

HANDBOOK OF TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES

2014 Revision

I. TOURNAMENT PROCEDURES

A. General

The rules and procedures set forth in this Handbook are meant to supplement the rules in the By-laws of the New York State Forensic League. Rules and Procedures apply to both Regional Tournaments and the State Championship Tournament, unless otherwise clarified.

B. Judging

1. At the Regional Tournaments, judges must be at least juniors or seniors in high school in their third year of forensics who have accrued a minimum of six (6) rounds of previous tournament judging experiences. These student judges may be used in Junior Varsity Extemporaneous Speaking and Declamation, Novice and Intermediate Lincoln-Douglas, Novice and Intermediate Policy Debate and Novice and Intermediate Public Forum Debate. Only adults with a minimum of six (6) rounds of previous tournament judging experience may be used in the remaining categories. The decision to allow students to judge is up to the individual Regional Directors.
2. At the State Championship Tournament, only adults with a minimum of six (6) rounds of previous judging experience may be used as judges in all categories. At no time shall a high school student be used as a judge.
3. Reasonable attempts shall be made by the Tournament Committee or Regional Director to limit a judge to rating speech contestants or debaters once in a tournament.
4. At no time may a judge rate a contestant or team:
 - a. from his/her own school,
 - b. the school by which the judge has been hired,
 - c. a school which the judge attended,
 - d. a school where the judge has coached or taught within the last five years.

5. Other questions of judge suitability will be ruled upon by the Tournament Committee or Regional Director, taking into consideration procedures B.3 and B.4 above.

6. At the State Championship Tournament, judges are expected to be available for the entire tournament. Judges who fail to report for assigned rounds will be liable to fines. The following fines are in effect:

- a. Judges who miss a preliminary round will be fined \$25.00
- b. Judges who miss an elimination round will be fined \$50.00
- c. Judges who leave the Tournament early and fail to fulfill their commitments will be fined \$250.00
- d. Schools that drop judges before the beginning of the Tournament will be fined \$200.00 with the possibility that a requisite number of students be dropped from the Tournament.
- e. The State Coordinator shall inform all schools of any fines incurred. Schools must resolve all fines before they may compete in a future State Championship Tournament.

c. Speech

1. General

- a. The number of rounds shall be set by the Tournament Committee or Regional Director(s).
- b. Scheduling of all preliminary rounds shall be done by the Tournament Committee and/or Regional Director(s) prior to registration in a manner that assures random competition with minimal amounts of same school and repeat competition.
- c. Scheduling should assure each contestant varied speaking positions from round to round.
- d. Contestant placement in the Regional Tournament shall be first by total ranks. Ties in ranks shall be broken by adding total number of first ranks, then the total number of second ranks, etc. If this does not break the tie, total rating points shall be used. Lastly, judge preference in any rounds of head-to-head competition shall be used.

- e. The number of judges in all rounds shall be determined by the Tournament Committee or Regional Director.
- f. Punishment for speaker tardiness shall be set by the Tournament Committee or Regional Director.
- g. No speeches shall be tape recorded.
- h. In speech events, with the obvious exception of Extemporaneous Speaking, the contestant shall use the same material from round to round of competition (in Oral Interpretation, the same prose and the same poetry selections shall be used throughout the contest).

2. State Championship Tournament

- a. A number of preliminary rounds set by the Tournament committee shall be scheduled so as to provide inter-regional competition between different geographic areas of New York State. (Currently that number is four.) There will be two judges in each preliminary round.
- b. Before determining which contestants shall advance to the first elimination round, the “worst” rank received by each contestant in a preliminary round shall be dropped and shall never be used again during the tournament.
- c. The remaining ranks from preliminary rounds shall be totaled, and those speakers with the lowest total ranks shall advance to the first elimination round. Ties in ranks shall be broken by adding total number of first ranks, then the total number of second ranks, etc. If this does not break the tie, total rating points shall be used. If ties are still unbreakable, all tied speakers will advance. Rating points shall not be used again during the tournament.
- d. To advance to additional rounds of competition, all ranks will be totaled. Those speakers with the lowest totals will advance. Again, ties in ranks shall be broken on the basis of the total number of first ranks, then the total number of second ranks, etc. If ties are still unbroken, all tied speakers shall advance.
- e. If Quarter-Final rounds are held, speakers will be grouped by their placement at the end of the preliminary rounds as follows:
 - Section A = Speakers 1 8 9 16 17 24
 - Section B = Speakers 2 7 10 15 18 23
 - Section C = Speakers 3 6 11 14 19 22
 - Section D = Speakers 4 5 12 13 20 21

f. For Semi-Final rounds, speakers will be grouped by their placement at the end of the preliminary rounds (or by their placement at the end of Quarter-Finals if held) as follows:

Section A = Speakers 1 4 5 8 9 12

Section B = Speakers 2 3 6 7 10 11

g. In elimination rounds, constraints on speakers from the same school being placed in the same section of a round shall be maintained as long as possible with pairing swaps being made between speakers with the same or closest ranks.

h. Final placement in the Tournament shall be determined by totaling all judges' ranks. The speaker with the lowest total wins the contest, etc. Ties in ranks shall be broken by adding total numbers of firsts, then seconds, etc. If this does not break the tie, placement in the Final Round shall be used to break the tie.

D. Debate

1. General

a. The number of rounds shall be set by the Tournament Committee or Regional Director.

b. Rounds will be paired as directed by the Tournament Committee or Regional Director.

c. A debater or debate team winning by forfeit or receiving a bye shall receive the average of the other ranks and/or points received during the tournament. A debater or team losing by forfeit shall receive speaker ranks of seven and no points.

d. In all elimination rounds, sides will be determined by a coin flip unless debaters or teams have met previously where side constraint applies.

e. The number of judges in all rounds shall be determined by the Tournament Committee or Regional Director.

f. Punishment for debater or team tardiness shall be set by the Tournament Committee or Regional Director.

2. State Championship Tournament

a. At all levels, debaters shall be prepared to debate both sides of the assigned resolution in alternating rounds of competition.

b. The first two rounds of all levels of debate will be randomly pre-set by the Tournament Committee as to provide competition between different geographic regions of New York State. (Only one round of team debate.)

c. In any level of debate in which a school has thirty percent or more of the entries, the school's coach will be asked to designate three debaters or teams who will not meet others from their own school during the preliminary rounds. Other debaters or teams from the school (s) may be scheduled to debate others from their school as the rules of the Tournament are applied.

d. There shall be five preliminary rounds in all levels of debate. Each debater will have two rounds on each side (with side constraints for rounds two and four). Rounds three and four will be bracketed within record with constraints on side, on previous meeting, and on same school, if applicable. The highest debater or team in each bracket will meet the lowest debater or team in the bracket; the second highest debater or team will meet the next to lowest debater or team, etc. If there is an odd number in a bracket, the middle card in the next lowest bracket will be "bumped up" and placed at the appropriate point level.

e. The number of elimination rounds in a category of debate shall be set by the Tournament Committee with considerations given to the number of entries in the category, time available in the Tournament, and the level and type of debate competition. Seeding will be based upon the following criteria: record, adjusted points, total points, double adjusted points (if operable), strength of opposition, judge variance, coin toss.

f. Traditional bracketing methods will be used. In a full bracketed round, the top seed will meet the lowest seed; the second top seed the second lowest seed, and so on. If the first elimination round is a partial bracket, then some debaters will be byed into the next round. Of those not byed in, the top seed will meet the lowest seed, etc.

k. During the elimination rounds, the winner will always maintain or adopt low seed numbers.

l. Judges from schools with debaters or teams in the Semi-Final rounds shall not judge in the rounds of the level or type of debate in which their debaters or teams are still competing. (This practice is to be used in the speech events as well.)

m. Once the seeding is determined, it shall not be changed, even if this should mean that debaters from the same school must meet.

n. In the event that debaters from the same school must meet in an elimination round, the coach from that school will have a choice to have the round adjudicated, or to decide which debater or team will advance. If the only remaining debaters are from the same school, the elimination rounds will not continue. The level of debate will be declared a “close out,” and the remaining debaters will be declared co-champions.