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The Brown Debating Union (BDU) is an undergraduate organization of Brown University in Providence, RI. Every year, the BDU travels across the world to compete in Parliamentary Debate tournaments.

To encourage speech and debate activities among high school and college students, the BDU also hosts several tournaments each year.

Brown Debating Union  
First Annual Brown University High  
School Parliamentary Debate  
Tournament

January 2025

Dear Speech and Debate Coach,

On behalf of the Brown Debating Union, we invite you and your team to the first annual Brown University Parliamentary Debate Tournament from Saturday, February 8th to Sunday, February 9th 2024. This online tournament will consist of competition in Varsity and Novice Parliamentary Debate. We expect that this tournament will qualify for NPDL TOC points.

This is Brown's first year hosting our high school tournament. Due to scheduling complications and the newness of the tournament, the tournament will be online, using Zoom and Discord. We plan to host next year's tournament in-person on Brown's campus.

This invitation and additional information will be posted on our tournament website, <http://brownparli.tabroom.com>. We will also be posting our distinguished tab director and team on the Tabroom site soon. Contacts for specific needs are labeled throughout this Invitation, but should you require general assistance, you may reach us at [debating@brown.edu](mailto:debating@brown.edu). Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions.

Best wishes for the start of the winter semester — we look forward to seeing you virtually this February!

Sincerely,

James Afford and Sophie Rukin  
Tournament Directors

## Online Rules

### **Adult Supervision and Virtual Chaperone**

Every student must be virtually accompanied at the tournament by an adult. This adult should be authorized by the student's school and/or parent to care for that student in the event of a medical or other emergency. The contact information for this adult must be given to tab at registration. The Brown University Parliamentary Debate Tournament takes no responsibility for the health and safety of students beyond notifying this accompanying adult of concerns or problems as we become aware of them.

### **Tab Contact Info**

Tab room contact information will be announced on Tabroom soon. Please make all of your students and judges aware of this number, so they can contact our tab staff. This number is for tournament use only and will be answered only during the tournament.

## Registration

### *Contact*

If you have any questions concerning registration, please email [sophie\\_rukin@brown.edu](mailto:sophie_rukin@brown.edu) and [james\\_afford@brown.edu](mailto:james_afford@brown.edu), beginning the Subject with "HST Registration: ".

### **Procedure**

All registration will be conducted online via tabroom at <http://brownparli.tabroom.com>. Online instructions are available on the [www.tabroom.com](http://www.tabroom.com) website if you are unfamiliar with the Tabroom system. We are also happy to answer any questions you may have and assist in the registration process.

### *Tabroom*

All students and judges must create an online tabroom account prior to registering. All competitors must be linked to their tabroom accounts. Let us know if you have any questions about this.

### *Registration Open Date*

We plan to open registration at **1:00 PM ET on Friday, January 10th.**

### **Event Cap**

We do not plan to have a cap for this tournament. If that changes, we will update all competitors and judges.

## **Varsity and Novice Status**

Any high school student may compete in the Varsity division. Students can only compete in the Novice division if they meet the qualifications for being a novice. We strongly encourage coaches to choose division with the educational purpose of debate in mind. Overqualified debaters competing in the Novice division can compromise this purpose and damage tournament experiences.

### *Novice Definition*

For the purposes of this tournament, a Novice is defined as a student in their first year of high school debate, who is either a Freshman or a Sophomore or Middle School Student.

### *Clarifications*

- Students who have debated in middle school and are in their Freshman year count as Novices.
- Students who debated as Freshmen and are in their Sophomore year are not Novices and must compete as Varsity speakers.
- Students who did not debate as Freshmen and are in their Sophomore year may debate as Novices.
- Students who have never debated before but are in their Junior or Senior year are not Novices for this tournament regardless of their inexperience and must debate in the Varsity division.

### *Middle Schoolers*

This tournament will accept middle school debaters. They should choose the proper division given their debating experience, once again aiming to maximize their own and others educational experiences.

## **Required Forms**

There will be required forms for all competitors and supervisors to fill out prior to competition. We will post those forms to the tab site soon with additional instructions. The forms must be filled out and uploaded by **Thursday February 6th, 1:00 PM ET.**

## **Entry Fees and Payment Instructions**

### *Entry Fees*

There will be an \$80 fee per each Varsity entry and a \$70 fee for each Novice entry. There will be no school entry fee.

### *Fee Waivers*

The Brown Debate Union is committed to making the Brown University Parliamentary Debate Tournament accessible to all students from all backgrounds. Please do not hesitate to contact us by **Friday, January 31st** if your team is experiencing financial difficulties. We are happy to discuss financial aid and are willing to work with those students and/or teams in need. Please email us [annabelle\\_kim@brown.edu](mailto:annabelle_kim@brown.edu) and include in the Subject “HST Financial Aid.”.

### *Payment Instructions*

Fees will be due by **February 7th, 11:59 ET**. Payment is required upfront for members of your school to be eligible to compete.

### *Late Payment*

If you expect your payment to arrive late, please be in contact with [annabelle\\_kim@brown.edu](mailto:annabelle_kim@brown.edu) to explain why your payment will be arriving late, and when we should be expecting payment.

### *Payment Method*

Schools can pay via check. To do so, complete the following steps:

1. Fill out the check
  - a. Make the check out to “Brown Debating Union”
  - b. Make the memo “SCHOOL NAME – Brown Invitational”
  - c. Mail the check to:
    - i. Controller's Office  
Brown University  
69 Brown St., Box J  
Providence, RI 02912
2. Mail the check and email [annabelle\\_kim@brown.edu](mailto:annabelle_kim@brown.edu) with the USPS tracking number
3. We will process your payment within 7 days of receipt and update it on your invoice

If you are unable to pay by check for some reason, please contact [annabelle\\_kim@brown.edu](mailto:annabelle_kim@brown.edu) and we will try our best to figure out a solution.

## **Team Registration**

All entries should be registered under the school they attend, if possible.

### *Independent Entries*

If a team is unable to register under the school they attend, they may request to enter as an independent entry. Doing so will require written permission from the head coach/administration of the affected school. Independent entries are not permitted from a school that is entering under the school’s name, absent unusual circumstances. Please reach out to [sophie\\_rukin@brown.edu](mailto:sophie_rukin@brown.edu) and [james\\_afford@brown.edu](mailto:james_afford@brown.edu) if you would like to register as an independent entry.

### *Hybrids*

This tournament allows hybrid entries. Both members of the hybrid team must register under the name of the school each individual debater attends.

### *Mavericks/Ironpeople*

This tournament allows Mavericks/Ironpeople to compete on a case-by-case basis. If you have an extenuating circumstance that prevents you from debating with a partner and you would still like to enter the tournament please contact [sophie\\_rukin@brown.edu](mailto:sophie_rukin@brown.edu) and [james\\_afford@brown.edu](mailto:james_afford@brown.edu).

## **Registration Procedures and Deadlines**

**All times are in ET**

Friday January 10th, 1:00 PM	Online registration opens at <a href="http://brownparli.tabroom.com">http://brownparli.tabroom.com</a>
Thursday January 30th, 11:59 PM	Deadline for all new entries. After this point there will be a \$25 nuisance fee for any changes to entries with the exception of names.
Friday January 31st, 11:59 PM	Fee waiver requests due.  Judge hiring requests due. We recommend that you make requests early so that we have a higher chance of fulfilling your request. We will notify you if your request can not be fulfilled.
Monday February 3rd, 11:59 PM	Judge registration and names are due. All tabroom accounts should be linked and we will be reaching out to you if they aren't.  Fees are frozen. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, fees will remain frozen whether or not you come.  Judge obligations are frozen unless you are dropping all entries from an event.  If you are not dropping all entries in an event, and you do not meet your judge obligation, or you drop a judge after this deadline, you will be charged for a hired judge and a \$100 fine. We will notify you if we are unable to fulfill any hired judge requests.
Thursday February 6th, 1:00 PM	All required permissions and school forms are due.
Friday February 7th, 11:59 PM	All fees are due. Ensure that adult contact information is accurate in case we need to contact them throughout the tournament.

## **Judging**

### **Judge Obligation**

Each team is required to bring two judges for every one team, rounded unfavorably — if you are bringing three teams, you must bring two judges. If necessary, schools may split up judging requirements between multiple people. Judges must be present for all preliminary rounds, and the round after their last team has been eliminated from the break.

### *Judge Requirements*

Teams must bring qualified judges. In the Varsity division, a qualified judge must be an adult or college student who understands high school debate, speaks fluent English, and is somewhat experienced in flowing and timekeeping. In the Novice division, a qualified judge must be an experienced high-school Varsity debater, college student, or adult who meets all of the aforementioned requirements.

### *Judge Training*

We will conduct a judge training session on the morning of the tournament. All judges should attend. We will also post a series of resources for new judges to look at prior to the tournament.

### *Unique Aspects of Brown Judging – Prelims*

Each school will be required to rate their judges based on experience level. During prelims, if we have extra judges for rounds, we will attempt to pair less experienced judges with more experienced ones, making the more experienced judge the “voting member” and the less experienced judge the “nonvoting member.” Both judges will cast ballots and if the votes disagree, the voting member’s ballot will count.

### *Unique Aspects of Brown Judging – Elims*

In elimination rounds, we will attempt to compose panels largely of members of the BDU. If we are unable to have entirely BDU based panels, we will attempt to include other college debaters or other very experienced judges on the panels to provide the best judging experience possible.

### **Hired Judging**

If you are unable to fulfill your school’s judging requirements you can request hired judging. While we can not guarantee all requests will be met, we will try our best to fulfill as many requests as possible.

### *Hired Judging Fees*

The hired judge fee is \$75. We charge for hired judges by the team, not by the whole judge. Practically, this means if you have 7 teams entered, and only 2 judges covering those students,

you owe 3 hired judging fees for a sum of \$225. We find this system fair because it does not require you to hire a whole judge just to cover a fractional obligation.

## **Judge Drops**

If judges are dropped, barring any extenuating circumstances, after the drop deadline on Monday February 3rd you will be fined \$175 to cover a hired judge fee and a \$100 fine.

## **Format**

### **Divisions**

There will be both a Novice and Varsity division.

### **General Style**

We will follow the collegiate American Parliamentary Debate Association (APDA) style with 7-8-8-8-4-5 speech times. We will post a style guide closer to the actual tournament, but generally this tournament will follow the East Coast high school Parliamentary Debate Format.

### *Preparation Time*

There will be 15 minutes of prep time. Debaters are not allowed to consult any outside sources during prep time with the exception of a dictionary. That means there is no internet research, backfiles, etc.

### *Motion Selection*

Prior to each round, three motions will be released on the tournament live document. Debaters will then conduct a coin toss to determine motion or side for the round.

### *Disclosure*

Judges are required to disclose their decision (who they voted for) at the end of each round. Reasons for decision can either be written or given verbally, though we highly recommend at least some form of a verbal reason for decision, as we think it increases the educational experience for everyone in the round.

### **Break**

Depending on tournament size, we expect to break to Varsity Octofinals and Novice Quarterfinals. Regardless, we will prioritize breaking all 4-1s or better.

### **Equity**

We will have an equity team to ensure an improved speech and debate environment. There will also be an equity briefing Saturday morning. Once our equity team is put together, they will put

out an equity policy and be on call during the tournament to act as a resource for students and judges pertaining to equity-related issues.

## Schedule

**All rounds are single-flighted**

**All times are in ET**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Round</b>	<b>Start Time</b>
Saturday	Round 1	10:30 AM
	Round 2	12:30 PM
	Round 3	3:00 PM
	Round 4	5:00 PM
	Round 5	7:00 PM
Sunday	Octos	10:30 AM
	Quarters	1:00 PM
	Semis	3:00 PM
	Finals	5:00 PM

## **Location**

The tournament will take place via zoom and information will be posted on our live doc linked [here](#). The zoom link will be posted closer to the tournament date.

## **Check In, Equity, Judge Training, and General Assembly**

Check in will open at 9:00 AM on Saturday and all teams must come to the check-in zoom to check in. Starting at 9:30 AM there will be a judge training session, followed by an equity session. At 10:15 AM on Saturday, after judge training and equity, general assembly will begin.

## **Schedule Mobility**

While we hope to run as on time as possible, we expect there will be some variations in the schedule. We reserve the right to change the times of rounds as necessary.