - 6. Excellence in Platform Commendation
 - i. Eligibility: Any school with entries in 2 or more of the 3 events in the Platform category.
 - ii. Award: Plaques for top 3 schools.
 - 7. Excellence in Interp Commendation

- i. Eligibility: Any school with entries in 2 or more of the 4 interp events.
 - ii. Award: Plaques for top 3 schools.
- D. Except in cases where a physical award is presented, ties will not be broken. In the event of a tie between two or more schools for any of the above awards, the entry with the best finish from each school will be used to break the tie. If still tied, the second-best finish will be used. This process will continue until the point where a tie is not breakable. At that point, the Executive Board of the League may declare an impasse and declare co-recipients. In those cases, the League shall pay the cost of any additional awards.

Rule 16: Student No-Show/Non-Performance in a Round

- A. At a Regional Tournament, in the case when there are insufficient entries in any event to constitute the necessity for competition to qualify for the State Championship, it will be left to the discretion of the Regional Director to petition the President for permission to eliminate rounds of competition in those events. In the case when rounds are eliminated, those competitors will automatically qualify for the FFL State Championship tournament. Regions may not eliminate any event which has more entries than qualifying slots.
- B. FFL Forfeit Rule
 - 1. Two forfeits/no-shows and a competitor is disqualified.
 - i. A forfeit is defined as an entry not showing up to their assigned round within 10 minutes of the start time of the round.
 - ii. If a student arrives late due to tournament operations/procedures the student will not be punished. The student's coach or approved adult representative must come to the tab room, and tab staff will address the issue.
 - iii. If a student is double entered the student must attend both double entered events by the scheduled end time of the round.
 - iv. If a judge thinks a forfeit/no show has occurred in their round, the following procedures should apply:
 - 1. Debate Round - the judge will keep the other entry immediately, contact the tab staff via a Google Form created for the tournament (overseen by the Ombudsman) and await direction. Tab staff will determine if it's a no show. While they may contact the school assigned coach or approved adult representative it is not the obligation of tab staff to track down students, coaches or approved adult representatives.
 - 2. Speech Round - upon the conclusion of the round if all other entries have gone and the student is not double entered the judge will contact tab staff and await specific direction. While they may contact the school assigned coach or approved adult representative it is not the obligation of tab staff to track down students, coaches or approved adult representatives.

Rule 17: Protection of Property

- A. No contestant or student observer shall enter or remain in a contest room without a judge present. The penalty for violation of this regulation shall be immediate disqualification from the tournament.
- B. Vandalism of property by any person at an FFL tournament shall result in the immediate notification of school and/or local police authorities. The Board of Directors shall notify the principal of the school associated with the vandal(s) in writing and insist upon appropriate remuneration. In the case of vandalism by a contestant, the additional penalty of immediate disqualification from the tournament shall also apply.
- C. If vandalism of host school property occurs and no individual or school can be held culpable for the damage, all schools in attendance in the event/s where the vandalism occurred at the tournament shall be assessed a vandalism recovery fee equal to the total amount of damage divided by the number of schools in attendance. Nonpayment of the vandalism recovery fee shall constitute just cause for denial of membership renewal (see Article 3, Section I, Clause K).

Rule 18: Closed Campus

During all FFL Sanctioned Events, the host site will be considered a closed campus. This means that no one affiliated with the tournament is allowed to leave the campus or risk team disqualification.

Debate Events - Rules & Procedures

Rule 19: Events & Special Notices

This section of the *Standing Rules* of the League shall cover regulations for Lincoln Douglas Debate, Public Forum Debate, and World Schools Debate. This includes The League deferring to NSDA Evidence Rules for debate events. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to modify rules for these events when circumstances arise that are not covered below.

Rule 20: Pairing of Rounds in Debate Events

- A. *Regional Tournaments*: When Regional Tournaments take place, the Tournament Director has a great deal of discretion in planning the format for these events. The decisions of the Tournament Director regarding the format for the debate events must be published and made available to all schools prior to the posting of the first round. The number of preliminary rounds will be determined by the Tournament Director based on the number of participants. The League President will approve the number of rounds a regional tournament uses to determine their qualifiers. Whenever possible, there will be a minimum of four rounds. The Tournament Director may petition the Executive Board to hold only three rounds if they believe that there are too few entries in an event to hold a full tournament. When there are the same number of or fewer entries than qualifying spots, the Tournament Director may petition the Executive Board to reduce the number of rounds to two. There shall be a maximum of six preliminary rounds. The necessity for elimination rounds will be determined by the Tournament Director based on the number of participants at the close of online registration. At Regional Tournaments with four preliminary rounds, each team or participant must have two affirmative and two negative rounds. Those with byes will have a 2-1 or 1-2 split on affirmative and negative rounds. The Tournament Director may petition the Executive Board for a waiver of the “two round affirmative, two round negative” rule if they believe that it will be logistically impossible to produce such pairings. Rounds one and two will be randomly paired; subsequent rounds may be powered at the discretion of the Tournament Director. Until the elimination rounds, entries from a given member will not debate other entries unless that member has more than one-quarter of the entries in the event, but this option should be elected only when it is not otherwise possible to produce a viable pairing.
- B. *State Tournaments*: six preliminary rounds will be held in all debate events. The level at which elimination rounds will begin at the State Tournaments shall be determined by the Executive Board on the basis of the number of entries in each event. Decisions about elimination rounds must be announced prior to the posting of the first preliminary round. The first two rounds will be preset with random pairing based on geographic protection, with each Region in the League serving as a geographic region. After round two, the format will be as follows:
 - 1. In Lincoln Douglas and Public Forum Debate, the first two rounds will be pre-set with random pairing based on geographic protection, with each Region in the League serving as a geographic region. After round two, the format will be as follows:
 - i. Round 3: High-Low Power off of the results from all previous rounds.
 - ii. Round 4: High-Low Power Within Brackets from the results of rounds 1-3.

- iii. Round 5: High-Low Power Within Brackets from the results of rounds 1-4.

At the discretion of the Executive Board, a system for the rating of judges and/or the collection of data about judging preferences may be implemented for the State Tournaments.

- 2. When using the computer program to schedule rounds, the tabulation staff shall select the program option to minimize room assignment moves.

Rule 21: Power Matching & Byes in Debate Events

- A. Power-matching is the assignment of rounds based on the win/loss record of the debaters/teams in the tournament. The League uses the following power matching.
 - 1. *High-Low Powering Within Brackets*: Teams with the same win-loss record are "within a bracket;" rounds are paired with the top-ranked entry in its bracket, meeting the lowest-ranked entry in its bracket. If there are an odd number of entries in a bracket or school restrictions preclude the exact powering of a bracket, the highest-ranked entry in the bracket will be paired against the highest-ranked entry in the next lower bracket. This system is also called "Power Protect Within Brackets."
- B. Byes are necessary when there are an odd number of teams or debaters entered in the tournament. A team or debater with a bye assigned for a round does not compete in that round. In the first two rounds of debate events, byes will be assigned as the result of a random draw. Whenever possible, there will be only one bye per school in the randomly paired rounds. In power-matched rounds, the bye will always be assigned to the team or debater with the lowest competitive record. Byes cannot be refused and are counted as a win. When receiving a bye, a team/debater will have ranks and speaker points for the bye round determined by averaging the ranks and speaker points gained in all non-bye pre-preliminary rounds.

Rule 22: Breaking Ties in Debate Events

In determining seeding and place (rank) in the tournament, ties may occur. They are to be broken in the following manner:

- A. Win/Loss
- B. Opponent Wins
- C. High/Low Speaks
- D. Judge Variance
- E. High/Low Ranks
- F. Head-to-Head
- G. Total Points
- H. Total Ranks

Rule 23: Topic Selection

This organization shall use the National Speech & Debate Association topics for Lincoln Douglas Debate and Public Forum Debate.

Rule 24: General Regulations for Debate Events

The following general rules will apply to all debate events at all League tournaments:

- A. Only ballots, critique sheets, and instructions to judges approved by the League shall be used at League tournaments.

- B. Overtime may count against a debater or team at the discretion of the judge.
- C. If a debater/team does not arrive for a debate by ten minutes after the round's scheduled beginning, the judge(s) shall award the decision to the opposing debate/team that is present.
- D. Debaters shall not be interrupted by opponents, the audience, or judges.
- E. In Lincoln Douglas and Public Forum Debate, judges may not supplement a written critique on the ballot with oral critiques.
- F. Judges shall award speaker points on a thirty-point scale.
- G. At the State Tournaments, elimination rounds will follow an unbroken bracket procedure based on seeding from preliminary rounds.
- H. Tournament Directors can establish a number of strikes in Public Forum Debate and Lincoln Douglas Debate, based on the number of available judges. This may mean that there are no strikes available, but if possible, it will be made available to coaches at registration.

Rule 25: Lincoln Douglas Debate Regulations

Unless otherwise noted below, Lincoln Douglas Debate will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the National Speech & Debate Association, including the NSDA's debate topic. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website, and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.

Rule 26: Public Forum Debate Regulations

Unless otherwise noted below, Public Forum Debate will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the National Speech & Debate Association, including the NSDA's debate topic. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website, and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.

- A. The tabulation room will pair Public Forum Debate teams against each other while assigning sides in debate (aka/"side-locked"). A coin toss will determine which speech they would like to give (first or last).

Rule 27: World Schools Debate Regulations

Unless otherwise noted below, World Schools Debate will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the National Speech & Debate Association, including the NSDA's debate topic. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website, and the League will use the most recent version of the USA World Schools Debate Invitational Manual.

- A. Teams must be homogeneous (no hybrid teams - all competitors must be from the same school).
- B. Teams will consist of 3-5 students.
- C. Each School may enter 1 World Schools Team at a Regional Qualifier.
- D. At a Regional Qualifying Tournament, each Region may qualify the top 2 entries in this division for the varsity state tournament.
 - 1. If a district does not fulfill its two entries, the vacant entry slot will go to the third place team in the District tournament that has the most world schools entries at their district qualifier.
 - 2. Remaining vacant entry spots will continue as outlined above and fall to the District tournament with the next largest number of entries.
- E. Specifics on Prepared and Impromptu Motion rounds will be included in tournament invitations.

- F. In Impromptu Motion rounds, all teams will receive the motion and prep in one large predetermined area under monitoring of multiple FFL representatives.
- G. During preparation, as prescribed by NSDA rules, teams will only be allowed to use a dictionary, a single volume encyclopedia, or a World Almanac as a resource. No electronic devices will be allowed and possible suspicion of using one will result in a loss of the round and zero speaker points for the round.
- H. In Prepared Motion rounds, the motions will cover the following 3 areas: Florida, Domestic, and International. Something special - for the Varsity State Tournament only students and coaches alike will have the opportunity to vote/choose the prepared Florida motion.

Congressional Debate - Rules & Procedures

Rule 28: Congressional Debate Regulations

This section of the Standing Rules of the League shall cover regulations for Congressional Debate. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to modify rules for this event when circumstances arise that are not covered below. Unless otherwise noted below, Congressional Debate will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the National Speech & Debate Association. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website, and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.

- A. Schools entering contestants in Congressional Debate at a League tournament may submit NSDA-formatted legislation (bill or resolution) for the agenda. Each school may submit only one piece of legislation, which must have a designated author. A league official shall review the legislation for topical relevance and adherence to format, removing any legislation with an inappropriate topic or improper format. Legislation should be released no later than the Monday prior to the tournament.
 - 1. If allowed by tournament software, the League would publish the submitted legislation packet sufficiently in advance and allow students the opportunity to vote on preferred legislation to be placed on the docket in advance of the tournament. Preliminary sessions should have one piece of legislation per hour of anticipated debate.
- B. At any tournament that utilizes two or more chambers, contestants will be assigned to chambers so that the fewest number of contestants from the same school are placed into each chamber. Assignments will otherwise be made randomly across all of the chambers. Every attempt should be made to make the chambers as quantitatively equal as possible. Coaches may not assign (or request that tournament officials assign) certain contestants to specific chambers, nor may they request that certain contestants be placed in the same/different chamber.
- C. Chambers will set their dockets at the beginning of each session. Legislation with authors/sponsors from a school in a chamber should have priority over legislation which does not have an author/sponsor from the school present.
- D. At a Regional Qualifying Tournament, there will be two preliminary sessions.
 - 1. If a Regional Qualifying Tournament has one chamber: Each session will have a minimum of 2 ½ hours of debate time. Each session will count as a separate legislative day for purposes of recency.
 - 2. If a Regional Qualifying Tournament has multiple chambers: Each session will have a minimum of two hours of debate time. Two sessions will constitute a legislative day for purposes of recency. A Super Session with at least two hours of debate will also be held.
- E. At the State Tournament, Novice State Tournament, and Middle School State Tournament, there will be three preliminary sessions, with each session lasting two hours. Each preliminary session will count as a legislative day for purposes of recency. Semifinal and final rounds will each be a single three-hour-long session.
- F. Recency will be pre-set for speakers or questioners. The preset, randomized recency chart is reset for each new session using the preset recency supplied by tournament

officials. The preset recency chart should be used for speeches and in reverse order for questioning. Each Presiding Officer should clarify selection procedures upon election, but it is the expectation of the tournament that Presiding Officers will follow precedence, then recency, for speaker selection once established (and, preferably, for questioner selection too).

- G. All legislators are eligible to run for Presiding Officer. Each chamber will elect one Presiding Officer per session. Chambers may not elect all three Presiding Officers before Session 1. Each chamber must elect the Presiding Officer at the start of each session. Additionally, there will be one Presiding Officer in each advanced round chamber and one Presiding Officer in the final round.
- H. Preliminary sessions will be evaluated by two Scorers, with a new panel being utilized for each session. One additional official will be appointed as Parliamentarian for the entire preliminary competition. The Final session will be evaluated by a panel of either three or five Scorers. These Scorers should be from five different regions from across the state, and should be void of conflict with all legislators in the Super Session.
- I. Ranks from preliminary sessions do not carry over to advanced rounds, and ranks from advanced rounds do not carry over to the next round.
- J. Judges should give the Presiding Officer two speech scores (one per hour, 6 points maximum, per speech) before submitting ballots at the end of the session. Judges should consider fairness in recognizing speakers/questioners, control of the chamber, and knowledge of parliamentary procedure in their scores/feedback. Additionally, the Presiding Officer is a competitor and should be considered for ranking among the top legislators in the chamber.
- K. Gavels will be awarded for Best Preliminary Round Presiding Officer in each chamber (based on judge's speech scores), and for for each advanced round Presiding Officer.
- L. Tie Breaking Process:
 - 1. Judge's Preference
 - 2. Reciprocals
 - 3. First Place Scorer Ranks
 - 4. If still tied after "c," then all legislators still involved in the tie will advance to the next session.
- M. The final number of advancing students and advanced chambers depends on the number of preliminary chambers, which depends on the number of legislators competing at the start of the first session. This information will be publicized before Session 1 begins.

Speech & Interp Events - Rules & Procedures

Rule 29: Events & Special Notices

This section of the *Standing Rules* of the League shall cover regulations for the following events:

- A. International Extemporaneous Speaking
- B. United States Extemporaneous Speaking
- C. Original Oratory
- D. Declamation
- E. Duo Interpretation
- F. Program Oral Interpretation
- G. Dramatic Interpretation
- H. Humorous Interpretation
- I. Informative Speaking
- J. Impromptu Speaking
- K. After Dinner Speaking

Rule 30: General Regulations in Speech/IE Events

The following general rules will apply to all Speech/IE events at League tournaments. Any general rules that conflict with the event rules of the NSDA or CFL rules are not applicable to those events unless specifically indicated in those event rules:

- A. Only ballots, critique sheets, and instructions to judges approved by the League shall be used at League tournaments.
- B. Unless otherwise noted below, all Speech/IE events will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the National Speech & Debate Association. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website, and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.
 - 1. Declamation (National Catholic Forensic League rules shall apply).
 - 2. After Dinner Speaking (National Forensics Association rules shall apply unless specified in Rule 40).
 - 3. When rules in this document come into conflict with NSDA rules, the League rules shall be controlled.
- C. Final cuttings of scripts in interpretation events are required at all League tournaments. A copy of the manuscript used by each contestant in Original Oratory, Informative Speaking, and After Dinner Speaking, should also be brought to the tournament. A list of works cited should be part of these manuscripts. Failure to produce this type of document when called for by the Tournament Director or Protest & Appeals Committee may result in disqualification from the tournament.
- D. In events with uneven sections (e.g., Section 1: 5 entries; Section 2: 5 entries; Section 3: 6 entries), the tab room will record only the lowest common rank. For example, the contestant receiving sixth place in Section 3 above would be credited with fifth place.
- E. Students may change their pieces between a Regional Tournament and State Championship Tournament. Coaches will need to update the registration for the State Championship Tournament with the new piece information.
- F. At the State Tournaments, no students from the same school shall meet in preliminary rounds whenever possible. Seeding will be preserved in all break rounds using the "snake pattern" to establish sections.
- G. At the State Tournaments, each contestant's lowest (worst) ballot (rank and corresponding points) from the preliminary rounds will be dropped from the results.

- H. After the preliminary competition, the designated number of students shall advance to elimination rounds. In all cases, cumulative ranks, with the worst rank and corresponding points discarded, will determine the rank order of contestants. In the event of a tie between two or more contestants for the final space(s) in elimination rounds, the following tiebreakers shall be applied in order until the tie is broken:
1. Inverse reciprocals
 - 1st = 1.00
 - 2nd = 0.50
 - 3rd = 0.33
 - 4th = 0.25
 - 5th = 0.20
 - 6th = 0.17
 - 7th = 0.14
 2. Cumulative points, with the points corresponding to the worst rank discarded.
 3. Cumulative ranks, with the worst rank, added back in
 4. Cumulative points, with the points corresponding to the worst rank, added back in
 5. Cumulative ranks, with the highest and lowest preliminary ranks, discarded
 6. Cumulative points, with the highest and lowest preliminary points discarded
 7. Highest rank in rounds where remaining tied contestants met in the same section. If ties remain after applying Step 7, the tie shall be declared unbreakable, and all contestants still tied shall advance to the next round.
- I. For all elimination rounds, tabulation shall occur as follows: the sum of the ranks and points from each preliminary round minus the lowest (worst) ballot (rank and corresponding points) each from the preliminary rounds plus each judge's ballot from the elimination rounds.
- J. If ties occur at the end of one elimination round to determine advancement to the next elimination round, the tie-break scheme shown above will be used, except that after #2 above (reciprocals), judges' preference shall be used to break the tie provided that a judging panel was used and that an odd number of judges were on the panel.

Rule 31: Extemporaneous Speaking (International & United States) & Mixed Extemporaneous Speaking (Novice State Only)

Unless otherwise noted below, Extemporaneous Speaking will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the National Speech & Debate Association. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website, and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.

- A. There will be two separate events (International and United States) at a Regional and the State Championship tournaments, with topics chosen from significant foreign and U.S. areas for the period of November 1 through the dates of the tournaments. The topics for both International and United States Extemporaneous Speaking, phrased in the form of questions, will be written by an external party designated by the Executive Board.
 1. Use of a 3X5 note card is permitted.
- B. In the final round of both Extemporaneous Speaking events at the State Tournaments, the speakers will be cross-examined. The first speaker will be questioned by the last speaker, who shall return to the prep room immediately following the conclusion of the questioning period. The first speaker will remain and question the second speaker. The second speaker will question the third speaker, etc. The cross-examination period is three minutes of continuous question and answer. The speaker who will ask questions may take notes during the speech. Because of the cross-examination period, the prep room shall extend the

interval between draws from seven minutes to ten minutes. Judges of the final round shall consider cross-examination in the awarding of rankings and ratings.

- C. The Extemporaneous Speaking Prep Room will follow rules and procedures set forth by the NSDA.
 - 1. Food and drinks are not permitted in the prep room.
 - 2. After the final round of competition, contestants are to clean the prep room.
 - 3. All files are to be removed from the prep room upon completion of a competitor's last extemp round..
- D. At a Regional Qualifying Tournament, the Regional Director for each region shall appoint a Prep Room Proctor and Assistant Proctors. At the State Tournaments, the League President shall appoint a Prep Room Proctor and Assistant Proctors. In all cases, Proctors may inspect file boxes, files, and other materials at their discretion. Prohibited items will be confiscated, and violations will be reported to the Tabulation Room. Contestants may be disqualified by the Protest & Appeals Committee for violating the above rules.

Rule 32: Original Oratory

Unless otherwise noted below, Original Oratory will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the National Speech & Debate Association. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website, and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.

Rule 33: Declamation

Unless otherwise noted below, Declamation will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the National Catholic Forensic League. Rules can be obtained via the NCFL website.

- A. Declamation is available only at the Novice State and Middle School State tournaments.
- B. Students are permitted to use past oratories that are more than five years old.

Rule 34: Duo Interpretation of Literature

Unless otherwise noted below, Duo Interpretation will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the National Speech & Debate Association. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website, and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.

Rule 35: Program Oral Interpretation

Unless otherwise noted below, Program Oral Interpretation will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the National Speech & Debate Association. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website, and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.

Rule 36: Dramatic & Humorous Interpretation

Unless otherwise noted below, both Dramatic Interpretation and Humorous Interpretation will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the National Speech & Debate Association. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website, and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.

Rule 37: Informative Speaking

Unless otherwise noted below, Informative Speaking will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the National Speech & Debate Association. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website, and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.

Rule 38: After Dinner Speaking

Unless otherwise noted below, After Dinner Speaking will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the National Forensic Association. Rules can be obtained via the NFA website.

- A. PURPOSE: A speech designed to entertain by advancing a relevant point through the use of humor.
- B. DESCRIPTION: After-Dinner speeches are characterized by humorous content development, creativity, uniqueness, timeliness, clear organization, significance, credible sources, and vocal and nonverbal delivery choices that reflect the speech's purpose.
- C. No visual aids are permitted.
- D. Maximum time limit of 10 minutes.

Rule 39: Impromptu Speaking

Unless otherwise noted below, Impromptu Speaking will follow the rules and regulations set forth by the National Speech & Debate Association. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website, and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.

- A. Topics: Chosen by the FFL Executive Board, topics will include proverbs, abstract words, events, quotations, and famous people.
- B. Use of a 3X5 note card is permitted.