

## SECTION 3: Pilot District Tournament Operations Manual

The National Speech & Debate Association is committed to providing every student with the opportunity to qualify for the National Tournament in a fair and impartial manner. When running the district tournament, due diligence must be made to ensure fairness and avoid any perception of impropriety. The Board of Directors has established and approved these procedures to be piloted for all district tournaments. The Executive Director must approve specific exceptions to these rules in writing. Each competitive event is governed by the rules established in the Event Rules Manual. During each tournament, an ombudsperson is available through the national office to adjudicate disputes regarding these rules. Please contact the national office to identify who your ombudsperson will be as well as to clarify any of the rules or procedures regarding district tournament operations.

**This document provides the specific pilot procedures for determining the national qualifiers in each district. All event-specific competition rules from the Unified Manual must be followed: <https://www.speechanddebate.org/high-school-unified-manual>**

**Prior to reading this manual, you are encouraged to read the NSDA's rationale for piloting and updating this new method: <https://www.speechanddebate.org/pilot-district-qualification-method>**

For questions not answered here, please contact the national office at [info@speechanddebate.org](mailto:info@speechanddebate.org) or call (920) 748-6206.

## Planning the District Tournament

The district chair, in consultation with the District Committee and members of the district, will determine the date, time, and place of the district tournament. This information and any changes to it must be reported to the national office immediately.

### Guidelines for Scheduling

- If any part of the district tournament series will occur before December 31, the District Committee must officially register all tournament dates with the national office by October 31 of the competition season. If all parts of the district tournament series will occur after January 1, the District Committee must officially register all tournament dates with the national office by November 30 of the competition season.
- A district tournament may not be held after May 1. No part of a district tournament may begin on or after May 1.
- The date should be determined after considering the interscholastic calendar so as to avoid conflict with state tournaments, major school events, and college entrance examinations, if possible.
- The dates and host locations are made by a vote of the District Committee, rather than by the chair alone.
- If necessary, multiple weeks or weekends may be used.
- Site logistics (room access, judges, and cooperative hosts) should be prioritized over a centralized location or rotation.

## District Tournament Rules and Penalties

1. **Start:** No round started after 9:30 p.m. (or 9:45 p.m. for Extemp) is valid, unless it is the final day of the tournament. **Penalty:** Any tournament doing so will be invalid, with no national qualification granted.
2. **Judges:** College-age judges are permitted at the discretion of the District Committee. Current high school students may *not* judge any portion of the district tournament series.
3. **Fines:** If a judge fails to fulfill a judging assignment, a fine may be assessed by the District Committee.
4. **Protest of Judges:** Judges assigned by the tournament committee are final unless protested before the beginning of the tournament. If a judge is added to the pool after the tournament begins, any protest must be made prior to the round in which that individual is assigned to judge. If protested, the District Committee will hear the protest, and its decision is final. If a member of the Committee is involved in the protest, they should be recused.
5. **Judge Strikes:** The District Committee may permit a judge strike policy at the district tournament.
  - A. Districts are encouraged to solicit opinions of all schools in the district when determining whether a strike system will be used, and if so, what type of system. The decision of the District Committee is final.
  - B. If a District Committee chooses to use a judge strike system, the chair must submit a complete description of the strike procedure to the national office for approval. The description must be approved at least seven days prior to the beginning of the tournament. Strike policies should be sent to [director@speechanddebate.org](mailto:director@speechanddebate.org).
  - C. The approved system must be used throughout the entire district tournament.
7. **Electronic Device Usage:** Permission to use electronic devices in any event shall be the autonomous decision of the District Committee. Granting usage subjects debaters to the Guidelines for Electronic Device Use found in the [Unified Manual](#).

8. **Disqualification:** In the case of a disqualification, all previous decisions will stand and no revision of decisions will occur **unless dictated by a specific protest procedure (e.g., evidence violation)**.
9. **Harassment:** Harassment in any form at any tournament is prohibited and is grounds for disqualification.
10. **Scouting:** Scouting is strongly discouraged.
11. **Disputes:** The District Committee or tournament committee appointed by it has the full power to adjudicate disputes or interpretation of rules but may not change the rules. The District Committee is authorized to determine how a rule is to be interpreted or applied in a specific situation. In case of a serious dispute or critical question of procedure, which the District Committee cannot resolve, the national office or acting tournament ombudsperson must be phoned for a ruling. Please consult the national office to determine the ombudsperson for your event.
12. **Computer Tabulation:** The tournament must be entirely registered, sectioned, and tabulated using Tabroom.com, The Joy of Tournaments, or Speechwire.com. The selected software must be used for all events of the district tournament series, e.g. a district is not permitted to use Tabroom.com for debate and Speechwire.com for speech. At the conclusion of the district tournament series, the district chair must upload all results from events tabulated using The Joy of Tournaments or Speechwire.com to Tabroom.com. Results from tournaments that do not use the permitted software will not be accepted.

## Committee-Determined Tabulation Rules

In speech and debate events, the District Committee may determine the number of judges they will use in preliminary and elimination rounds. In debate events, the District Committee will decide whether to use a full, half, or tenths speaker point scale.

By default, speech events will hold three preliminary rounds, but districts may choose to hold more. In speech events, the District Committee may set the number of clearing entries in each event prior to the start of the tournament, as long as it meets minimum standards. See the section on scheduling elimination rounds in speech for more information. The number of clearing entries does not need to be the same for each speech event. By default, 25% of an event's entry total (rounded up to the nearest whole number) and all entries whose rank totals are tied with an advancing entry will clear.

In debate events, the District Committee may choose between three methods to run their tournament. If they have a small number of entries in all debate events, they may choose to hold a round robin in each event to determine their winner. Alternatively, the District Committee may hold preliminary rounds and then choose to break to a double or single elimination bracket. By default, debate events will hold four preliminary rounds and break to a single elimination bracket.

Finally, the District Committee must determine the method used to break ties between alternates in debate events. See the section on breaking ties for alternate spots for Debate districts for more information.

Each of these options must be decided on by the District Committee, not the chair alone. The district's policies for each event must be decided and communicated to coaches of schools attending the tournament before the start of round 1 of each event. These policies may not be changed after the start of round 1 in each event. In the absence of a publicized policy, the default policies specified above must be used.

## Protests and Penalties

In addition to pairing/sectioning protocols, the district tournament series has specific rules and policies that must be followed in order to ensure that qualification to the National Tournament is valid.

It is the affirmative duty of the District Committee to ensure all rules and procedures in this manual are followed. Failure to adhere to these rules may invalidate tournament results.

The members of the District Committee present shall have full power to adjudicate any protest, dispute, or interpretation of the competition rules. Protests must be filed in writing and must include:

- Name of coach filing protest (a coach of record with the protesting school must file the protest) and school, city, state.
- Code of person/team being protested.
- Round being protested.
- Section/room and speaker number of person/team being protested.
- Specific infraction being protested described with reference to the *Unified Manual*.
- Signature of protesting coach.

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.

If the district chair and/or committee are unclear as to how a rule should be interpreted or the penalty for a rule, please contact the district tournament ombudsperson assigned to the district by the national office.

## Tournament Roles and Responsibilities

### Tournament Officials

- **District Chair:** The chair exercises general supervision over the tournament. The chair should be available for consultation and give assistance where necessary. The chair must master this manual as well as understand each part of the tournament process.
- **District Committee Member:** As individuals, committee members should take major assignments in tournament operations. As a committee, they adjudicate disputes, protests, and interpretations of rules. If a committee member's school is involved in a dispute, another party appointed by the committee may serve in this capacity.
- **District Coaches:** The chair and committee should work to make the operation of the tournament a community experience. Distributing leadership beyond just the committee would assist in this endeavor.

### Suggested Tournament Roles

- **Registration Coordinator:** oversees the on-site registration process, accepts outstanding payments from schools, and communicates with tab staff regarding dropped entries.
- **Ballot Collectors:** (two or three individuals) collect ballots after a judge adjudicates a round. They should check over the entire ballot to ensure it's filled out properly, is easy to read for the tab station, and appears to be a constructive ballot that will help students.
- **Ballot Sorters:** oversee the scanning/copying and stuffing or posting of ballots for schools to see their judge feedback and results after the tournament.
- **Debate Coordinators and Assistants:** oversee the pairing of rounds, entering of results, and judge assignments for one or more of the following: Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Public Forum Debate, Policy Debate, Big Questions Debate, and World Schools Debate.

- **Individual Events Coordinator and Assistants:** oversee the pairing of rounds, entering of results, and judge assignments for one or more of the following: Original Oratory, Dramatic Interpretation, Humorous Interpretation, Duo Interpretation, Program Oral Interpretation, Informative Speaking, United States Extemporaneous Speaking, and International Extemporaneous Speaking.
- **Congress Coordinators and Assistants:** oversee the pairing of sessions, entering of results, and judge assignments for Congressional Debate.
- **Judge Training:** checks in volunteer or hired judges, explains events, offers supplemental materials, and ensures judges are prepared and informed. This role could be fulfilled on site or through an online training in advance.
- **Logistics Coordinator:** hosts the tournament, oversees hospitality, and is responsible for competition spaces.
- **Sweepstakes Coordinator and Assistant:** If your tournament offers sweepstakes awards, these individuals can calculate the winners. They will take your parameters (rules/formula) and then create an excel spreadsheet to keep track of the information. Alternatively, they may be responsible for pulling the relevant reports from an approved software that calculates sweepstakes.
- **Double Entry/Qualifier Auditor:** If your tournament allows for double entry, this individual can calculate qualifiers based off the Single Entry Letter of Intent.
- **Extemp Prep Coordinator and Assistant:** oversee the Extemp prep/draw process and work to ensure students are preparing within the guidelines of the rules governing the tournament.
- **Auditors:** After every round, two people should check the work of the tab stations. They should check to be sure the wins/losses, points, ranks, etc. were entered properly into the tabulation software.
- **Tab Room Director:** oversees the entire tabulation room, helps answer questions, is aware of the master schedule and checks in with tab stations to ensure they're on pace, ensures the audits are done properly, and makes changes as necessary based upon circumstances of the tournament.
- **New Coach Liaison:** serves as a resource for coaches attending districts for the first time; answers questions.

*NOTE: The district chair and committee may determine that additional personnel are necessary for the administration of the tournament and assign additional roles, accordingly.*

# Standards for Holding a District Qualifying Tournament

## District Eligibility

1. **Minimum Schools Requirement:** Any district that maintains at least 8 active *charter* chapters or 16 active chapters **of any type** is allowed to hold a district qualifying tournament series. If a district does not meet this minimum requirement, it may **not** hold a tournament series. However, schools in the district may petition to attend a qualifying tournament in a contiguous district. Schools must attend the entire district tournament series (inclusive of debate, speech and Congress) in their own district.
2. **Minimum Entries Requirement:** If a particular speech or debate event has fewer than four entries, regardless of the district’s qualification level, no qualifiers are allowed in that event. An entry must participate in at least one round (or in the case of Congressional Debate, must give at least one speech) in order to count as an entry.
3. **Minimum School Entry Requirement:** In order to qualify entries in a speech or debate event to the National Tournament, a minimum of two schools must have entries that participate in the event. (See Congressional Debate Exception below.)
4. **Congressional Debate Exception:** The number of Senate and House qualifiers is independent of all other district tournament benchmark standards.

### A. Senate

A district with eight (8) or more schools represented in the **Senate** will qualify two (2) senators to the National Senate. If fewer than eight (8) schools are represented, *no Senate may be seated*.

### B. House of Representatives

Refer to the chart below to determine number of **House** chambers, final round requirements, and advancement to the National House (note that the number of students in the far left column is based on *participation*—speaking or presiding at least once):

#### National Tournament Qualification Requirements for House

<i>Participating Students</i>	<i>Qualifiers</i>
16-29	2
30-58	4
59-87	6
88-116	7
117-145	8
146+	9

## Establishing Chamber Sizes

**A Chamber shall seat no more than 29 contestants.**

<b>Participating Students</b> <i>(must give a speech or preside)</i>	<b>Preliminary Chambers</b>	<b>Students who Advance to Final Session from each Preliminary Chamber</b> <i>(if applicable)</i>	<b>Final Session Requirement</b>
16-29	1	<i>Not applicable</i>	<i>Not applicable</i>
30-58	2	8-12	Required
59-87	3	6-8	Required
88-116	4	4-6	Required
117-145	5	4-5	Required
146+	6 or more	3-4	Required

A district may have no Senate or one or two Senate Chambers and six or more House Chambers, as determined by the above formula. Non-qualifying (non-District Congress) Houses may also be held for regular merit points. No more than nine (9) students from a district may qualify to the National House of Representatives.

Contestants qualify to the National House of Representatives according to the number of *actual participants* in each chamber (number of students giving at least one speech). No district shall state or imply that if a student qualified in a previous event, that student may not enter the District Congress or imply that a student previously qualified cannot qualify for the National Congress.

## National Qualification Levels

### National Qualification: Level 1

- 1.1 **Qualification Level 1 is reserved for districts on a growth plan due to realignment or district creation.** A district that meets the minimum schools and entries requirements is allowed **one** entry to the National Tournament per speech and debate event, as long as the event meets the four-entry minimum. Also, for Level 1 districts:
- 1.1.1 If there are at least **16 entries in an event**, that event is allowed 2 qualifiers.
  - 1.1.2 If there are at least **32 entries in an event**, that event is allowed 3 qualifiers.
  - 1.1.3 If there are at least **56 entries in an event**, that event is allowed 4 qualifiers.

### National Qualification: Level 2

- 2.1 A district **meeting the minimum district standard in the previous school year** is allowed **two** entries to the National Tournament per speech and debate event, as long the event meets the four-entry minimum:
- 2.1.1 Maintain **12** or more **charter** chapters **with paid membership in the previous school year.**
  - 2.1.2 Maintain **20** or more chapters of any type **with paid membership in the previous school year.**
  - 2.1.3 **200 new individual student memberships as a district in the previous school year.**
  - 2.1.4 **700 or more new degrees from schools with paid membership during the previous school year.**
- 2.2 If the district qualifies for Level 2 under one of the above criteria, that district may:
- 2.2.1 Earn a third qualifier in any event with **30 entries.**
  - 2.2.2 Earn a fourth qualifier in any event with **50 entries.**

**National Qualification: Level 3**

- 3.1 A district that meets the minimum district standard in the previous school year is allowed **three** entries to the National Tournament in **every** speech and debate event as long as at least 12 solo entries or 10 team entries in each event compete in at least one round; if that minimum is not met by a particular event, only two entries shall be granted in that event:
- 3.1.1 **24** or more charter chapters with **paid membership in the previous school year.**
  - 3.1.2 **40** or more chapters of any type with **paid membership in the previous school year.**
  - 3.1.3 **400** new individual student memberships as a district in the **previous school year.**
  - 3.1.4 **1400** or more new degrees from schools with **paid membership during the previous school year.**
- 3.2 If the district qualifies for Level 3 under one of the above criteria, that district may earn a fourth qualifier in any event with **50 entries.**

Qualifiers to the National Tournament – Entries Required per Event				
National Qualifying Level	1 Qualifier	2 Qualifiers	3 Qualifiers	4 Qualifiers
Level 1	At least 4 entries	<b>16 entries</b>	<b>32 entries</b>	<b>56 entries</b>
Level 2		<b>4 entries</b>	<b>30 team entries</b>	<b>50 team entries</b>
Level 3		<b>4 entries</b>	<b>10 team entries</b>	<b>50 team entries</b>

**Auto-Qualification**

In any given year at the National Tournament, any student who places in the top 14 in any main event (**or top 4 of Big Questions or top 8 of World Schools Debate**), has not completed more than six semesters of high school, and is still enrolled in high school (as a student in good standing) may enter the following year’s National Tournament in the same solo event or in the same team event with the same partner.

The district will permit an auto-qualified student to participate in the district tournament and to double enter as specified by the district’s uniform double-entry policies. No rule regarding double entry may be violated by auto-qualification. The entry must indicate acceptance of the auto-qualification through his or her *Single Entry Letter of Intent* prior to its district competition. The district chair should notify the national office of acceptance of the auto-qualification in reporting district results. A student who accepts auto-qualification may double-enter based on rules above but must sign the single letter of intent, which is binding, in favor of the event of their auto-qualification. If the entry signs the single letter of intent and rejects auto-qualification, the results of the district tournament are binding.

An entry that accepts auto-qualification is above and beyond the number of qualifiers a district may earn as per the Level 1-3 requirements above, whether or not the entry participates in the current year’s district tournament series. However, an auto-qualifier may participate and help a district meet its quota requirements.

**School Eligibility and Entry Limits**

An entry is defined as a registered unit in any event. In a partnership event (Policy Debate, Public Forum Debate, or Duo Interpretation), each team is one entry. A student who is double entered counts as two entries. Two students in a partnership event who both double enter (in solo events) are counted as three entries.

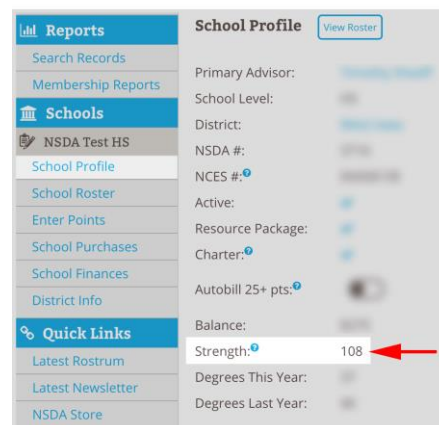


1. **Allotment:** The number of entries a school is permitted to enter is based upon the number of **paid** members and degrees on record with the national office prior to the district tournament entry deadline set by the District Committee. Each registration deadline must be set to begin no earlier than seven days (168 hours) prior and end no later than one day (24 hours) prior to on-site registration of the event. Districts must establish their entry deadlines for all events in their district tournament series at least 60 days prior to the start of series. If multiple dates are used, allotment is assessed prior to each contest, subtracting entries that may have been used in a prior contest. Current school strength can be found on the School Profile page of the Association website. Please refer to the *High School Unified Manual* to determine how members and degrees are calculated. (The following entry limits were revised in 2016-2017 to account for the additions of POI and INF as main events.) To download our helpful guide for understanding your team’s strength and why it matters, visit [www.speechanddebate.org/what-is-strength](http://www.speechanddebate.org/what-is-strength).

Members and Degrees (Strength)	Speech, Lincoln-Douglas, Policy, and Public Forum Entries Allowed
1-15	4
16-20	6
21-30	10
31-40	12
41-50	15
51-60	16
61-70	18
71-80	21
81-90	23
91-100	24
101-120	27
121-140	29
141-160	32
161-180	33
181-200	34
201-230	35
231-260	37
261-300	38
301-350	39
351-400	40
401-500	42
501-600	43
601 +	44

Members and Degrees (Strength)	Senate Entries Allowed	House Entries Allowed
1-20	2	2
21-35	2	3
36-55	2	4
56-75	2	5
76-100	2	6
101-150	2	7
151-200	2	8
201-250	2	9
251-300	2	10
301-350	2	11
351-400	2	12
401 +	2	13

View a team’s strength on the School Profile page:



2. **Entry Limit per Event:** Each school may enter up to four entries in each event. Congress uses a separate formula for entry limits. See the Senate/House chart above under “Allotment.” Schools may enter 0-2 students in the Senate and a number in the House equivalent to their member/degree allowance above.

3. **Penalty for Excess Entry:** The District Committee must not permit excess entry. If a school enters in excess of its allotment, it forfeits all coaching credit points and all sweepstakes points for the entire tournament as well as a penalty of ten trophy points. If the excess entries create additional qualifiers, the District may face penalties resulting in loss of qualifiers.
4. **Bonus Entries:** Any school that registers two entries in every category that actually compete (by participating in at least one round) in the district tournament will be permitted to register two additional entries in the tournament. However, no more than four entries are permitted in each event.
5. **Registration:** Tournament entry must be completed online using Tabroom.com, The Joy of Tournaments, or Speechwire.com — including downloading and printing the official forms, obtaining necessary signatures, and submitting it to the district chair. Registration must be completed prior to the district tournament entry deadline set by the District Committee.
  - A. The district may choose to impose a late fee of \$5 per day, or \$5 per entry, whichever is less.
  - B. All NSDA districts may allow substitutions with eligible student competitors up to the conclusion of the on-site registration.
  - C. Any substitutions in district entries after the close of registration must be approved by the district chair.
  - D. The district chair will accept incomplete registrations and notify the school that their registration is incomplete. If registration remains incomplete at the start of the tournament, the affected students will be ineligible to participate.
  - E. All school fees and outstanding invoices must be paid prior to the beginning of the tournament. The district chair receives a list of outstanding balances prior to the tournament and should communicate this information to each school. The chair will accept payment at the time of registration, which will be sent to the national office along with other required tournament information. If outstanding fees are not paid prior to the start of the tournament, the school and its students are ineligible to participate. District chairs must call an ombudsperson from the national office before allowing an unpaid school to compete or its results will be invalid.
  - F. The district chair must notify chapter schools of tournament dates and locations in a timely manner as well as communicate requirements for entry. Each school is responsible for ensuring all rules of entry are met prior to arriving at the tournament site.

## Student Eligibility and Requirements

1. **National Speech & Debate Association Membership:** Only active Association **paid** members in good standing are permitted to participate in the district tournament. It is the affirmative duty of each coach to provide proof of Association membership and proof of website registration for each new student member entered in the district tournament. The District Committee must disqualify any non-member student from competition. Only students officially registered as a member user on the organization website ([www.speechanddebate.org](http://www.speechanddebate.org)) may compete in district competition. Further, only students who are registered will count toward a school's allotment.
  - A. Students must be paid members prior to the district tournament entry deadline set by the District Committee. All necessary fees must be submitted to the national office by this deadline.
  - B. A student may not have attended a secondary school more than nine semesters and must meet the age/eligibility requirements of their state activities association.
  - C. **Students must be officially registered as a member user with a valid, unique email address on the organization website.**

- D. Students must have a minimum of 25 merit points, at least 10 of which were gained in interscholastic contests.
2. **Community Standards:** Prior to registering online for the district tournament, all coaches are required to confirm the following statement: "I certify that we, the coach(es), student(s), administrator(s) directly affiliated with our NSDA chapter, have agreed that the student performance(s) reflect(s) our school standards in terms of subject matter, language, and use of gesture."
3. **Double Entry Policy**
- A. No student may double enter at the National Tournament. A *Single Entry Letter of Intent* must be filed with the district chair prior to the beginning of the district tournament series indicating the event in which the student will compete at the National Tournament, should they qualify. This letter must be on file before the student competes in the second event.
- B. The District Committee may limit entry to one event per student in the district tournament. The district may choose to permit double entry under the following guidelines:
1. **Congressional Debate Exception:** Students who double enter within the speech and debate district tournament are still eligible to compete in the District Congress.
  2. **No Triple Entry:** The District Committee is allowed autonomy in terms of its double entry policy. However, triple entry is not permitted unless one of the events is Congressional Debate or Big Questions. A student who enters more than two speech or debate events at districts will forfeit National Tournament entry, district points, and trophy points, even if portions of the tournament occur on different dates or different times of the year or if they have failed to qualify in a previous event.
  3. **Qualifying in a Partnership Event:** If a student qualifies in a partnership event (Public Forum Debate, Policy Debate, or Duo Interpretation) and an individual event, the student must attend the National Tournament in the partnership event.
  4. **Partnership Events:** Students may only enter one partnership debate event (Policy Debate or Public Forum). Students may enter in one partnership debate event as partners and in Duo Interpretation as the same partnership. A student may not enter a partnership debate event and a Duo Interpretation with different partners **unless the two events are held on different weekends (see exceptions below)**.
  5. **Partnership Event Exception:** If two students qualify for the National Tournament in a partnership event and both individuals also qualify for the National Tournament in individual events, the students may choose to enter the National Tournament in their individual events if indicated on their *Single Entry Letter of Intent*. If two students enter the district tournament in a partnership debate event and in Duo Interpretation (with the same partners), and the two events occur on the same weekend, the students must choose the same one of the team events on their respective *Single Entry Letters of Intent*. If the partner debate event and the duo event do not occur on the same weekend, the school may forfeit an alternate position that resulted from the first competition, allowing new partnerships to be created. If the school wishes for the alternate status to be retained from the first competition, the same partnership has to be used when entering the second. If the first competition resulted in a qualification for Nationals, those students may not enter a team event with different partners.
  6. **Denial of entry:** No student will be denied entry into an event or denied participation in the district tournament based on previous National Tournament qualification or performance unless that student is attempting to violate the above rules or has failed to submit a *Single Entry Letter of Intent*.

7. **Penalty:** Violation of the above rules will result in disqualification from National Tournament entry.

4. **Orations and Literary Material**

- A. In interpretive events (Dramatic, Humorous, Duo, and Program Oral Interpretation), the same selection of literature entered at on-site registration should be used for the duration of the tournament.
- B. Oratory manuscripts and interpretation materials must be available at all district tournament tournaments in the event of a protest. However, it shall be the choice of each individual District Committee whether or not to require these materials be submitted *prior* to the district tournament. The script must identify quoted materials, state the number of quoted words, include a work cited page in APA or MLA format, and both the orator and the coach must attest by signature that the oration is the original work of the contestant.
- C. All materials used are expected to meet the standards in the *High School Unified Manual*.

5. **Penalties:** An ineligible participant or one who uses ineligible material will not earn merit points, points toward tournament trophies, tournament awards, or National Tournament entry. A student who competes in the wrong section or against the wrong opponent, at no fault of his or her opponent or the tournament officials, will automatically receive last in the round or a loss for that round, with speaker points averaged from other rounds.

# Judge Instructions and Guidelines

## General Instructions

- All judges are to report to their assigned rooms at least five minutes before the time the round is scheduled to begin.
- Each judge's ballot is to be secured from tournament official and submitted immediately following each round.
- Read the instructions on the ballot.
- Do not confer with other judges.
- Judges should not interrupt the flow of rounds in any way. They are silent evaluators and should not reveal their decision.

## Statement on Conflicts of Interest in Judging

Fair competition requires not merely the absence of impropriety but also the absence of *appearance* of impropriety. A conflict of interest is a relationship that might reasonably be thought to bias a judge toward or against a competitor. Such relationships may themselves be quite innocent, but they could reasonably be thought to compromise a judge's impartiality.

A judge **must** recuse themselves from judging a student under the following conditions:

1. The judge and the student may be perceived to have a competitive or financial agreement that may bias the judge's impartial evaluation of the round. Examples include but are not limited to:
  - A. The student attends a school (or a collaboration of schools) that the judge attended, coached for, or competed with. **NOTE:** Two potential exceptions to this guideline would be that if a designated committee or ombudsperson felt that enough time has passed since that judge's attendance at the school to resolve concerns of impropriety. In addition, if both coaches felt comfortable with a judge that graduated from a school of one of the competitors, the tab room may allow that judge placement.
  - B. The judge has a paid or unpaid coaching, consulting, or judging relationship with the student or school during the same academic year. **NOTE:** Serving as a tournament-hired judge does not constitute a conflict of interest.
  - C. The judge has received or provided expressed or implied offers to provide future coaching, consulting, or judging to a school or student.
  - D. The judge has provided exclusive pre-round preparation to a student either before or during a tournament through any method including electronically, verbally, or through the transfer of resources. **NOTE:** Sharing of information does not constitute preparation, but the discussion of strategies, arguments, evidence, etc., would constitute preparation. If such preparation is provided during a tournament, the judge should immediately (before pairings are released) recuse themselves from judging the student they prepared for the rest of the tournament. If practice rounds before or during the tournament has occurred between schools that a judge is fulfilling obligations for and could potentially judge, that would be defined as preparation and all parties should consider that a conflict.

2. The judge and the student may be perceived to have a personal or social arrangement that may bias the judge's impartial evaluation of the round. Examples include but are not limited to:
  - A. The judge and the student may be perceived to have had a personal relationship that may bias the judge's impartial evaluation of the round.
  - B. The judge and the student are or have been in a familial, physical, or emotional relationship.
  - C. The judge and the student have communications of a personal nature over email, telephone, or the Internet including social networking sites that goes beyond causal exchanges. For example, communications that are extensive and/or repetitive may create a conflict. Judges who socialize with the student outside of the competition arena are considered to have established a personal or social relationship with that student.
3. The judge does not believe they are able to fairly and impartially adjudicate a competition involving a particular student for whatever reason.

Judges may **choose** to recuse themselves from adjudicating a student under the following conditions. (If these conditions exist, it is the affirmative duty of the judge to make such information publicly available prior to the round beginning.)

1. The judge shares transportation and/or lodging with the student's team on a regular basis.
2. The judge has a personal, financial, or familial relationship with the student's coach or member of the student's family.
3. The judge is an administrator of, currently employed by, or anticipates employment from a forensic-related enterprise with whom a financial or advisory relationship exists or is sought with the student.  
**NOTE:** These guidelines do not prohibit lab leaders/institute staff from judging their lab students; however, if those lab leaders maintain consistent contact with those students and/or engage in personal relationships with them, they should recuse themselves from judging those specific individuals.

*The expectation of competitors, judges, and coaches is to engage in the highest levels of professionalism and integrity. While the responsibility is on judges to aide transparency, the responsibility exists for coaches and student competitors as well. It is the affirmative duty of all coaches and debaters to assist efforts in transparency. No decisions will be modified as a result of disclosed information.*

# Running the District Debate Tournament

The following rules apply to Lincoln-Douglas, Policy, Public Forum, and Big Questions debate events at the district tournament. Any tournament violating these rules will be invalid, with no national qualification granted.

A district may choose to use one of three methods to run their district debate tournament: round robin, single elimination bracketed, or double elimination bracketed. This selection must be finalized and publicized at least one week prior to the start of round 1. All debate events must use the same method.

## Method 1: Round Robin Tournament

Districts with a small number of entries in a debate division may elect to hold a round robin for their qualifying tournament. If a district uses this method, all entries in an event will debate all the other entries in that event once. A round robin requires one fewer round than there are entries in the division. For example, if an event had six entries, five rounds would be held.

All rounds of the tournament must be pre-scheduled before the tournament begins using approved software. The rounds must be paired so each entry hits every other entry once, and in LD and CX, each entry should end up with an even number of affirmative and negative rounds. They will not necessarily alternate sides round to round.

Round robin tournaments may elect to use 1, 2, or 3 judge panels, but all debates in the entire tournament must have the same number of judges as all other rounds.

The round robin concludes after the preliminary rounds; no elimination rounds are necessary. Qualifiers and alternates are determined first by total ballot count, and next by the winner of the head-to-head debate between two tied competitors. In the event that a tie still exists (such as if a 2 judge panel split in a head to head debate), a runoff debate with an odd number of judges should be held between the tied competitors.

Rounds between entries from the same school may either be debated or decided at the coach's discretion; if 2 judge panels are used, the ballots in the case of a no-debate would be split 1-1 between the two debaters. If 1 or 3 judges are used, all ballots must be awarded to one entry by the coach decision.

## Methods 2 & 3: Single and Double Elimination Bracketed Tournaments

### General Rules for Single and Double Elim Bracketed Events

1. **Minimum Rounds:** At least four preliminary rounds are held in all debate contests unless only four entries compete. If only four entries compete, three preliminary rounds may be held.
2. **Number of Judges:** One or three judges may be used in preliminary round debates, as determined by the District Committee. All debates must have the same number of judges as all other debates in a round throughout the tournament. Elimination rounds must use three or more judges per round. All judge panels must consist of odd numbers of judges, and no elimination or final round may use fewer judges per panel than any previous round.
3. **Forfeits:** Judges should notify the District Committee of a student who arrives to their round more than 15 minutes after the posted start time of the round. If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student was more than 15 minutes late. Debaters who are 15 minutes late forfeit the round, but the District Committee may waive the penalty. For a speech competitor, the District Committee may choose to drop each judge score in the round by two ranks. The judge(s) should not adjust the student's ranks themselves. The District Committee may waive the penalty.
4. **Judges** in preliminary rounds must award a win/loss, with no ties permitted, and speaker points to each individual debater on a 30 point scale. The District Committee must decide and communicate whether

speaker points will be assigned using a full, half, or tenths point scale before the start of round 1. Judges in elimination rounds only award a win/loss without points.

## Pairing and Tabulation Rules

Rounds 1-2 are randomly preset, and any subsequent rounds must be powermatched.

### Pairing Presets (Rounds 1-2)

Preset rounds are sectioned with the following priorities in order:

1. Avoid two entries from the same school debating each other
2. Avoid entries debating each other more than once
3. Avoid any entry in CX and LD debating on the same side of the topic more than once
4. Avoid any entry drawing a bye (due to uneven numbers) more than once
5. Avoid any entry debating more than one opponent from the same school
6. Avoid any school drawing a bye (due to uneven numbers) more than once

### Pairing Powermatched Rounds (Preliminary Rounds after Round 2)

After round 2, entries are ordered or seeded by the following:

1. Highest number of rounds won
2. Highest total entry speaker points with highest and lowest ballots' scores dropped (drop the highest and lowest total team score in CX and PF, not the lowest score of each speaker)
3. Highest total entry speaker points
4. Lowest average opponent seed
5. Coin flip/random number

Debates are assigned within brackets. All entries with the same win count are grouped in the same bracket.

## Pull Ups

Begin with the top bracket (the most wins). In a non-side-locked round, which is all rounds in PF, and odd numbered rounds in LD and CX, pull ups are required either if numbers are uneven or there is no way to avoid scheduling a debate between entries from the same school or entries that have previously debated. In side-locked (even rounds in CX or LD), pull ups are also required if the number of teams due to debate affirmative is not equal to the number due to debate negative. Until these conditions are met, pull up an entry or entries from the brackets below according to the following priorities in order:

1. Pull entries up only if they are due to debate the short side in a sidelocked round
2. The pull up should not force a debate between entries in the same school
3. The pull up should not force a debate between entries that have previously debated
4. The pull up should come from the nearest bracket possible
5. The pull up should have the worst (highest) average opponent seeding

Do not avoid pulling an entry up because they have been previously pulled up. Pull ups are re-seeded into their new bracket as they would be based on the tiebreakers other than win/loss. For example, if a pull up has the eighth best high/low speaker points out of 12 entries in a bracket, they are given the eighth position despite having fewer wins.



## Pairing

Once the bracket has an even number of entries, schedule entries such that the entry with the best (lowest) SOP score debates the entry with the worst (highest) SOP score. Then the second best debates the second worst, and so on. The following priorities should be used in pairing powermatched debates:

1. Avoid two entries from the same school debating each other
2. Avoid entries debating each other more than once
3. Avoid any entry in CX and LD debating on the same side as a previous round in sidelocked rounds
4. Pair entries according to their position in the bracket as determined by SOP scores

SOP (Seed + Opponent Seed) scores are calculated by adding the seeding of the entry together with their average opponent seed up to that point in the tournament. The top seeded debaters might end up lower in the bracket than worst seeded debaters if they debated against worse opponents. The goal of SOP is to even out the difficulty of the brackets over the course of the tournament.

Break this pattern of SOP as minimally as possible to avoid higher pairing priorities. In an event with an uneven number of entries, the bye goes to the entry with the worst SOP score overall that has not yet been awarded a bye. If two entries must debate against each other a second time in either preliminary or elimination rounds, in LD and CX, the second debate must have sides reversed from the first debate; in PF, the coin flip is still used.

In all cases, the computer should be primarily used to create pairings in preset and powermatched rounds to ensure impartiality and true randomness where necessary; however, the debate tabulation staff should check the computer to ensure pairing priorities are correctly followed.

## Elimination Rounds

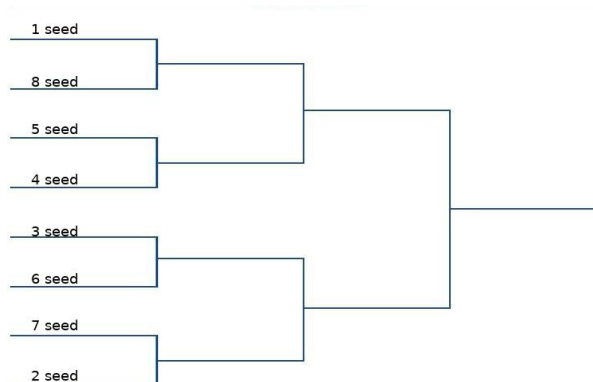
After preliminary rounds, the entries should be ranked in order based on the same seeding rules used for powermatching. The District Committee may choose either to advance all entries with a winning record or only advance all entries with one or zero losses.

If your district is using the single elimination bracket, proceed with the “Method 2: Single Elimination Bracket” rules found below. If your district is using the double elimination bracket, skip to “Method 3: Double Elimination Bracket” to finish your tournament.

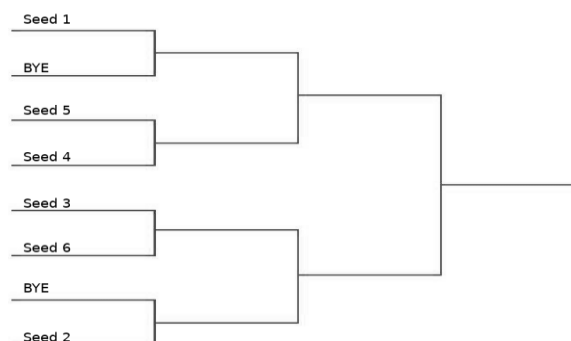
### Method 2: Single Elimination Bracket

Advancing entries will be placed in a single elimination round bracket. The best seeded entry debates the worst seed, the second best seed debates the second worst, and so on. If the number is not a power of two, then the top seeded debaters are given byes until the bracket is complete. The winner of the best/worst debate should debate the winner of the middle debates, the winner of the second best debate the next middle, and so on.

## SAMPLE SINGLE ELIMINATION BRACKETS



8 ENTRIES ADVANCING



6 ENTRIES ADVANCING (PARTIALS)

Debaters should flip a coin in any LD and CX debate where the entries have not previously debated. If LD and CX debaters have previously debated, they should debate on the opposite sides of the topic from the previous round. PF debaters always flip for sides/position and may choose the same sides and speaker positions as previous debates.

At least three judges must judge each elimination debate. Every round must have an equal or greater number of judges than all previous rounds, and all debates of a given round must have the same number of judges. Brackets may not be broken to avoid same-school debates. Coaches of debaters in same school debates may either decide who advances without a debate, or elect to hold a debate as normal.

The winner of the majority of ballots in each debate advances, while their opponent is eliminated. The tournament must continue until the number of entries active is equal to or lower than the number of qualifiers; further rounds for recognition may be held at the discretion of the District Committee.

### Determining National Qualifiers

Qualifying spots are always determined by wins in elimination debates. A district which qualifies one entry must conduct a final round (if there are multiple entries advancing to elimination rounds). A district which qualifies three entries must conduct a debate between the two non-advancing semifinalists for the third slot to the National Tournament.

### Determining Alternates

Alternate placement is determined by one of two methods. By default, the preliminary round seeding method is used; District Committees that opt for run-offs must publicize that decision before the start of round 1 of each event.

## OPTION 1: PRELIMINARY ROUND SEEDING

The order of the finishers is determined by the following tie-breakers in order:

1. Winner of the final round
2. The last round competed in, e.g., a student in finals places better than a student that does not advance from semifinals
3. Preliminary round seeding as determined by the tie-breakers used to break

## OPTION 2: RUN-OFFS

Entries who are eliminated in the same elimination round are considered tied for alternate positions, and a series of run-offs must be held to determine the final ordering. If a slot for the National Tournament falls to the quarterfinalists, for instance, then all debaters willing to attend the National Tournament will be scheduled so the highest seed debates the lowest seed, and the middle two seeds debate; the winners of those two debates then debate for the slot to the National Tournament.

## Method 3: Double Elimination Bracket

Districts may elect to use a double elimination bracket for the elimination rounds of their district debate tournament. A double elimination bracket requires that an entry must lose two debates in elimination rounds before they are eliminated from the tournament. This method requires more elimination rounds than a single-elimination bracket.

Tournaments using a double elimination bracket will use the same rules as a single elimination bracketed tournament for preliminary rounds and determining which entries will clear to elimination rounds. The first elimination round will also be conducted according to the same rules as the single elimination bracketed tournament. The best seeded entry debates the worst seed, the second best seed debates the second worst, and so on. If the number is not a power of two, then the top seeded debaters are given byes until the bracket is complete.

## Pairing Elimination Rounds

After the first elimination round, a double elimination format bracket is divided into a “winner’s bracket” of debaters who have not lost in elimination rounds, and a “loser’s bracket” of debaters who have already lost one debate in elimination rounds. The winner’s bracket operates exactly like a single elimination format bracket, except that when an entry loses, they are moved to the loser’s bracket instead of eliminated from the tournament.

The loser’s bracket is paired among teams with one loss. The loser’s bracket teams are ‘seeded’ with either a) the better seed of the last loser’s bracket debate they won, or b) the worse seed of the last winner’s bracket debate they won. For example, the loser of a winner’s bracket debate between the 1 and 8 seed is seeded 8 going into the next loser’s bracket debate. The winner of the loser’s bracket debate between the 5 and 11 seed in the loser’s bracket is seeded 5 going into the next loser’s bracket debate.

Each loser’s bracket round must have a number of entries equal to a power of 2 (powers of 2 are 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, etc.). If there are more debaters than that, give byes to the *best* seeded debaters until there is a power of 2 number of rounds. For example, if there are five entries in the loser’s bracket, one will receive a bye and the bottom four seeds will debate. If there are 13 entries in the loser’s bracket, five will receive byes and the bottom

eight seeds will debate. If there are six entries in the loser's bracket seeded 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, and 11, byes are given to the 5 and 6 seeded entries.

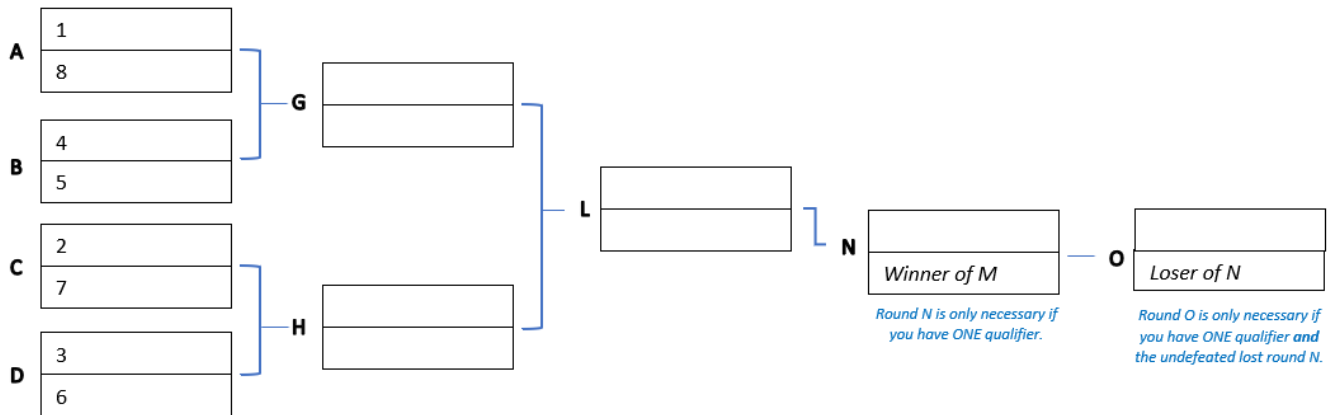
Pair the debaters in the loser's bracket so that the *average total seed* of the two debaters competing against each other is the same as all other debates in the loser's bracket. Using the above example, the 7 and 11 seeds would debate (sum 18) and the 8 and 10 seeds would debate (sum 18).

Debaters may debate the same opponents they have already faced in preliminary rounds, but they may not debate twice in elimination rounds. When the seeding schedules two entries to debate for a second time in elims, *flip* one half of the opponents such that the seed total of all debates are as close as possible to each of the others while avoiding repeat debates. In these cases, the "worst" seed sums will be 2 higher than the "best" seed sums. Using the above example, imagine the 8 and 10 seeds had already debated in elims. Instead of keeping each seed sum at 18, the 7 and 10 seeds would debate (sum 17) and the 11 and 8 seeds would debate (sum 19).

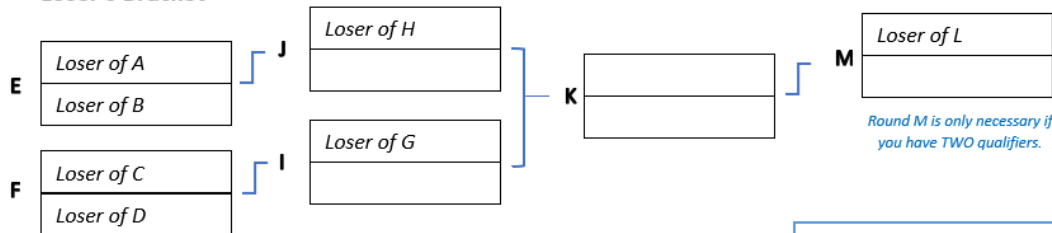
Rounds between entries from the same school may either be debated or decided at the coach's discretion; do not break brackets to avoid same-school debates.

### SAMPLE DOUBLE ELIMINATION BRACKETS

#### Winner's Bracket

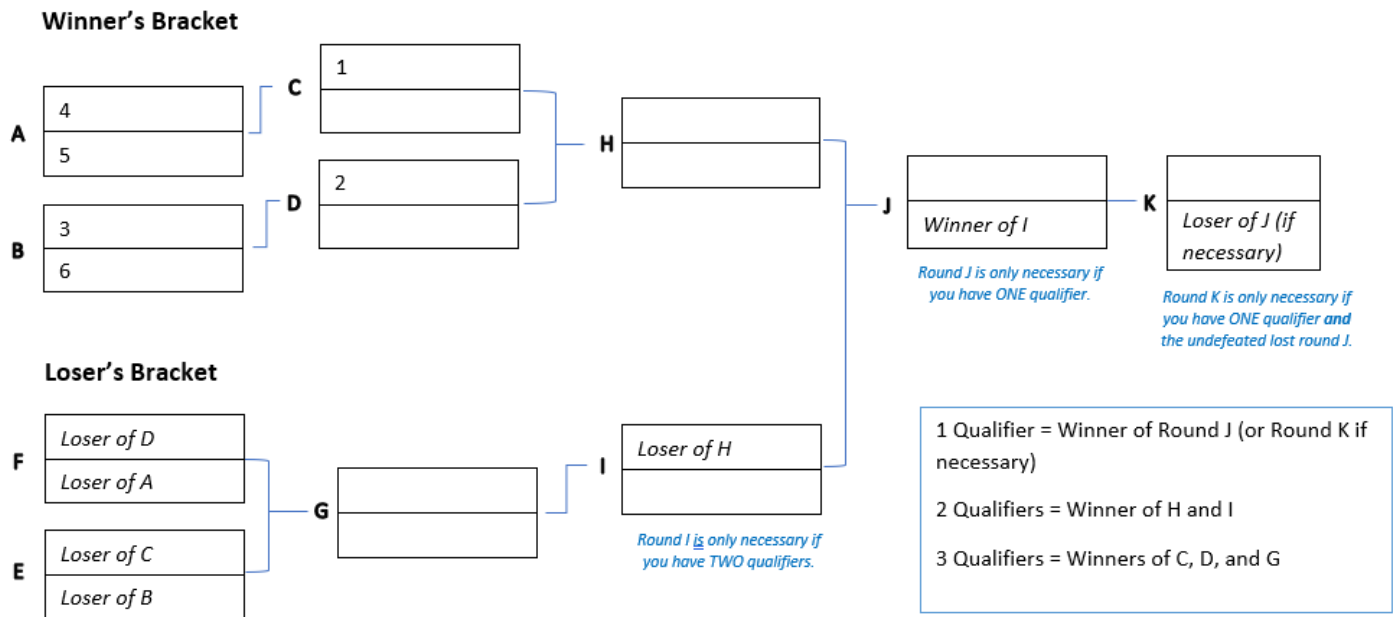


#### Loser's Bracket



- 1 Qualifier = Winner of Round N (or Round O if necessary)
- 2 Qualifiers = Winner of L and M
- 3 Qualifiers = Winners of G, H, and K

### 8 ENTRIES ADVANCING



## 6 ENTRIES ADVANCING

### Determining National Qualifiers

Qualifying spots are always determined by wins in elimination debates. A district which qualifies one entry must conduct a final round (if there are multiple entries advancing to elimination rounds) between the champion of the winner's bracket and the champion of the loser's bracket. If the undefeated entry loses the final round, the two entries in finals must switch sides and debate again. The winner will qualify to the National Tournament. A district which qualifies three entries must conduct a debate between the two non-advancing entries that were eliminated in the round before the final round, one from the winner's bracket and one from the loser's bracket.

### Determining Alternates

Alternate placement is determined by one of **two** methods. By default, the preliminary round seeding method is used; District Committees that opt for run-offs must publicize that decision before the start of round 1 of each event.

#### OPTION 1: PRELIMINARY ROUND SEEDING

The order of the finishers is determined by the following tie-breakers in order:

1. Winner of the final round
2. The last round competed in, e.g., a student in finals places better than a student that does not advance from semifinals
3. Preliminary round seeding as determined by the tie-breakers used to break

**OPTION 2: RUN-OFFS**

Entries who are eliminated in the same elimination round are considered tied for alternate positions, and a series of run-offs must be held to determine the final ordering. If a slot for the National Tournament falls to the quarterfinalists, for instance, then all debaters willing to attend the National Tournament will be scheduled so the highest seed debates the lowest seed, and the middle two seeds debate; the winners of those two debates then debate for the slot to the National Tournament.

# Running the District Congressional Debate Tournament

## General Rules

1. **Legislation.** The District Committee should establish a legislation submission deadline at least 24 days prior to the Congress, and may allow for late submissions, but no legislation may be offered at the tournament.
  - a. Schools are encouraged to submit at least two items using Association templates. Each school's advisor is responsible for ensuring submissions are original work of their students.
  - b. At least 14 days before the Congress, the district chair should post a docket of at least three items per round scheduled.
2. **Time Allowance and Rounds.** A district must offer at least two rounds, one of which must be a final round. If a district has only one chamber in a division (Senate or House), the scores from all rounds shall cumulatively determine placement and advancement to the National Tournament; a final round is not required. When planning the schedule, each round must include at least ten minutes per student in a chamber. For example, a round with 20 students in each chamber must be at least 200 minutes long. **However, if there are 25 or more students in a chamber, the district may choose to hold four hour rounds instead.** Additional time should be planned for breaks/meals. Each round includes:
  - a. Election of a presiding officer; nominated from the floor with the parliamentarian or tournament official conducting the election. A District Committee may appoint adult presiding officers with no affiliation to any participants.
  - b. New seating chart (necessary accommodations for students with special needs may be made)
  - c. Resetting of precedence/recency
  - d. New legislation that has not been debated in a previous round at that tournament
3. **Judges.** Procure unaffiliated judges (e.g., local legislators, legislative staff, attorneys, law students, civic organization members, chamber of commerce professionals, etc.). College-age judges are permitted at the District Committee's discretion. Current high school students may not judge any district tournament event. Judges:
  - a. A parliamentarian is assigned to each chamber and remains throughout multiple preliminary rounds. They will holistically rank all participants at the end of the round (or end of the last preliminary round), with the top 8 serving as a judge rank, and all ranks serving as a final tie-break. It is a parliamentarian's duty to primarily be an observer, but also to control the chamber should students sway from parliamentary procedure and Congressional Debate rules. They will also:
    - i. Call roll and ensure students are in assigned seats
    - ii. Monitor timekeeping and speaker recognition by the presiding officer (PO)
    - iii. Intervene when a PO becomes confused or makes errors in procedure
    - iv. Record round start/end times and document votes/actions taken
  - b. At least two scorers must be assigned each round in each chamber, in addition to the parliamentarian as outlined above.
    - i. Number of scorers required:
      1. One preliminary round: at least two scorers
      2. Multiple preliminary rounds: at least one scorer per round
      3. Final rounds: at least three
    - ii. For each round, scorers:

1. Rate 1-8 points per speech, considering answers to questions
  2. Rate 4-8 points per full hour of presiding (fractions of an hour are not scored)
  3. Rank their 8 most preferred legislators (which may include POs)
- c. No more than 40 merit points may be earned a day per student. The average total of scorer panels' points for each speech and complete hour of presiding will be recorded.
4. **Setting up the District Congress.**
- a. Rooms must allow for all contestants to be seated such that the presiding officer can see them.
  - b. Obtain needed materials/supplies for presiding officers and parliamentarians: gavels (optional; may be ordered at [store.speechanddebate.org](http://store.speechanddebate.org)), timers/stopwatches, Table of Parliamentary Motions, amendment forms, and recency charts.

## Sectioning Chambers

1. The District Committee may choose to either allow coaches to select which chamber their students will compete in or randomly place students in each chamber using approved software. Chamber size within each division is consistent and no more than 29 contestants.
2. Once chamber assignments are made, only replacing an absent student with an alternate is allowed, and no changes shall be made once a chamber has convened.
3. Seating charts should be generated and printed facing toward the back for both the presiding officer and parliamentarian. Seating charts should be printed facing toward the front for each scorer.

## Tabulation

Scorer and parliamentarian ranks are inputted (software automatically considers non-ranked students as ranks of 9 and uses higher parliamentarian ranks as tie-breaks only). Each individual chamber is tabulated independent of others. Legislators with the lowest cumulative rank total advance to the next level of competition, employing the following tiebreakers:

1. Judges' preference (or students' preference for the student rank option below)
2. Reciprocal fractions
3. Adjusted cumulative rank total after dropping highest and lowest ranks
4. Reciprocals of adjusted cumulative rank total
5. Rank by the parliamentarian (ranking first to last)

## Student Rank Option

Districts have the option of allowing student cumulative rank totals (not student preferential redistribution of ballots) to determine national qualifiers. If a district exercises this option, it must do so for *both* Senate and House. After judge cumulative rank totals from elimination rounds have determined the top eight students in the chamber, students shall rank order their preference next to each student's name. Each individual rank for all participating students will be inputted, to determine the lowest cumulative rank total. If a student completes a ballot incorrectly (duplicate or missing rank), it must be discarded, and shall not count in tabulation.

## Qualifiers and Alternates

Qualifiers are determined by rank total from the final round only. The top contestants, up to 14th place in each chamber, are qualifiers and alternates in order of finish. Alternates may attend if qualifiers withdraw before June 1, regardless of whether or not the qualifier has entered the tournament. After June 1, alternates can only replace qualifiers that have been officially entered into the tournament. No alternate (who is replacing an officially entered



qualifier) may enter the National Tournament after 4:00 p.m. on registration day of the National Tournament. National Tournament alternates are determined as follows:

1. Alternates are first determined by order of placement, whether by rank total from the final round by judges or by students.
2. If student ranking was used and additional alternates are necessary beyond those ranked by the students, the original judge rank total from finals, using appropriate tiebreakers through the parliamentarian's rank, shall be used.

# Running the District Speech Tournament

## General Rules for Speech Events

1. **Minimum Rounds:** At least three preliminary rounds must be held in all speech contests.
2. **Number of Judges:** One, two, or three judges may be used in preliminary rounds, as determined by the District Committee. All sections of an event must have the same number of judges as all other sections in a round throughout the tournament. **All speech events must use the same number of judges in the preliminary rounds.** Elimination and final rounds must use three or more judges per section. All elimination round judge panels must consist of odd numbers of judges, and no elimination or final round may use fewer judges per section than any previous round.
3. **Judges** in all speech rounds should rank each entry in order, best to worst, 1-7. Ties are not permitted; points are not necessary.

## Preliminary Rounds

Preliminary round sections are assigned with at least four and no more than seven entries each; the ideal is sections of six. The priorities for paneling these rounds, in order, are:

1. Avoid entries from the same school in the same section
2. Avoid entries competing against each other multiple times
3. Avoid schools competing against each other multiple times

Speaker order is varied within preliminary rounds so that every entry's average speaker position is as equal as possible to all other entries in the same event. Each entry should speak early in a round (first 2 speakers) and late in a round (last 2 speakers) at least once during preliminary rounds.

In all cases, the computer should be primarily used to create pairings to ensure impartiality and true randomness where necessary; however, the speech tabulation staff should check the computer to ensure pairing priorities are correctly followed.

If there are sections with uneven numbers of students, students receiving the lowest rank in the larger section will have their rank truncated. That is, if section A has 6 students and section B has 5, both the fifth and sixth ranked students in section A will receive a rank of 5.

## Preliminary Round Breaks

After the preliminary rounds are concluded, the entries are ordered by rank total, lowest being best. If each entry is given four or more scores (if there are four prelims with one judge, or three prelims with two judges each, etc.) then the worst (highest) rank score is dropped from their rank total.

**If there are less than eight entries, no elimination rounds are required.** Any event with eight or more entries must break to elimination rounds.

**The District Committee may choose how many entries will advance to elimination rounds in each event. The break point for elimination rounds must meet the following standards:**

- **Number of entries that will advance in each event will be announced prior to the start of round 1.**

- A minimum of 25% of an event’s entry total (rounded up to the nearest whole number) OR four entries, whichever is smaller, must advance in each event. For example, an event with twelve entries must clear a minimum of four students to finals.
- All entries whose rank totals are tied with an advancing entry also advance. For example, if the target to advance is six, but a rank total tie exists between sixth and seventh, the top seven entries advance.

## Elimination Rounds

If more than seven entries advance, section a quarter or semifinal round. Sections should have no fewer than four and no more than seven entries. If more than 21 entries advance, quarterfinals must be held. If 15-21 entries advance, semifinals in three sections are held unless the District Committee has set and communicated a lower threshold for quarterfinals.

## Snaking Sections

Elimination rounds are snaked: the top placing entry is placed in the first section, and the next entries are assigned in order by the rank totals going into the round until the number of sections is exhausted. The next entry is placed in the last section and the rest filled in up to the first section. Then, the next entry is placed in the first section and filled in to the last, and so on.

### SAMPLE SNAKED ELIMINATION ROUND

Section 1	Section 2	Section 3	Section 4
Seed 1	Seed 2	Seed 3	Seed 4
8	7	6	5
9	10	11	12
16	15	14	13
17	18	19	

Sections are then adjusted by swapping entries with the same rank total to avoid entries from the same school competing in the same section, where possible.

## Speaker Order

Speaker order in elimination rounds is determined by totaling the entries’ past speaker orders and ordering the section by the reverse of their previous speaker position totals, so the entry with the highest total of past orders speaks first, the next highest speaks second, and so on. Speaker order may be adjusted to accommodate double entry.

## Advancing from Elimination Rounds

After each elimination round, placement order is determined first by lowest total ranks in all preliminary rounds, dropping the worst (highest) preliminary round rank for each entry whether or not each entry received four or more scores in prelims. Then add the total of all ranks earned in elimination rounds multiplied by two. Ties are broken by the lowest rank totals from the last elimination round only.

Six entries advance out of a semifinal round (an elimination round with two or three sections), together with any entry tied with an advancing entry on both overall rank total and ranks in the previous elimination round. Twelve entries should advance out of a quarterfinal, together with any entries tied with an advancing entry on both overall

rank total and ranks in the last elimination round. Advance the top overall entries, not equal numbers from individual sections. If more than seven entries are tied to advance to finals from semifinals, or more than 14 are tied to advance to semifinals from quarterfinals, then all entries tied for the last spot on both scores are excluded from advancing.

## Final Round

If the number of entries clearing to finals is equal to or lower than the number of slots the district will send to Nationals, it may be skipped; otherwise, finals must be held. Speaker order in finals is determined by the same method as elimination rounds. Final round judge panels should consist of an odd number of at least three judges and should never be smaller than the number of judges used in any previous round of that event.

## Determining National Qualifiers and Alternates

**If elimination rounds were held:** Qualifiers are determined by the cumulative scores of finalists based on the factors below. After finals, the order of placement overall is determined by, in order:

1. The last round competed in. *This means that when determining the overall final rank of every student in an event, a finalist places better than a semifinalist, a semifinalist places better than a quarterfinalist, etc.*
2. Lowest total overall ranks score, dropping the worst prelim rank and multiplying elimination and final round ranks by 2.
3. Highest total reciprocal of all ranks, dropping the worst prelim rank, and multiplying elimination and final reciprocals by 2.
4. Lowest total ranks in the final round
5. Judge's preference (head to head) in the final round
6. Highest total reciprocal of ranks in the final round
7. Judge's preference (head to head) in elimination round(s)
8. Judge's preference (head to head) in prelim round(s)

If ties still exist for a spot to Nationals, hold a run-off round with three judges. The winner of the run-off, on ranks, judges' preference, then reciprocals, wins the tie.

**If no elimination rounds were held:** The order of placement overall is determined by, in order:

1. Lowest total overall ranks score
2. Highest total reciprocal of all ranks
3. Judge's preference (head to head) in prelim rounds

If ties still exist for a spot to Nationals, hold a run-off round with three judges. The winner of the run-off, on ranks, judges' preference, then reciprocals, wins the tie.

# Sweepstakes Awards

## Overall District Sweepstakes Plaque

### Overview:

1. A school must actively participate in both debate and speech with at least three entries in each area to be eligible for the award. Congressional Debate is not currently included in calculation of the **overall** District Sweepstakes Plaque.
2. Top five speech and top five debate entries per school will count towards its sweepstakes calculation.
3. Team events (Public Forum, Policy, Duo) count as one entry.
4. Tie breakers:
  - A. Add the 6th speech and the 6th debate entry per school.
  - B. Greatest number of 1sts, 2nds, 3rds, etc.
  - C. Add the 7th speech and the 7th debate entry per school.
  - D. Add the 8th speech and the 8th debate entry per school.
5. If ties cannot be broken, both students will receive the points for the highest place in which they tie.
6. 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place sweepstakes finishes should be awarded in each district.

**Point Schedule Per Event** - Points are allocated based on **actual entries** for qualification rather than any district bonus.

	Category A Event ≤ 37 entries Team event ≤ 29 entries		Category B Event = 38-57 entries Team event = 30-49 entries		Category C Event ≥ 58 entries Team event ≥ 50 entries	
	1 or 2 qualifiers		3 qualifiers		4 qualifiers	
	Speech	Debate	Speech	Debate	Speech	Debate
<b>1<sup>st</sup> Place</b>	6	7	7	8	8	9
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Place</b>	5	6	6	7	7	8
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Place</b>	4	5	5	6	6	7
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Place</b>	3	4	4	5	5	6
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Place</b>	2	3	3	4	4	5
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Place</b>	1	2	2	3	3	4

**Example:**

	Team A		Team B	
<b>PF</b> 2 Qualifiers	1 <sup>st</sup> Place 3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	12 points	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	6 points
<b>DUO</b>				
<b>Policy</b> 2 Qualifiers	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place 4 <sup>th</sup> Place	10 points	5 <sup>th</sup> Place	3 points
<b>LD</b> 3 Qualifiers	4 <sup>th</sup> Place	5 points		
<b>IX</b> 2 Qualifiers	6 <sup>th</sup> Place	1 point	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	5 points
<b>USX</b> 2 Qualifiers	4 <sup>th</sup> Place 6 <sup>th</sup> Place	4 points		
<b>DI</b> 2 Qualifiers			1 <sup>st</sup> Place	6 points
<b>HI</b> 2 Qualifiers			2 <sup>nd</sup> Place	5 points
<b>OO</b> 2 Qualifiers			1 <sup>st</sup> Place 3 <sup>rd</sup> Place	10 points
	<b>Team A Total:</b>	32 points	<b>Team B Total:</b>	35 points

### Congress, Debate, and Speech Sweepstakes Awards

In addition to an overall District Sweepstakes Plaque, awards will be given for the three distinct divisions at the district tournament: Congress, Debate, and Speech. Each of these areas functions separately, and are often held on different days/weekends. This also allows schools whose programs focus in one or two of the areas to still have a chance at earning some type of squad award.

A school's top eight *placing* speech, top six debate, and top five congress entries will count toward calculation in each area, respectively.

Computing the sweepstakes award for Speech and the award for Debate functions in the same manner as those two areas are figured for the overall sweepstakes award (see schedule for awarding sweepstakes points on the previous page).

	Congress
<b>1st Place</b>	8
<b>2nd Place</b>	7
<b>3rd Place</b>	6
<b>4th Place</b>	5
<b>5th Place</b>	4
<b>6th Place</b>	3

In Congress, each of a school's top five students who place in their respective Senate and House chambers will receive points based on the schedule above. If a preliminary and a final round are held, only the final round will count.

### **District Cumulative Sweepstakes Award**

Rounds for all student entries accumulate from year to year and a District Tournament Trophy is awarded for one-year possession to the school participating in the present tournament whose total is highest at the conclusion of the tournament. Its record will be set back to zero and the records for other schools carried forward to the next year. The trophy will become the permanent possession of the school winning it three (3) times. A tie will be broken in favor of the school whose students were in the largest number of rounds in the present tournament. If still tied, the trophy will be awarded to the school with the highest total of Association merit points earned at the present tournament.

## District Team for USA World Schools Debate Invitational

All Association districts are allowed to qualify up to two teams of three to five students using the procedures outlined below. The deadline for the district chair to officially name a team is May 1. The entry fee is \$75 per student on the team, or \$50 per student for teams staying within the hotel block. Each district must provide a full-time judge for each team, available for the entirety of the competition. Districts that do not provide a full-time judge for each team will not be permitted to enter.

### Methods to Select the World Schools District Team

Teams are comprised of three to five members from each district opting to participate. After the entire district tournament series (speech, debate, Congress) is complete, any student who competed at districts but did not qualify to Nationals would be eligible for participation on the World Schools District Team. The established criteria of the district should be made available to all coaches attending the district tournament. This could be done via the tournament invitation or through an email announcement.

#### A district has two options for selecting its members:

**Option A** – Districts may invite alternates to be on the team. To provide an objective method of selecting the team members, districts would do the following:

- Invite the highest point earners that are seniors, 1st alternates to serve on the team.
- If a student turns down the opportunity, go to the next name on the list of seniors, 1st alternates by merit points.
- If you get through all seniors, 1st alternates, then go to seniors, 2nd alternates by merit points.
- Keep working through the senior alternates (3rd, 4th, 5th, etc.). If there are no seniors left, go to junior, 1st alternates by merit points, then sophomores, and then freshmen.

**Option B** – Any district participant would be given the opportunity to apply for consideration. The district would select a committee to examine the applications and make decisions to field the team. The selection committee may consist of **current** coaches, retired coaches, community members, administrators, and more. Selection committee members should recuse themselves from scoring their own student applicants. In addition to the above criteria suggested in option A, the selection committee might also consider additional criteria, but are not bound to them:

- Give preference to applicants who are from schools that did not qualify to the National Tournament.
- Give preference to applicants from schools with fewer than three entries.
- Give preference to new schools to the district.
- Give preference to schools with new coaches in the district.

**Note:** If your state association prevents hybrid teams, a district may select entries all from one school to enable a participating team to attend Nationals.

Additionally, the application process could consist of a qualifying World Schools Debate tournament to determine which teams will attend Nationals. All participants must compete or have competed in another event at their district tournament.

Students do not have to be a non-qualifying entry from districts to be selected to compete for the district World Schools Debate team. Students who attend the district tournament and qualify in a main event for the National Tournament may forgo their qualification and participate in the USA World Schools Debate



Invitational, if they are selected for the team by their district and have preferred it on the Single Entry Letter of Intent prior to the District Tournament Series.

### **Coach of the World Schools District Team**

The coach of the district team should be selected by the District Committee. This person would be the main point of contact between the national office and the district team.

# District Qualification Process for Big Questions Debates

For additional information about debate rules and access to resources and judge training, visit the Big Questions website at [www.NSDABigQuestions.org](http://www.NSDABigQuestions.org).

## Entries/Qualification Process

- The top-placing student at each district's Big Questions division will qualify to the National Tournament.
- District chairs must elect to hold a Big Questions national qualifying event on the Tabroom District Dates form.
- Districts will not be eligible to receive a sub-grant for hosting a Big Questions event.
- Big Questions entries will not count toward a school's district entry limits.
- The district Big Questions division may be held in conjunction with the district tournament or as a stand-alone event on a separate date as long as it occurs before May 1. The district event must meet the following requirements:
  - Minimum of 10 high school competitors.
  - All students must compete as individuals.
  - All competitors must be NSDA members and eligible to compete in the district tournament series.
  - More than one school must be in attendance.
  - The event must be organized through or with the permission of the district chair.
  - The event will follow the tabulation method chosen by the District Committee for all other debate events. This includes the double down method or the pilot method.
  - The top-placing student will not be eligible to compete at the National Tournament if they have qualified in a main event. Students may choose to attend the National Tournament in Big Questions instead of World Schools Debate.
  - If the Big Questions district event is held before the district tournament main event divisions, the top-placing student's name may be withdrawn and replaced with an alternate's if the top-placing student qualifies in another event.
- Only entries composed of individual debaters may compete at Nationals.
- Each qualifier must provide a full-time judge for the entirety of the competition at the National Tournament. Students who do not provide a full-time judge will not be permitted to enter.

## District Tournament Audit Procedures

The required method of tabulating the district tournament is to use the approved tournament software on a computer.

At the completion of each round, the District Committee will produce an audit sheet. That sheet will be compared to the ballots for each round to determine that the ballots have been accurately entered and tabulated. If mistakes have been made, the results will be evaluated and corrected.

Once events are tabulated, the District Committee must audit or check the results of rounds in two ways:

1. The audit will be conducted by an Audit Committee appointed by the District Committee.
2. Ballots and the audit sheet will be made public so that head coaches or their designees may take responsibility for the audit.

District Committees are strongly encouraged to make the tabulation process as transparent as possible.

Before the tournament, one coach per school in attendance should be designated to receive ballots and audit sheets that are made available at the conclusion of each round audit. Online ballots, if used, should be published to coaches after each round audit. If a district is not auditing results and/or providing the audit to a coach representative, the coach representative should file a protest to the Committee, citing this procedural violation. If a protest is filed, the District Committee is required to contact the tournament ombudsperson for a ruling.

If coaches believe errors in tabulation have occurred, they must first address the issue with the District Committee in a *timely fashion*. If the tournament is still in progress, the protest should be lodged within one round of the audit being available to coaches.

The audit for the final round results must be made available before the awards assembly. No protests regarding tabulation will be permitted after the awards assembly.

The national qualifiers determined by the national office final audit will be official. If the District Committee erroneously identifies and announces that a student has qualified for the National Tournament, that student will not keep that qualification spot for the National Tournament.

## Reporting to the National Office

The district chair is required to submit several reports to the national office within 48 hours of the completion of the district tournament. Please do not submit materials not requested here. Note that if your district uses Joy of Tournaments or Speechwire to tabulate your tournaments, the district chair must manually upload the data file to Tabroom after the completion of your district tournament series.

### Tabroom.com Districts:

1. Any **fees** due to the National Speech & Debate Association collected at the tournament. These should be sent immediately after each portion of tournament.
2. Review the Qualifiers and Alternates Report under the Results tab. Tabroom will generate this for all events. It is the affirmative duty of the chair to ensure that the qualifiers and alternates listed on this page are accurate, but a paper copy does not need to be submitted to the national office.
3. If your district had auto-qualifiers, mail or scan and email their **Single Entry Letter of Intent** forms to [info@speechanddebate.org](mailto:info@speechanddebate.org). Since coaches on Tabroom filled out event preferences for double entered students during the online registration process, chairs only need to collect paper copies of the Single Entry forms from auto-qualifiers. These should be sent at the conclusion of your tournament series, not after each portion.

### The Joy of Tournaments/SpeechWire.com Districts:

1. Any **fees** due to the National Speech & Debate Association collected at the tournament. These should be sent immediately after each portion of tournament.
2. A signed copy of the **Qualifiers and Alternate Report**. The Joy of Tournaments will generate this for all events except Congress, which must be completed manually. The signature of the chair indicates the order of finish represented on these two pages is correct. It is the affirmative duty of the chair to ensure that the qualifiers and alternates listed on this form are accurate. This should be sent at the conclusion of your tournament series, not after each portion.
3. All **Single Entry Letter of Intent** forms. These should be sent at the conclusion of your tournament series, not after each portion.
4. **Upload The Joy of Tournaments or SpeechWire.com data file to Tabroom.com** by logging into Tabroom, selecting the name of your district tournament, and following the steps listed on the page.
5. If you used Joy of Tournaments, save one copy for your records and upload one copy to Joy of Tournaments. You should do this after each portion of your tournament to allow Joy of Tournaments to auto-post points. If you have troubles uploading, attach the .JOT and .TRN files in an email to [support@joyoftournaments.com](mailto:support@joyoftournaments.com).