



2021 Middle School Championship

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Dear Forensics Community,

Building upon the success of last year's online tournament, *National Online Forensics* is excited to announce the **2021 National Online Forensics Middle School Championship**. This will be a **synchronous** video conference national championship tournament held June 1-6, 2021 for middle school students.

National Online Forensics sees a tremendous value in an online national championship that can afford more students and programs the opportunity to compete and showcase their skills on a national level.

Key Points:

- Registration is due by Friday May 28th, 2021 at 12pm Pacific time on ForensicsTournament.net
- Reasonable entry fees payable by credit card on the website.
- Each school is required to provide one judge for every 5 IE entries per pattern/2 debate teams. At the discretion of the Tournament Director, uncovered entries may be allowed (penalty fees apply).

We hope you and your team can join us June 1-6, 2021 for a celebration of the hard work our forensics students have been doing all season. If you have any questions please feel free to email us at info@nationalonlineforensics.org.

We would like schools to be aware of the following:

1. The tournament will be held entirely online. Please see the Best Practices Guide on the tournament registration page for additional information regarding the preparation for Internet tournaments. This guide will have suggestions and policies regarding specific events.
2. Throughout the entire tournament, we will have a live help room for anyone having trouble. The URL will be 8x8.vc/NOFhelp. If anyone from your team has problems, this virtual room will be the first place to go.
3. All middle school competitors will be required to have a parental guardian onscreen for the duration of the round or provide a waiver. Please download the waiver from the tournament registration page.

4. This invitation is subject to change. We will send out notices to coaches regarding any changes.

The tournament will be held on June 1-6, 2021! Please feel free to pass this invitation along to anyone who might be interested in attending.

Sincerely,

Robert Cannon, (Wilshire Academy) Tournament Director	Mike Kyle (Nova 42) Tab	Brianna Broady (PCC) Competitor and Judge Liaisons	Angelica Grigsby, (Maricopa) Competitor and Judge Liaisons	Danny Cantrell (Mt. SAC) Tournament Director
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Rules/Event Descriptions:

All events will follow NOF rules unless otherwise noted in this invitation. For full list of event descriptions, tournament procedures, and round design, please go to <https://www.nationalonlineforensics.org>.

Wellness:

We have designed the schedule for this tournament with great care. We have tried to consider how late rounds would begin for those on the East Coast, and how early rounds would begin for those on the West Coast. As such, we will need to spread the tournament over the course of several days.

While we have tried to provide students with the opportunity to compete in as many events as possible, this comes at a potential risk. We ask that students carefully consider the schedule before deciding to enter multiple events. The tournament will not delay rounds for students who did not attend a round on time. Furthermore, students who insist on doing both speech and debate events may risk missing lunch breaks.

Entries:

Entries are due on Friday, May 28th (5/28/21) at 12:00 p.m. (noon) Pacific. Fees are frozen at this time, though nuisance fees may be applied. All judge names must be entered by the tournament deadline.

You may access the invitation and entry system at: <https://forensictournament.net/NOFCMS/21>.

Awards:

All competitors advancing to an elimination round shall be awarded for doing so. The tournament shall award school sweepstakes awards for the three overall schools in the middle school division. The top 10 speakers will also be recognized as individual sweepstakes winners. Points shall be calculated in accordance to the NOF rules and by-laws. We plan to ship awards to all competitors after the tournament. If your students would like to record their unboxing, we ask that they post videos using the hashtag #UnboxingSpeech. Please be patient with us as we get awards to students, but we will make sure that each student who earns an award receives it.

The awards ceremony (announcement of the placements) will be streamed onto YouTube for those who would like to watch.

Eligibility:

Students from 6th - 8th grade are permitted to compete in the middle school division at this tournament.

Postings:

Postings will be sent to each student before the round begins. Coaches should update their student rosters on ForensicsTournament.net to include the cell numbers or the e-mail addresses for each student. Once the posting preference is selected, coaches can test that the cell/e-mail is getting through to the student(s). Students and judges do not need to create their own individual accounts on ForensicsTournament.net; only coaches need to do so. Please take time to update your school's roster (both competitors and judges). [Here](#) is an article which explains how to do that.

Judges:

Each school must supply at least one judge. One of our biggest concerns is that we do not run late. We require each judge to have a reliable Internet connection and use a laptop or desktop computer to evaluate the round. While tablets and mobile devices are possible, we do not encourage the usage for judges since they will be managing the eBallot and the video screen at the same time. We recommend that judges open the eBallot on one tab and the video on another. Judges should be able to toggle between the two easily. Alternatively, judges can take notes on paper while viewing the round, and then transcribe the notes to the eBallot after the round has concluded.

It should be noted that the Internet is the responsibility of the person using it. While the tournament will attempt to accommodate those with Internet problems, it cannot do so at the expense of fairness or delay of the tournament. Please read the best practices guide thoroughly.

Special Rules:

We would like to call your attention to a few items that may be different from other tournaments.

- No publication requirements for interpretation events. Students may not write pieces themselves unless the event requires it, but we allow students to use literature from any source, published or non-published.
- Internet access is permitted for Extemp and all debate events (SPAR does not permit in-round research or use of evidence). Students should not use this access to confer with coaches or other direct outside sources, but may use the Internet to access articles and case files.
- SPAR times are the following: (2 prep) Pro 2; Con 2; Cross 4; Pro 2; Con 2.
- Performative plagiarism, as outlined on in the NOF Rules & By-laws, prevents the “copying the performance of other performers.” Please review this section of the rules for all students entered in interpretation events.
- This tournament will not break brackets for debate outrounds.
- Regardless of event size, no IEs will break more than quarterfinals. No debates will break more than double-octafinals.

Middle School Events (6th-8th grade):

(competitors may enter as many of the patterns as they would like)

Pattern A:

(Students may enter only one of the following for this pattern):

- Lincoln-Douglas Debate: (NSDA topic released on May 1st, 2021 [Nationals Topic])
 - Public Forum Debate: (NSDA topic released on May 1st, 2021 [Nationals Topic])
 - Big Questions: (Resolved: Mathematics was discovered, not invented.)
 - Congress: Congress docket will be available at the tournament registration page.
 - Policy Debate: (Resolved: The United States federal government should enact substantial criminal justice reform in the United States in one or more of the following: forensic science, policing, sentencing.)
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Pattern B:

(Students may enter no more than two of the following for this pattern):

- Prose (use of manuscript required, 7 min. maximum)
- Humorous Interpretation (10 min. maximum)
- Original Oratory (no visual aids allowed, 10 min. maximum)
- Duo Interpretation (10 min. maximum)
- Speech to Entertain (no visual aids allowed, 10 min. maximum)
- Impromptu (7 min. bank)
 - Round 1 - Concrete nouns
 - Round 2 - Abstract nouns
 - Round 3 - Proverbs
 - Quarterfinal Round - Quotations
 - Semi-final Round - Quotations
 - Final Round - Quotations

Pattern C

(Students may enter no more than two of the following for this pattern, except Extemp):

Dramatic Interpretation (10 min. maximum)

Declamation (10 min. maximum)

Poetry (use of manuscript required, 7 min. maximum)

Storytelling (5 min. maximum)

Informative (visual aids are allowed, 10 min. maximum)

Program Oral Interp (use of manuscript required, 10 min. maximum)

(Students may enter only one of the following for this pattern):

Extemporaneous Speaking (30 min. of prep / 7 min. maximum)

Round 1 - Asia

Round 2 - Europe

Round 3 - Economy

Semi-final Round - The Americas (non-U.S.)

Final Round - Domestic News

Pattern D

(Students may enter only one of the following for this pattern):

- SPAR (Topics will be provided at the tournament)

2021 Tentative Schedule

Middle School Schedule*:
(All times are Pacific)

Tuesday: June 1st, 2021

10:00 a.m.	Team registration/judge orientation 1
1:00 p.m.	Team registration/judge orientation 2
5:00 p.m.	Opening Ceremony

Wednesday: June 2nd, 2021

10:00 a.m.	Round 1 Pattern A (PF, LD, Big Q) / Round 1 Pattern D (Policy, Cong)
12:00 p.m.	Round 1 Pattern E (SPAR)
1:30 p.m.	Round 2 Pattern A (PF, LD, Big Q) / Round 2 Pattern D (Policy, Cong)
3:00 p.m.	Round 2 Pattern E (SPAR)

Thursday: June 3rd, 2021

8:00 a.m.	Round 3 Pattern A (PF, LD, Big Q) / Round 3 Pattern D (Policy, Cong)
10:00 a.m.	Round 3 Pattern E (SPAR)
11:30 a.m.	Round 4 Pattern A (PF, LD, Big Q) / Round 4 Pattern D (Policy)
1:30 p.m.	Quarterfinals Pattern E (SPAR)
3:00 p.m.	Round 5 Pattern A (PF, LD, Big Q) Round 5 Pattern D (Policy)
5:00 p.m.	Semifinals Pattern E (SPAR)

Friday: June 4th, 2021

8:00 a.m.	Double-octafinals Pattern A (PF, LD, Big Q) / Quarterfinals Pattern D (Policy, Cong)
10:00 a.m.	Finals Pattern E (SPAR)
11:30 a.m.	Octa-finals Pattern A (PF, LD, Big Q) / Semifinals Pattern D (Policy, Cong)
1:30 p.m.	Round 1 Pattern B (Pro, HI, OO, Duo, STE, Imp)
3:00 p.m.	Quarterfinals Pattern A (PF, LD, Big Q)
5:00 a.m.	Round 2 Pattern B (Pro, HI, OO, Duo, STE, Imp)

Saturday: June 5th, 2021

8:00 a.m.	Semifinals Pattern A (PF, LD, Big Q) / Finals Pattern D (Policy, Cong)
9:30 a.m.	Round 3 Pattern B (Pro, HI, OO, Duo, STE, Imp)
11:00 a.m.	Round 1 Pattern C (DI, Dec, Poe, Sty, Info, POI, Ext)
12:30 p.m.	Quarterfinals Pattern B (Pro, HI, OO, Duo, STE, Imp)
2:00 p.m.	Round 2 Pattern C (DI, Dec, Poe, Sty, Info, POI, Ext)
3:30 p.m.	Finals Pattern A (PF, LD, Big Q)
5:00 p.m.	Round 3 Pattern C (DI, Dec, Poe, Sty, Info, POI, Ext)

Sunday: June 6th, 2021

8:00 a.m.	Quarterfinal Pat. C (DI, Dec, Poe, Sty, Inf, POI, Ext)
9:45 a.m.	Semifinals Pattern B (Pro, HI, OO, Duo, STE, Imp)
11:30 a.m.	Semifinals Pat. C (DI, Dec, Poe, Sty, Info, POI, Ext)
1:15 p.m.	Finals Pattern B (Pro, HI, OO, Duo, STE, Imp)
3:00 p.m.	Finals Pattern C (DI, Dec, Poe, Sty, Info, POI, Ext)
6:00 p.m.	AWARDS

Fees:

Fees will be frozen and assessed on Friday May 28th, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. Pacific. Any changes after this date will be subject to the following penalties. Please enter all judges through the forensicstournament.net registration website mentioned previously.

Payments must be made by credit card by Monday, May 31st, 2021 at 12:00 p.m. (noon) Pacific. An invoice will be generated through the registration site.

\$50 school fee

\$15 per IE/Congress/Spar slot (\$30 per Duo team)

\$40 per Lincoln Douglas/Public Forum/ slot

Each school must supply at least one judge.

\$30 judging fee per uncovered IE slot (One judge covers 5 IE slots)

\$125 per uncovered debate slot (One judge covers 2 LD/PD/PFD slots)

\$20 per change after Friday, May 28th, 2021 (5/28/21) at 12:00 p.m. (noon) Pacific.

\$50 No-show fee per competitor.

\$50 No-show judge fee per round.*

\$200 dropped judge fee after Sunday, May 30th, 2021 at 12:01 a.m. Pacific.

*To ensure that the tournament starts on time and runs smoothly, each judge will have a 5 minute window to accept his/her ballot. If the judge does not accept during this time, the ballot may be pushed to another judge, and the no-show judge's school will be penalized the \$50 no-show fee. Coaches should update their rosters on ForensicsTournament.net, change their ballot preferences to e-mail/text, and double-check that their judges have a reliable Internet connection.

Any schools seeking to buy out of their judging requirements must have approval by the Tournament Director. Please contact us early so we can let you know if we will be able to approve uncovered entries.

To ensure timely pickup of ballots, all judges on the standby list should wait in the Standby Judge Room (<https://8x8.vc/NOFStandbyRoom>) until dismissed. This will also ensure judges are not missing ballots pushed to them during the tournament.

Contact:

If you have any questions or comments before the tournament, please feel free to reach out to us [here](#).

Key Points

Individual Events

- Three prelims will be held; one final round will be held.
- Students may enter a maximum of two events per pattern
- 1 Judge is required for every 5 entries per pattern
- Speaker Points will not be used.
- Students will be recognized with *Superior*, *Excellence*, and *Honors* awards. The top 5% of students in each event will be recognized with a superior award, the top 10% Excellence, and top 20% with Honors. For example, if an event has 50 entries there will be roughly 3 superior awards, 2 excellence, and 5 honors depending on tiebreakers and breaks. All students in elimination rounds will receive recognition.
- The top speaker in each event will be recognized as the National Champion.

Limited Prep Events:

- Impromptu topics will be provided to each student in the Live Video Room (their competition room) chat box. Judges will need to copy/paste the topics (provided on the eBallots) in the chat window for the students.
- Each student will receive a different set of impromptu topics.
- Extemp questions will be provided for all speakers in a separate Extemp Prep Live Video Room. Students do not need to stay in the Extemp Prep Room after receiving the questions. The extemp proctor will copy/paste the questions into the chat window at the specified time.

Platform Events:

- While students are allowed to still use Visual Aids, they are encouraged to have them printed on 8.5x11 pages to show to the audience while presenting.
- Screen sharing to show a PowerPoint or image is **not permitted** due to various technology issues. Since not all students may be able to access the screen sharing function, we feel it's best to not allow that option.

Interp Events:

- **Books will be optional. Given the nature of the video conferencing system, holding books while performing can block many cameras. Students are encouraged to use them to hold true to traditional forensics tournaments but this adaptation is left to the students. Judges are instructed not to penalize students for not using books.**

- Students may, if they desire, stand up while performing to showcase blocking or sit while performing, if they prefer.
- Partners are encouraged **NOT** to be in the same room to respect social distancing recommendations.
- Partners, if in the same physical room, should share one live stream. Having multiple live video rooms open on the same WiFi causes poor connections.
- Students are encouraged to try out various methods of performance ahead of time and innovate!

Debate

- Standard pairing will be used with 2 random rounds followed by 3 HL rounds. In Elims, brackets will be broken to facilitate debating.
- Two final rounds will be held Phi Rho Pi Style. Teams not advancing from the first elimination round will receive Honors; teams advancing but not winning the final will receive Excellence; teams winning the final will receive Superior.
- 1 Judge is required for every 2 debate entries.
- Speaker Point Scale will be 100-70
- Prelim Ranking: Wins/Total Points/HL Points/Opp Wins/Z Score
- Speakers Ranking: HL Points/Total Points/Ranks/Z Score
- A 5 minute forfeit rule will be put in place for all debate rounds.

Competitor Logistics / Best Practices

- All competitors must have a verified text number or email saved on ForensicsTournament.net **Email is preferred**
- Coaches can save those (& verify) from the Student Roster page.
- Competitors will receive a text/email with their ePostings information.
- The ePostings will have a link to a Live Video Room where they will perform. Click that link to go to your round. No logins or passwords are required. Judges will be in the same Live Video Room to listen and rank the round. The tournament will be using the [8x8 video conference room software](#).
- If double entered, students should go to each room before competing and type in the chat window that they are double entered so judges know they will be coming back.
- Please do not immediately start to talk when entering a Live Video Room. Another student may be already performing. Please wait to be recognized by the judge.
- Students should remain in the Live Video Room as audience members with both video and audio on to the extent possible. Due to audio feedback loops or bandwidth issues, you may need to mute your audio or video feeds. But ideally, react to the performances like in a face-to-face round.
- Students can, if it fits their particular setup, sit while performing. Judges are instructed *not* to penalize students for sitting while speaking since the particular tech setup may work better while sitting.
- Students are also encouraged to use a mic/headphones since audio quality is much better than with an external mic. Judges are instructed *not* to penalize students for having mics/headphones on.
- We recognize this creates some challenges for certain events. But we trust in the ingenuity of the forensics community to adapt to this new environment. Some students may also have better quality video, lighting, sound, etc... We will all try our best.
- **If a student's internet connection drops or audio quality is poor**, they will be **required** to call into the video conference room and give their speech with audio only. While not ideal, it will ensure all student's speeches are listened to by a judge. You can get the dial-in information from the info icon in the bottom right of the screen.

Judge Logistics / Best Practices

- All judges must have a verified phone or email saved on ForensicsTournament.net
- Coaches can save those (& verify) from the Judge Roster Page
- Judges will receive a text/email with their eBallot link. Judges should click on that link within 5 minutes of receiving it to indicate that they have “picked up” their ballot.
- On your eBallot you will have all of the competitors in that round along with a link to a live video room. Click that link to go to your video conference room.
- Your eBallot will then have a feedback form where you can type your feedback to the student while they are performing or afterwards. The eBallot also has a timer to make it easy to time each speaker.
- If a judge’s keyboard is loud they are encouraged to mute their audio during performances but please leave the video feed on so competitors can receive your visual feedback.
- Judges are instructed *not* to penalize students for sitting while speaking since the student’s particular tech setup may work better while sitting.
- Judges are also instructed *not* to penalize students for having mics/headphones on since audio quality is usually much better using a mic/headset.
- Judges are also instructed *not* to penalize students for lighting, video/audio quality, video background to the extent possible.
- **If a judge’s internet connection drops or audio quality is poor**, they will be **required** to call into the video conference room and listen to speeches with audio only. While not ideal, it will ensure all student’s speeches are listened to by a judge. You can get the dial-in information from the info icon in the bottom right of the screen.
- For Impromptu/Extemp/IPDA/NPDA, the eBallot will have the quotations/questions listed on it.

FAQ

(will be updated as more questions are sent our way)

- **How can I register?** Coaches will need to register their teams on ForensicsTournament.net
- **Can I have 2 uncovered IE entries/just 1 uncovered debate team?** No. All entries must be covered or they will not be accepted. Given that the tournament is not collecting entry fees we have no funds to pay for hired judges.
- **Where is the Extemp Prep/NPDA Topic announce Room?** As we get closer to the tournament links will be sent out to a special video room for these events.
- **How will I get my impromptu quotation?** The judge will have the impromptu quotations on their eBallot. When it's your turn to speak your judge will copy/paste the prompts into the chat window in the Live Video Room.
- **How will we strike IPDA topics?** The judge will have all five IPDA topics on their eBallot. At the start of the round go to your Live Video Room. The judge will copy/paste the resolutions into the chat window. Each team will strike as normal. Turn off your audio/visual feeds in the room during prep. 30 minutes later the round will commence.
- **Where will we prep for NPDA?** Each school has access to practice rooms through ForensicsTournament.net. Please use those rooms.
- **What type of awards will be given out?** National Championship quality trophies will be mailed to each school for distribution to students. Sweepstakes awards will be sent out to each school following the tournament.
- **Can NPDA debaters read from prepared files on their computer?** While the nature of a video conference room debate opens up a lot of different options, we would like NPDA to mirror as closely as possible the tournament experience. While it may be difficult to enforce, debaters should only be using material prepared during the preparation time and **not** reading from prepared scripts. If that's your jam, please enter NFA-LD.
- **What type of NPDA topics should we expect?** A variety of fact, value, policy, and possibly metaphor topics will be used at the tournament. Students will receive the topics 20 minutes before the debate round starts in a separate NPDA Topic Video Conference room that will be announced later.
- **Can coaches help prep during NPDA/IPDA prep time?** Yes. But coaches who are judging IPDA should first ensure their topic draw is completed before going to help prep their teams.
- **What about poor internet connections?** In order for the video conference to work, your internet should be at least 6 Mbps. You can check your internet speed [here](#). There is also an asynchronous tournament being offered which may work better if you have a poor internet connection. Each Live Video Room has an option

to “call in” via phone. While there will be no visual, at least you can still present the audio portion of your speech.

- **But isn't it unfair I can't compete because I have a poor internet connection?** Yes. We are sorry. But we see this as analogous to students who can't compete at national tournaments due to costs / entry limits / time commitments / family or job obligations / etc... No tournament is accessible to all students. But we are trying our best to afford many students an end of the year tournament. Again, please see the Asynchronous tournament which may work better for people with slow internet connections.