



Carolina West District Speech & Debate Tournament

Welcome to the Carolina West NSDA District Qualifier Tournament. This tournament will determine who competes from our district at the NSDA National Tournament, which will be held this year from June 15-20 in Des Moines, IA.

Our district qualifier tournament for **all** events will be held March 1-2 at Asheville High School. We no longer will host separate tournaments for Congress, Policy Debate and Big Questions. Register at carolinawest.tabroom.com. For specific rules or questions that are not answered below, please consult the NSDA Unified Manual.

Due to the nature of school entry limits, we ask that you update your students' NSDA points through the NSDA's website at least 10 days prior to the tournament they are entering. Students must have an active NSDA account with a minimum of 25 NSDA points on record to be eligible to compete at this tournament.

Additionally, all fees must be paid with the NSDA prior to competing at the tournament. Any school with outstanding NSDA fees will not be allowed to compete until those fees are paid in full.

Please read the updated NSDA High School Unified Manual, available on the NSDA website (<https://www.speechanddebate.org/>). We encourage you to print a copy for yourself or save a digital copy and have it on hand at the District Tournament. Most questions you may have during the qualification process can be answered directly by the Manual. Rules for each specific event can be found on pages 29-65. Procedures for tabulation and tournament management can be found on pages 101-120.

In accordance with NSDA rules, we will permit changes to registrations after the seven day deadline, but the team registration itself must be received on Tabroom at least seven days ahead of the tournament (February 21) to ensure entry into the tournament.

NOTE: For liability reasons, each school must have a faculty member present and fully available for the duration of the tournament, including registration. In lieu of a faculty member, the principal may designate an approved adult that will be present for the entire tournament and accept full responsibility for the team. This must be submitted ahead of the tournament in writing on school letterhead by the principal or headmaster. Additionally, we cannot accept independent entries and, per NSDA rules, **ONLY** the faculty coach of record can register the team online and fill out the hard copy paperwork. Please adhere to this very important rule.

Please be sure to read the information in this invitation to ensure your registration is conducted properly. We look forward to seeing you in Asheville on March 1st and 2nd.

Most sincerely,

Your Carolina West District Committee:

Keith Pittman (Asheville & SILSA), District Chair

Scott Bennett (NW Guilford), Elected Member

Mike Bischoff (North Mecklenburg), Elected Member

Bilal Butt (Charlotte Latin), Elected Member

Megan Butt (Charlotte Latin), Elected Member

Angela Segarra (Cuthbertson), Appointed Member



Tournament Guidelines

All district qualifying tournaments will follow the guidelines found on pages 80-134 of the NSDA Unified High School Manual. Some of the highlights of those rules are listed in this document. However, the Carolina West Committee encourages you to read the manual, as you will be responsible for following those rules and guidelines. In addition, the district committee has implemented additional guidelines for this tournament as noted below.

District Venue and Judge Sharing Partnership

The Carolina West NSDA District Tournament for all events will be held concurrently with the South Carolina NSDA District Tournament for Speech events. The two tournaments will share a venue and a common judge pool. However, they will still function as two separate competitive tournaments. At no time will students from Carolina West compete against students from South Carolina.

School Fee

Each school will be assessed a \$50 school fee in addition to individual student entry fees.

Entry Fees

Entry fee for the Carolina West District Tournament will be \$30 per student regardless of the number of events entered. The charge is per person, not per event.

Drop Fees

Drop fees will be assessed at the following rates:

- LD/PF/Policy/Speech drops after 4 PM Friday, February 21: Original cost of entry per event.
- LD/PF/Policy/Speech drops after 4 PM Wednesday, February 26: \$50 per student per event, plus original entry cost.
- Other drops after 12 Noon Friday, February 28: \$100 per student per event plus original entry cost.

No drop fees will be assessed for any students that can be REPLACED with other NSDA members on your team. Please understand that the NSDA uses a "quota" system where the number of students who qualify for nationals is based on the number of entries in the event. So when you drop a contestant, you potentially lower the number of students from our district who can go to nationals in that event.

Entry Limits

A school's entry to the District Tournament is based around their degree strength on file with the NSDA. Tabroom will automatically show you the number of allowed entries based on your team's degree strength.

Double and Triple Entry Guidelines

- Students may double enter in any two speech events (including both Extemp if desired).
- Students may enter one speech event and one debate event (except Policy) if they choose. [For example, double entry in US Extemp and LD would be allowed.]
- Policy Debate teams may not double enter in any Speech or Debate event.
- Students may not enter two debate events (LD, PF, Policy, Big Questions).
- Triple entry is permitted **only** if one of the events is Congress (House or Senate).
- Some events will run in the same time slots. Double entered students need to plan accordingly and know that some events will overlap. Please do not hold up the tournament. 15 minute forfeit rules may apply.
- Any student who wishes to double enter in more than one partner event must have the same partner for both events (This applies to Public Forum or Policy and Duo).

All double or triple entered students must sign a single entry letter of intent indicating which event they would choose for NSDA Nationals in the event that they qualify in both. That letter is available on your team's Tabroom registration page for you to mark digitally and then print a required hard copy.

Rules Concerning Judges

1. Judges must have an active Tabroom.com account and be able to log into it.
2. **NEW IN 2025: Judges must have an updated paradigm entered on Tabroom.com.**
3. Judges must have graduated from high school. First-year out judges may be registered, but are free strikes. **Coaches must designate any first-year out judge as such as part of the registration process. Failure to do so will result in the offending school losing all of its judge strikes and could result in the disqualification of the judge and being assessed a missing judge penalty.**
4. Judges must be aware of all NSDA rules regarding event procedures, scoring, and requirements of the event you have placed them in. If a judge is unfamiliar with the rules and regulations, or unfit to judge (as determined by the District Committee) you will be penalized for the full cost of a missing judge and the judge will be disqualified.
5. Judges need to be available throughout the tournament. They should not leave the tournament until all rounds are completed. This is necessary because the elimination rounds require multiple judges and we cannot use "dirty" judges. You will be charged a missing judge fee if your judge fails to show when called for a round until all judges have been cleared by the District Chair.
6. Judges may be used in both the Speech pool and Debate pool. The district committee will attempt to use your judges in the pool in which you place them. However, **any judge may be used for any event at any time.** Please make sure that each of your judges know this.
7. **"Debate" judges must be trained for and willing to judge Lincoln Douglas, Public Forum and Big Questions.** Please make sure all "Debate" judges are trained for all three.
8. **"Policy" judges must also be trained and willing to judge LD, PF and BQ.**
9. **"Big Questions" judges must also be trained and willing to judge LD and PF.**



Judge Ratios

Every school **must** supply judges in the following ratios. **No hired judges will be available.**

- In Speech Events, 1 judge per 4 entries or fraction thereof.
- In Lincoln Douglas and Public Forum Debate, 1 judge per 2 entries or fraction thereof.
- In Policy Debate, 1 judge per 1 entry.
- In Congress, 1 judge per 5 entries. If your school owes a second judge, one must be trained to be a Parliamentarian.

Schools not meeting their judge quota will be asked to drop the proportionate number of student entries.

Extra Judge Bonus Credit

Due to our incredible need for judges at this tournament due to paneling rounds, **teams will be issued a \$100 credit in their entry fees for each DEBATE judge provided that is OVER the team judge quota as long as you also meet your Speech judge quota.** These judges must be at least one full year out of high school to receive this credit. Please let District Chair Keith Pittman know if you will be providing extra judges for fee credit.

Judge Bond/Missing Judge Fines

Carolina West will not collect a judge bond this year. However, we will be charging a missing judge fee of \$50 per round for the first offense and \$200 if your judge misses two or more rounds. This fee must be paid before your students can receive any awards.

Judge Strikes

Each school may request to strike up to three judges. These strikes must be presented to the District Chair in writing (or by marking them on Tabroom) prior to the end of final onsite registration. Strike requests after that are at the discretion of the district committee and may not take effect immediately. However, no judge strike requests will be accepted after the first round begins. Judge strikes are universal and apply to all events **except Congress**. In other words, a judge strike in LD will also be effective for all other speech and debate events. You may not request to strike a judge in one event only.

First-year out judges will be considered “free strikes” and do not count against a school’s three strike limit. These strikes are unlimited.

In the event that the District Committee has to add judges to the judging pool after the list of judges is published, we will offer them to you as free strikes and they will not count against the three strike limit.

Judge strikes will be honored unless the committee determines that doing so would cause an unreasonable hardship to the tournament or that no other workable or reasonable options exist for judging a particular round.

Due to the number of schools in each Congress chamber, the committee cannot guarantee honoring strikes in House or Senate.



Backup Competition Platform

The Carolina West District Committee reserves the right to move the tournament to virtual in the event of weather or any other unforeseen circumstance preventing an in-person tournament. Should the tournament move to virtual, the district will use the NSDA Campus platform. Please make sure your students are familiar with how to use this platform should it become necessary.

Round Observation Policy

All elimination rounds are open for observation, pending space in the room. Observing preliminary rounds requires the approval of the District Committee. Please see District Chair Keith Pittman if anyone affiliated with your school wishes to observe a preliminary round. Disruptive observers may be removed by the judge of the round or by the District Committee.

Scripts & Manuscripts

All Interpretation and Oratory scripts are required to be available and on-site in the event of a challenge as required on pages 45-50 of the NSDA Unified Manual. These will not be taken up at registration. However, failure to produce these according to the exact specifications listed in the NSDA Unified Manual whenever requested could result in disqualification. **You are urged to read pages 54-62 carefully. In the event of a protest or challenge, simply producing the script is not enough.**

Tabulation of Speech Events

Three preliminary rounds will be held in each Speech event. At minimum, the top 25 percent of students in each event after preliminary rounds will break to elimination rounds. Elimination rounds will not be held if there are fewer than eight entries. No final round will have less than four entries. The exact number of breaking entries in each event will be announced prior to the beginning of round one. Preliminary rounds will have a minimum of one judge. Elimination rounds will have a minimum of three judges. Complete tabulation rules may be found on pages 114-120 of the NSDA Unified Manual

Tabulation of Policy Debate

We will use a round robin format for Policy Debate as described in Method 1 on page 102 of the NSDA Unified manual. If more than six teams enter, the committee will consider using Methods 2 or 3 on pages 103-109 of the NSDA Unified Manual) and announce its decision prior to round one.

Tabulation of Big Questions Debate

The Carolina West District Committee will announce which method of tabulation will be used a minimum of 24 hours prior to the start of the tournament based on the number of students entered in the event. The tabulation methods must be one of the three listed on pages 102-109 of the NSDA Unified Manual.



Tabulation of Lincoln Douglas and Public Forum Debate

We will hold four guaranteed preliminary rounds of both LD and PF. After round 4, all teams with a 4-0 or 3-1 record will advance to elimination rounds. We will use either a single or double elimination bracket after the four guaranteed rounds. The district committee will make and publicize that decision within four days of the start of the tournament. Preliminary rounds will have one judge. Elimination rounds will have a minimum of three judges. Speaker points for all rounds will use a half point scale. We will break ties for alternates to nationals using Option 1 on page 80 of the NSDA Unified Manual. Please refer to pages 77-83 of the NSDA Unified Manual for complete tabulation protocols and rules.

Extemporaneous Speaking Topic Areas

The National Office of the NSDA will be providing questions for both United States and International Extemporaneous Speaking. These topic areas will be announced closer to the tournament. The Carolina West NSDA District Tournament will use cross examination in the final round, time permitting.

Congressional Debate

The Congressional Debate qualifier will be held at the regular district tournament this year. Please see the specific rules posted in a separate document on Tabroom. Congress qualifiers are welcome to also enter this tournament in up to two other events of their choice, only one of which may be a debate event.

World Schools Debate

Carolina West will once again be fielding two World Schools teams at NSDA Nationals. These teams will consist of students who entered the district tournament in at least one event and either did not qualify for nationals or indicated in advance a preference for World Schools over their district event. A form will be sent to all coaches after the district tournament offering them the chance to nominate World School competitors. The district World Schools coaching staff will select the members within one month of the district tournament and notify the chosen team members and their head coaches.



Protests & Decorum

We ask that you remind your judges and students that due to the nature of the District Tournament, emotions are typically high, and tempers short. We ask that students, judges and coaches work to maintain proper decorum throughout the tournament.

We ask that you are very aware of all rules in the NSDA Unified Manual. You should submit a protest only when you are sure that a rule has been violated. We will respond with serious attention. Protests are accusations. We want everyone to feel respected and honored as we conduct this tournament. Please handle the protest with tact, discretion and dignity. Do not involve a student in an unnecessary dispute.

Some additional notes:

- **Harassment:** Harassment, in any form, at any contest is prohibited and is grounds for disqualification. See policy below.
- **Disputes:** The District Committee 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 dispute or critical question of procedure. If the District Committee cannot resolve, the National Office or acting Tournament Referee must be phoned for a ruling.
- **Protests:** Judges assigned by the tournament committee shall be final unless protested before the tournament has begun. If a judge is added to the judge pool after the tournament has begun, any protest must be made prior to the round in which that individual is assigned to judge. If protested, the District Committee shall hear the protest, and its decision will be final. Members of the District Committee involved should recuse themselves.
- **Protest Committee:** This is made up of the district committee. If a district committee member must recuse themselves, the member may be replaced by a District Chair from outside of the district or a member of another district committee, if present, at the tournament.

Tab Room, Audit, and Results Posting Policy

The Carolina West District Committee has an open tab room policy. Coaches-of-record are welcome to visit the tab room at any time and observe or review any activity within the tab room. The only exception is in the rare event when the district committee may need to meet in an executive session to deliberate on a matter requiring the sensitivity of a closed door session. In these cases, the committee will be transparent with the involved coaches about its decision.

Head coaches are always welcome in the Tab Room. The name of every additional adult that a school plans to use as an authorized coach of record should be submitted to the District Chair by the conclusion of final registration. Schools are encouraged to designate more than one adult coach of record in case the Head Coach is unavailable. All designated coaches of record must be approved by their school's administration. Only head coaches and pre-designated coaches of record will have tab room access.



The Carolina West District Committee will employ a neutral Tab Room Manager with no affiliation to Carolina West. In 2025, this will be Jay Rye of Alabama. The hands on pairing of rounds and judge assignments will be done exclusively by the neutral Tab Room Manager with the Chair and Committee assisting as needed but never without the presence of the Tab Room Manager. The South Carolina District Chair, Gail Nicholas, may also be involved in this process.

All results will pass an initial committee audit before being released to coaches. As noted earlier, all coaches-of-record are welcome to be present to observe the initial audit.

In Speech events, results (ranks and points) are made available to all coaches-of-record at the end of each round but will not be publicly posted. It is the responsibility of each coach to check the results in the tab room if they choose to do so and report any potential errors to the District Chair within one round, per NSDA policy. Specific ballot comments are available to coaches only upon request.

In Debate events, results (without ballot comments) are publicly posted at the conclusion of each round except finals. Coaches-of-record have the right to request to see written comments from the ballot with the understanding that Tabroom allows judges to add additional comments later so the comment portion of the ballot may be incomplete. It is the responsibility of each coach to check the publicly posted results if they choose to do so and report any potential errors to the District Chair within one round, per NSDA policy. Coaches may see additional information from the ballot besides results upon request in the tab room.

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.

A final round audit for coaches-of-record only will be made available before the posting of awards. It is the affirmative duty of the coach to request to see the audited results, as they will not be publicly posted at that time. Coaches who request to see and personally audit the final results prior to awards shall not be denied that opportunity. Coaches are asked to not reveal final round results to students after inspecting the results but may reveal results prior to finals to their own students if they choose.

It is the affirmative duty of coaches to hold the District Committee accountable to their published auditing procedures and use this procedure to check results after each round. 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 NSDA ombudsperson for a ruling.



Carolina West District Harassment and Discrimination Policy

The Carolina West District of the National Speech & Debate Association is committed to providing its participants, judges, coaches, and staff the opportunity to pursue excellence in their endeavors. This opportunity can exist only when each member of our community is assured an atmosphere of mutual respect. The NSDA prohibits all forms of harassment and discrimination. Accordingly, all forms of harassment and discrimination, whether written or oral, based on race, color, religion, sex, gender identity or expression, sexual orientation, marital status, citizenship, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by any applicable federal, state, or local law are prohibited, whether committed by participants, judges, coaches, or observers. Individuals who are found to have violated this policy will be subject to the full range of sanctions, up to and including removal from the tournament premises. Violations of this policy should be reported to the Belonging and Inclusion Station, the District Chair or a member of the Carolina West District Committee.

The Carolina West District tournament will have a staffed Belonging and Inclusion Station for providing a safe space for participants and for addressing any harassment, discrimination or other equity concerns that may arise.

More about the Belonging and Inclusion Station and how to report issues can be found here: <https://www.speechanddebate.org/bis> . Please especially note the sections on Intake Process, Inquiry, Resolution and Appeal.

The staffed Belonging and Inclusion Advocates for the Carolina West District Tournament will be Radeyah Muhammad of Charlotte Latin and Jay Rye of Montgomery Academy in Alabama. District Chair Keith Pittman and South Carolina Chair Gail Nicholas are also trained as BIAs and may serve in this role as needed.



District Student of the Year

With the level of integrity, intellect and character that is among the student population in each district, the NSDA is proud to announce the implementation of the NSDA District Student of the Year award.

Each coach may nominate one student who exemplifies the leadership practices and positive qualities set forth by the National Speech and Debate Association.

The award will be based on coach nominations only. Nominations should be in the form of a 500-word (or fewer) essay about the nominee and his or her service, passion and dedication to the district, the NSDA, and the activity of forensics. Nominations will be collected and reviewed by the District Chair and his or her committee. Whoever receives the strongest nominations for the award should receive the award.

The winner of the District Student of the Year award will receive a plaque from the National Speech and Debate Association during the Awards Ceremony of the District Tournament. His or her District Chair will present the award.

To nominate, each nominee should reflect the following standard:

- A nominee must be an NSDA member in his or her senior year of high school.
- The nominee should uphold the NSDA Code of Honor.
- The nominee should demonstrate strong academic standards.
- The nominee should demonstrate participation in a wide array of community involvement and service.
- The nominee should exhibit dedication and commitment to the NSDA and forensics.

The nomination form can be found here:

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/student-of-the-year-nomination-form/>

To be considered, your form must be submitted by March 1 at 12 Noon.

District Coach of the Year (Head, Assistant, New)

"The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in speech and debate. Students should be treated with the utmost respect, and their welfare should be considered in decisions by coaches at all times."

We want to recognize the coaches in our District that embody the tenants of the Coaches Code of Ethics. To that end, nominations will be taken for **Coach of the Year, Assistant Coach of the Year and New Coach of the Year**. A nomination process followed by a vote of head coaches will determine the Coach of the Year. For Assistant Coach of the Year and New Coach of the Year, the winner will be determined by a neutral committee from among those nominated.

Nomination forms for all three of these awards can be found at this link:

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/coach-recognition/> (Scroll toward the bottom.)

To be considered, your form must be submitted by March 1 at 12 Noon..