

Dear Colleague:

Samford University Debate cordially invites you and your students to this year's Bishop Guild Debates, Samford University’s High School Debate Tournament, to be held on Friday, Saturday, and Sunday January 10, 11, & 12, 2025. The tournament will be hosted *in-person* on the Samford campus.

We are excited about the prospect of bringing qualified and talented students to the Birmingham Area to compete in debate. This year we will be offering competition in Policy Debate (varsity and novice), Lincoln-Douglas (Open), and Public Forum (Open).

Appropriate awards will be presented to those teams that reach elimination rounds. Speaker awards will also be presented to individuals in each division. The number of elimination rounds and speakers will be determined by the size of the divisions. Finally, the Tournament of Champions has recognized our tournament as a qualifier for teams reaching the semi-finals in policy debate.

Following on last year’s success, we will continue to make extra efforts to provide superior judging. Our goal is that you leave our tournament thinking that you enjoyed the best judging you have had all year.

We have also included several meals in this year’s tournament price to expedite meal breaks. We hope that this added convenience improves your tournament experience. If the increased fee poses a financial hardship, please let us know and we will see what we can do.

Please let me know if I can be of assistance to you. I would love to talk with you about Samford University or the tournament itself.

Sincerely,

Ryan Galloway

Tournament Director

(205) 726-2695 (office)

(205) 253-4367 (cell phone)

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# Tournament Information

Varsity Policy Debate: The varsity division is open to any two-person debate team. The format will be 8-3-5 with 8 minutes of preparation time. There will be six preliminary rounds with elimination rounds to follow.

Novice Policy Debate: Novice policy debaters are those who are competing in their first high school year on their first high school debate topic. Participation in middle school debate does not count against someone competing as a novice. Novices enjoy all of the same rules as varsity policy debate. High school seniors with policy debate experience can judge novice debate.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate: The LD division is open to middle and high school students of any experience level. LD debate will use the January/February topic. There will be five double-flighted preliminary rounds with elimination rounds to follow.

Public Forum Debate: The public forum division is open to middle and high school students of any experience level. PF debate will use the January topic. There will be six double-flighted preliminary rounds with elimination rounds to follow. We will be using the pilot NSDA time limits, so summary speeches will be three minutes in length, and prep time is three minutes.

Judging: One judge must be provided for every two entries in an event. Each judge will be assigned to one school. Any judge with additional conflicts should note said conflicts on the entry form and on tabroom.com. In addition, please take care to provide judges qualified to judge the divisions and events your school is entered in. This includes having a judge philosophy posted in policy debate, though one is preferred in other events as well. This is the only way to guarantee that the judging is of the highest standards and ensure that students can adapt to judge expectations. All judges are expected to remain available for all rounds until one beyond the time that their team is eliminated.

Judges must register for a Tabroom.com account, as we will use this system to distribute pairings and submit ballots. Paper ballots will not be distributed. Judges may wish to bring a device that will allow them to complete online ballots, such as a laptop.

Parking: On Friday, you should park in a commuter lot: we will include a parking pass in your packet. There is a commuter lot behind Brooks and another across the quad near Samford Hall. After 4PM on Friday and all day Saturday and Sunday, campus safety will not be ticketing and you can park in any open lot.

Internet log-in: You should use Samford’s guest network.

Meals: The tournament will be providing breakfast on both Saturday and Sunday for all participants in Brooks Hall. On Friday, for students, we will provide pizza after Round 2. We will also provide lunch for students on Saturday. Coaches, please enter your students’ dietary restrictions on the tabroom website. On Sunday, no lunches are provided, but we are happy to recommend local restaurants and delivery options. For coaches, meals, coffee, and snacks will be served in the SIM Forum in Brooks Hall (135) throughout the tournament.

Prelims: Six preliminary rounds in policy debate, five preliminary rounds in Lincoln-Douglas and public forum. The first two will be pre-set. In the interest of time, Rounds 4 & 5 may be lag paired Saturday morning in Public Forum and/or Lincoln-Douglas if the divisions are running behind.

Flighting: We start with the assumption that we will be double-flighting Public Forum and Lincoln-Douglas. However, if we have the ability to, we will begin single-flighting in rounds where we can. Rooms and judges are our two constraints.

Decision time limits: Judges are expected to give their decisions in a timely manner. Please submit or turn in the ballot before giving oral comments or walking back to Brooks Hall.

Wait list, Breaking brackets, elim sides, hybrids, and mavericks: We will have an initial cap of eight entries in each division, and more will be added as the tournament numbers allow. A school cannot be more than 40% of the pool in any division. We will not break brackets in elims. Sides in elim rounds are decided via coin flip conducted by the tabroom online coin flip system. If teams have previously met, they should switch sides. We allow hybrids and mavericks, and they are eligible for speaker awards, but may not clear at the tournament. Mavericks are only allowed if the team entered as a team, and one partner is ill or unable to compete after debating at least one round.

Rules:The NSDA policy debate topic will be used. Prep time in policy debate is **8 minutes** in both open and novice. Mutual preference judging will be used in Varsity Policy debate. The tournament is a semi-finals TOC qualifier for Varsity policy debate. Judges must vote for one and only one team each debate. Speaker points are on a 30 point scale with decimal places and no ties in points.

**Fees**

Policy Debate Teams $100.00 per team

Lincoln Douglas Debate $45.00 per entry

Public Forum Debate $90.00 per team

Hired Judges $200.00 per LD/PF hired judge

$50 per round in Policy Debate

Payment: We will use an online payment system for credit cards. We will also accept checks made out to Samford Debate.

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### Deadlines

Entries will be taken on a first come, first served basis up until the wait list point. Teams will be taken off of the wait list on a space-available basis. When the buildings are full, we can take no more entries.

All entries must be finalized by Monday, January 6th, 2025.

## Judging Responsibilities

Each school is expected to supply one judge for every two entries in each event category. Samford is a small team, so we work hard to recruit qualified judges, and often they travel from outside of the Birmingham area. Judges cannot be hired at registration.

## Tab Room

The tab room will be run electronically on tabroom.com. We will be using mutually preferred judging in varsity policy and random judge placement in other divisions. Pairings will be done according to the schedule designations.

## Schedule

Registration will occur in Brooks 102 from 11AM-12PM. We will begin competition at 1PM. We will have three rounds on Friday, and rounds will begin again at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday. All elimination rounds for LD and PF will be held on Saturday, and in Policy elimination rounds will be on Sunday starting at 8:00 a.m.

## Directions

Samford’s address is 800 Lakeshore Drive, Birmingham, AL 35229. The tabroom is in Brooks Hall and we will use surrounding buildings as well as Brooks for the tournament. If you have difficulty finding Samford or Brooks Hall, call me at 205-253-4367.

## Housing

There are many hotels within a mile of the Samford campus. Let us suggest a few.

Holiday Inn Express & Suites

320 Commons Drive

Birmingham, AL 35209  
(205) 848-7911

La Quinta

60 State Farm Parkway  
Homewood, AL  
(205) 290-0150

Courtyard Birmingham, Homewood

500 Shades Creek Parkway

Homewood, AL 35209

**To Enter the Tournament**

This year we are taking entries only at www.tabroom.com. Please go to the website and enter your teams on-line. If you are having difficulties with this process, please contact [rwgallow@samford.edu](mailto:rwgallow@samford.edu) and we will make sure you get registered for the tournament!

Tentative Schedule

# Friday, January 10, 2025

11AM-12 PM Registration, Brooks Hall 102

1PM Round 1 Start Time

3:30 PM Round 2 Start Time

5:30 PM Dinner Break

6:30 PM Round 3 Start Time

# Saturday, January 11, 2025

7AM Pairings/Breakfast Available

8:00 AM Round 4 Start Time

10:15AM Round 5 Start Time

12:30PM Lunch Break

1:30PM Round 6/First Elimination Round PF & LD

3PM Awards Assembly for PF & LD

4:30PM Awards Assembly for policy debate, Brooks Auditorium

5PM ` First elimination round for policy

Second elimination round for PF and LD.

6:30PM Third elimination round, PF & LD

8PM Fourth elimination round, PF & LD (if necessary)

# Sunday, January 12, 2025

7AM Pairings/Breakfast Available

8:00 AM Policy Second Elimination Round Start Time

11AM Policy Third Elimination Round Start Time

2PM Policy Fourth Elimination Round Start time

An additional elimination round may be scheduled in policy debate if entries warrant breaking to double octofinals. In the past few years, the tournament has cleared to partial-octofinals.