



2024-2025 MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL LEAGUE

Debate Rules and Policies

www.mshsl.org/governance

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DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

REGION: The term “region” will refer only to the administrative region and all administrative functions of region.

SECTION: The term “section” will refer to a geographic grouping of schools for competition.

- A. Policy Debate:** A Policy Debate team consists of two (2) contestants debating on a resolution chosen by the MSHSL in advance of the Section Tournaments.

Procedure: The Policy debate topic will be the National Federation's national high school resolution for the current year.

- B. Lincoln-Douglas Debate:** A Lincoln-Douglas debate team consists of one (1) contestant debating on a resolution chosen by the MSHSL in advance of the Section Tournaments.

Procedure: The Lincoln-Douglas topic selected by the MSHSL shall be the resolution designated by the National Speech & Debate Association for January/February.

- C. Public Forum Debate:** A Public Forum Debate team consists of two (2) contestants debating on a resolution chosen by the MSHSL in advance of the section tournament.

Procedure: The Public Forum debate topic selected by the MSHSL shall be the resolution designated by the National Speech & Debate Association for January.

- D. Congressional Debate:** A Congressional Debate entry consists of one (1) contestant debating on legislation chosen by the MSHSL to be debated at the State Debate Tournament

I. GENERAL DEBATE RULES

- A. Limitation on Participation:** No student may participate in more than one debate categories in any MSHSL debate contest. A contestant may participate in a one act play and/or speech as well as in debate activities.
- B. Policy Debate:** An official entry in Policy Debate shall be two (2) debaters and an alternate designated prior to the tournament. Once an alternate is used, s/he must be used throughout the competition on that day.
- Each debater must deliver only one (1) constructive speech, one (1) rebuttal speech and one (1) cross-examination, organized as follows, etc. The penalty for violation of this rule will be a forfeit and no speaker points for the team in that round. *Debaters shall not be penalized for which constructive, rebuttal or cross- examination they choose to give.*

Constructive Speeches	
Affirmative	8 minutes
Cross examination by negative	3 minutes
Negative	8 minutes
Cross examination by affirmative	3 minutes
Affirmative	8 minutes
Cross examination by negative	3 minutes
Negative	8 minutes
Cross examination by affirmative	3 minutes

Rebuttal Speeches	
Negative	5 Minutes
Affirmative	5 Minutes
Negative	5 Minutes
Affirmative	5 Minutes

- A judge shall not be recorded as having heard a team or debater unless s/he made a decision for that round. Forfeit is considered to be a decision made by the tournament manager. In the event of a disqualification or a reversal of a decision after the completion of the round, the judges shall be recorded as having heard each team or debater based on his/her original decision in the round.
- Each entry is expected to bring an electronic device to be available for all rounds in which their team is debating. judges are responsible for official time keeping in the round. Preparation time during rounds shall be eight (8) minutes.

C. Lincoln-Douglas Debate

1. An official entry in Lincoln-Douglas Debate shall be one (1) debater. If an entry is unable to continue participating after the start of Round 1, there will be no substitution.
2. The speeches of the debate shall be organized as follows:

Affirmative constructive	6 minutes
Cross examination by negative	3 minutes
Negative constructive	7 minutes
Cross examination by affirmative	3 minutes
Affirmative rebuttal	4 minutes
Negative rebuttal	6 minutes
Affirmative rebuttal	3 minutes

3. Each entry is expected to bring an electronic device to be available for all rounds in which their team is debating. judges are responsible for official time keeping in the round. Preparation time during rounds shall be four (4) minutes.

D. Public Forum Debate

An official entry in Public Forum Debate shall be two (2) debaters and an alternate designated prior to the tournament. Once an alternate is used, s/he must be used throughout the competition on that day.

1. Each debater must deliver one constructive speech and one rebuttal/summary speech, and the debate shall include cross-fire and grand cross fire, organized as follows, etc. The penalty for violation of the rule requiring each debater to deliver the required speeches will be a forfeit and no speaker points for the team in that round. *Debaters shall not be penalized for which constructive, rebuttal or cross-examination they choose to give.*

Affirmative	4 minutes
Negative	4 minutes
Cross Fire	3 minutes
Affirmative	4 minutes
Negative	4 minutes
Cross Fire	3 minutes
Affirmative	3 minutes
Negative	3 minutes
Grand Cross Fire	3 minutes
Affirmative Summary	2 minutes
Negative Summary	2 minutes

2. A judge shall not be recorded as having heard a team or debater unless s/he made a decision for that round. Forfeit is considered to be a decision made by the tournament manager. In the event of a disqualification or a reversal of a decision after the completion of the round, the judges shall be recorded as having heard each team or debater based on his/her original decision in the round.
3. Each entry is expected to bring an electronic device to be available for all rounds in which their team is debating. Judges are responsible for official time keeping in the round. Preparation time during rounds shall be three (3) minutes.

E. Congressional Debate

An official entry in congressional debate shall be one (1) debater. If an entry is unable to continue participating after the start of session 1, there will be no substitution.

The structure of a congressional debate is as follows:

1. A session is defined as including:
 - a. Minimum of two (2) hours.
 - b. 12-18 students as the optimum number for a three-hour session; otherwise, a session should be lengthened by ten (10) minutes per each additional student beyond 18. Chambers may not be larger than 24 students.
 - c. Election of a presiding officer. The presiding officer must be elected with a majority of the vote. If one (1) candidate does not receive a majority of votes, eliminate the candidate with the fewest votes and vote again. If candidates are tied for the fewest number of votes, vote to determine which of the tied candidates should remain in contention. Repeat this process until one (1) candidate receives a majority of votes. Each session needs a uniquely elected presiding officer.
 - d. New seating chart (necessary accommodations for students with special needs may be made).
 - e. Resetting of precedence/recency. See 'Recognizing Speakers' below.
 - f. New legislation that has not been debated in a previous session at that tournament.
2. Recognizing Speakers
 - a. When more than one (1) speaker seeks the floor, the presiding officer must follow the precedence/recency method:
 - i. First recognize students who have not spoken during the session.
 - ii. Next recognize students who have spoken fewer times.
 - iii. Then recognize students who spoke earlier (least recently).
 - b. Before precedence is established, the presiding officer should recognize speakers fairly and consistently.
 - c. During any session, precedence/recency should not reset, to ensure that all students in a chamber have an equal opportunity to speak and receive evaluation from scorers. When a new session begins, precedence/recency will be reset along with a new seating chart, and election of a presiding officer.
 - d. Before precedence is established, the presiding officer should explain their recognition process and it must be fair, consistent, and justifiable.
 - e. Scorers will include answers to questions when evaluating speeches. A speaker may yield time on the floor during debate (for questions or clarifications) but that speaker will remain in control of their three (3) minutes (see #6 below regarding questioning).
3. Speeches introducing legislation are allotted up to three (3) minutes, followed by two (2) minutes of questioning by other delegates. A student from the school who wrote the legislation gets the privilege of recognition (called authorship), regardless of precedence; otherwise, the presiding officer may recognize a "sponsor" from the chamber, provided this recognition follows the precedence guidelines above. Regardless, this speech of introduction must be followed by two (2) minutes of questions. Should no student seek recognition for the authorship/sponsorship, the chamber will move to lay the legislation on the table until such time that a student is prepared to introduce it.
4. The first negative speech must be followed by two (2) minutes of questions.
5. Following the first two (2) speeches on legislation, the presiding officer will alternately recognize affirmative and negative speakers, who will address the chamber for up to three (3) minutes, followed by one (1) minute of questioning by other delegates. If no one wishes to oppose the preceding speaker, the presiding officer may recognize a speaker upholding the same side. When no one seeks the floor for debate, the presiding officer may ask the chamber if they are "ready for the question," at which point, if there is no objection, voting may commence on the legislation itself. There is no "minimum cycle" rule; however, if debate gets "one-sided," the chamber may decide to move the previous question.
 - a. In the event a student speaks on the wrong side called for by the presiding officer and the error is not caught, the speaker shall be scored, and the speech shall count in precedence, but the speaker must be penalized at least three points for not paying close attention to the flow of debate.
 - b. In the event a student speaks on an item of legislation not currently being debated, said speech shall count in precedence, but zero (0) points shall be awarded.

6. *The presiding officer will open the floor for direct questioning following each speech. The presiding officer will recognize questioners for a cross-examination period of no more than 30 seconds per person. Questioners will be chosen according to a separate questioning recency. If no other students seek to be recognized, a speaker may do a second 30-second questioning period. There is no formal "permission to preface," however; presiding officers should discourage students from making statements as part of questioning, since that is an abusive use of the limited time available.*
7. *The presiding officer will pause briefly between speeches to recognize any motions from the floor; however, they should not call for motions (at the beginning of a session, the presiding officer should remind members to seek their attention between speeches).*
8. *Amendments must be presented to the presiding officer in writing with specific references to lines and clauses that change. This must be done in advance of moving to amend.*
 - a. *The parliamentarian will recommend whether the amendment is "germane"—that is, it upholds the original intent of the legislation—otherwise, it is considered "dilatory." The title of the legislation may be changed.*
 - b. *A legislator may move to amend between floor speeches. Once that motion is made, the presiding officer will read the proposed amendment aloud and call for a second by one-third of those members present, unless he/she rules it dilatory.*
 - c. *Should students wish to speak on the proposed amendment, the presiding officer will recognize them as per the standing precedence and recency, and the speech will be counted toward their totals, accordingly.*
 - d. *Simply proposing an amendment does not guarantee an "author/sponsor" speech, and any speeches on amendments are followed by the normal one minute of questioning.*
 - e. *Amendments are considered neutral and do not constitute an affirmative or negative speech on the original legislation.*
 - f. *If there are no speakers or the previous question is moved, the chamber may vote on a proposed amendment without debating it.*
9. *All major voting (such as the main motion/legislation) which a congressperson's constituents should have a record of, shall be done with a counted vote. Secret balloting is used when voting for presiding officer.*
10. *Students should ask permission to leave and enter the chamber when it is in session (move a personal privilege). However, do not interrupt a speaker who is addressing the chamber.*
11. *Use of Evidence: in general, see Evidence Rules for debate. Here are some things unique to Congressional Debate:*
 - a. *Visual aids are permitted in Congressional Debate, provided they do not require electronic retrieval devices in the chamber.*
 - b. *All evidence used is subject to verification. Honesty and integrity are of utmost importance in legislative debate. Falsification or deliberate misuse of evidence may result in the legislator being suspended by tournament officials.*
 - c. *The use of laptop computers is permitted. Laptop use must comply with the Guidelines for Laptop Use in Debate Events.*
12. *Since the rules above ensure fairness for competition, they may not be suspended; the presiding officer should rule such motions out of order; except to extend questioning and allow for open chambers provided the tournament staff permits doing so.*

F. General Debate Rules (Section & State Debate Tournaments)

1. *An official entry shall be designated prior to the tournament. Substitution shall be for illness or extreme family emergency only.*
2. *The debaters shall receive no coaching while the debate round is in progress.*

3. In the event of a tie in speaker points in any event a win may be awarded to either entry.
4. The exchange of specific evidence between schools designed to give an unfair advantage to one entry/school is not permitted. Evidence shall include flows, cases, tape recordings, briefs, articles or books. Such evidence is not to be exchanged at any time by anyone from the start of registration through the completion of the final round.

Tournament Procedure Note: Posting of information to a publicly accessible website in which no one team is disadvantaged is permissible.

5. Contestants at the MSHSL State Tournament may use electronic devices (including laptop computers, tablets, and/or cell phones) to access information residing on the device or to access the internet during debate rounds with the following conditions.
 - a. Computers or other electronic devices may not be used to receive information for competitive advantage from non-competitors (coaches, assistant coaches, other students) inside or outside of the room in which the competition occurs. Information that would be restricted would include but not be limited to coach/non- participating competitor generated arguments, advice on arguments to run, questions to ask during cross examination, and other information not generated by the participating competitors.
 - b. Internet access may be used to retrieve files, exchange evidence and/or argument, research arguments, and partner to partner communication. These electronic device guidelines do not limit communication between debate partners during the debate round.
 - c. Sanction: Contestants found to have violated provision a above shall be disqualified from the tournament and shall forfeit all rounds. In case of a serious dispute or critical question, the tournament jury will have the final ruling.
 - d. Availability of Evidence: Contestants electing to use computers shall have the responsibility to promptly provide a copy of any evidence read in a speech for inspection by the judge or opponent. Printers may be used. Evidence may be printed in the round or produced electronically but must be provided in a format readable by the opposing team and the judge.
 - e. Contestants electing to use computers are responsible for providing their own computers, batteries, extension cords and all other necessary accessories. Tournament hosts shall not be responsible for providing computers, printers, software, paper, or extension cords for contestants. Host schools may provide wireless internet access but will not guarantee that contestants will be able to gain access when needed.
 - f. Because public speaking decorum remains an important element of debate, all debaters are expected to stand at the front of the room facing the judge while speaking.
 - g. Contestants choosing to use laptop computers and related equipment accept the risk of equipment failure, No, special consideration or accommodations, including no additional prep time or speech time, will be given by judges or contest directors should equipment failure occur.

- h. By choosing to use laptop computers in the round, debaters are consenting to give tournament officials the right to search their files. The device may only be searched by tournament officials and the search must be restricted to the files and/or electronic exchanges relevant to the protest. Failure to comply would result in the upholding of the protest. Debaters and coaches should be present as their device is searched. Debaters who do not wish to consent should not use computers in the round.

6. Evidence Rules

- a. Responsibilities of teams reading evidence
 - 1) The team is responsible for the validity of all evidence they read in the debate.
 - 2) In all rounds of LD and Public Forum, debaters should, at a minimum, orally deliver title of the source (for example title of book, not chapter; title of journal, not article), qualifications of source, author's name, and year. In Policy Debate, all debaters shall orally deliver the name of the author and year.
 - 3) In all rounds of debate, complete citations for each piece of evidence introduced in the round must be available in the round. Written citations must include name of the author, qualifications, complete title of source (for example, title of book, not chapter; title of journal, not article), and complete date. Online sources must also include the title of the site, database, or access point, the date accessed, and the web address. The additional citation required for online sources must appear on all evidence but is not required to be read. Should two (2) or more quotations be used from the same source, the author and title need be given orally only for the first piece of evidence from that source. In the subsequent oral citation, only the author's name is required.
 - 4) Either no internal ellipsis (Ellipses occur after the first word of the quotation and before the final word) may be used in evidence cited on a card, or ellipses may be shown on cards if the original source or a photocopy is present. The evidence may be read in ellipses form, but the entirety of the evidence must be available in one of the two ways previously cited.
 - 5) Personal letters or telegrams shall not be admissible as evidence.
- b. Responsibilities of teams challenging evidence
 - 1) Indictments or protests of the validity of evidence must be made on substantive grounds.
 - 2) A challenger must have either the original source or a photocopy of the source being cited, or
 - 3) A challenger must demonstrate that reasonable search has not been able to locate the source – photocopies of relevant pages in *Books in Print*, *Reader's Guide*, *P.A.I.S.*, etc.
- c. Definitions of Non-existent evidence or evidence which seriously distorts the intention of the original source.
 - 1) "Serious distortion" exists when the evidence itself contains added or deleted word(s) which do not clarify but in fact change the position of the author with respect to the issues in question.
 - 2) "Non-existent evidence" means that:
 - i. Reasonable search is unable to produce the original source and/or the team reading the evidence is unable to provide the original source or a photocopy of the relevant pages.
 - ii. The evidence cited is not located in the original source cited. Typographical errors in citation will not automatically result in the evidence being labeled non-existent, if the team reading the evidence can produce the correct information.

7. Rules of Evidence Authenticity

- a. In policy debate, judges may request and read any evidence presented in the debate. In all other debate events, judges are prohibited from requesting and reading any piece of evidence at the end of a round unless the issue of authenticity was raised during the debate or unless the judge has substantial reason to suspect the authenticity of the evidence.
Authenticity refers to:
 - 1) Fabrication: falsely representing a cited fact or statement of opinion as evidence; or

intentional omission/addition of information within quoted material.

- 2) Distortion: misrepresentation of evidence or of citation which significantly alters meaning or context.
- b. Debaters are responsible for the authenticity of evidence they present in rounds and shall allow the opposing team/debater to examine evidence introduced in the round. Any challenges to the authenticity of evidence must be made by the debaters during the round or at the conclusion of the second affirmative rebuttal.
- c. Judges should not allow an apparent violation to enter into their decision unless the evidence is challenged by the opposing team or unless the judge has substantial reason to suspect the authenticity of the evidence.

Procedure: The judge will wait until after the debate, when all other arguments have been presented, to investigate an alleged evidence violation. In the event of an evidence challenge, by the other team, be sure that the nature of the violation is clearly specified by the opposing team within the context of the debate; vague accusations do not warrant investigation. If you request to see a piece of evidence, you must notify the debaters that the reason is a matter of a possible serious violation of ethical use of evidence.

- d. If the judge decides that an authenticity challenge is legitimate:
 - 1) In the case of fabrication (see 7-a-1), the judge shall award a loss with zero points as the penalty to the offending team and shall report the offense to the Tournament Manager. In the event of a judging panel, each judge will make his/her decision individually and report the offense to the tournament manager who will call the tournament jury together to review the offense; the tournament jury may then provide an opportunity for the panel to confer if necessary.
 - 2) In the case of distortion (see 7-a-2), the judge will determine the severity of the penalty based upon the severity of the violation; the Judge may void the effect of that evidence or may impose an additional penalty up to a loss with no speaker points; the severity of the penalty should be commensurate with the severity of the distortion violation. In the event of a judging panel, each Judge will make his/her decision individually.
 - 3) In the rare event of a judge-initiated authenticity challenge, which has not been introduced by the debaters in the round, the judge must submit the challenge to the tournament manager for review by the tournament jury prior to any succeeding rounds.

8. A false accusation of unethical conduct is considered a serious violation of ethics.
9. During the tournament, it is unethical for any coach, student, observer, or judge to attempt to influence the decision of a judge before, during, or after a round. No feedback or discussion between debaters and judge may occur until the tournament ballot is signed and turned into the tab room.

II. SECTIONAL DEBATE TOURNAMENTS

- A. Section Organization:** Debate shall be organized on a section basis and shall be under the supervision of the Region Committee designated by the Board of Directors. The MSHSL shall determine the number and apportionment of sections.

Procedure: There are four (4) sections in Minnesota. The section alignment shall be reviewed every two (2) years to provide an equal number of schools based on registration for debate with the MSHSL.

The Region Committee shall assume full control and financial responsibility for administering the Section

Tournament. Expenses shall include fees paid officials and judges, advertising, tickets, rentals, and other miscellaneous items for conducting the event. Administration expenses, however, do not include transportation, meals and housing for the participating schools or contestants.

The Tournament Committee must include, but is not limited to, the Tournament Manager recommended by the MDTA Section Representatives. The tournament committee is responsible for organizing, tabulating, and facilitating the Section Tournament.

B. Section Tournament Administration

1. **Registration of Schools:** The Tournament Committee shall establish a procedure for the registration of schools in the section and will publish that procedure in advance of the tournament. The MSHSL will determine the number of teams each school may enter in the Section Tournament.

Procedure: Each school may enter one (1) or two (2) entries at their Section Tournament in each debate event.

Tournament Format and Procedure: The Tournament Committee shall determine the site and time for the Section Tournament. The Section Tournament must be completed no later than the Saturday before the State Tournament.

Procedure: The Tournament Committee will solicit the recommended Section Tournament Judges from the Minnesota Debate Teachers Association. Judges who are offered a contract will be strongly encouraged in a letter to hear at least fifteen (15) debate rounds during the season.

C. Running the Congressional Debate Tournament

General Rules and Instructions

1. **Legislation.** Schools are encouraged to submit at least two bills or resolutions no later than one month prior to the scheduled section Congress Tournament. All legislation presented shall meet NSDA formatting criteria (see rules section) and must be the original work of students from the submitting school. Non-original work shall not be considered for the agenda. It shall be the affirmative duty of each coach and each student entered in the to determine absolutely that material submitted is original.
 - a. The MDTA Jury Committee shall attempt to accept at least one bill or resolution from each school submitting bills or resolutions, provided the legislation is submitted by the deadline.
 - b. At least three (3) weeks before the official Congress date, the MDTA Jury Committee should send to each participating school a copy of not fewer than eight (8) bills or resolutions, which shall constitute the agenda for each chamber per day.
 - c. If the tournament officials allow for a suspension of the rules, bills or resolutions not submitted may be considered only after the officially established legislative agenda has been considered (debated).
 - d. The MDTA Jury Committee may deny bills or resolutions from being offered from the floor.
2. **Time Allowance and Sessions.** A two-day format is recommended. On day 1, two (2) sessions of two (2) hours of length will be used. On day 2, two (2) sessions of two (2) hours of length will be used. A unique set of legislation will be used for each day. Each session is two (2) hours and includes:

- a. Election of a presiding officer
 - 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 session at that tournament
3. Congress Officials
- a. The MDTA Tournament Jury will determine the manner in which judges are procured for the section tournament. The State tournament will procure judges through the same procedure used to hire judges for Policy, Lincoln-Douglas, and Public Forum Debate.
 - b. A parliamentarian supervises each chamber and remains throughout all preliminary sessions: to call roll and ensure students are in assigned seats, to monitor timekeeping by the presiding officer, to intervene in case a student officer becomes too deeply involved in parliamentary rules, to correct gross errors in procedure, to record session start and end times, and to record actions taken. Ordinarily s/he should remain in the background, but step forward firmly when his/her presence is required. The purpose of Congress is to debate legislation; the parliamentarian ensures this is done. The parliamentarian is also considered a judge in the chamber and will rank all participants at the end of the session (or in the case of a multiple session preliminary round, at the end of the last session).
 - c. Scorers: In addition to the parliamentarian, at least two scorers must be used for each session in each chamber, and those scorers should not be affiliated with students in that chamber. The Section Manager or State Tournament Director can decide to assign different judges each session, or keep the same judges, as well as whether to use one scorer in preliminary sessions preceding a final session (which must have at least three, including a parliamentarian).
 - i. Assign up to six (6) points per speech, considering answers to questions in the awarding of points.
 - ii. Presiding officers shall receive not less than three (3) or more than six (6) speaker credit points for each full hour of presiding (fractions of an hour are not scored).
 - iii. Points – No more than 24 points may be awarded a day per student. A total of the average of the scorer panel's points for each speech and complete hour of presiding shall be reported by the chair as merit points for the tournament, but points no longer have bearing on advancement.
 - d. At the end of each scorer's and parliamentarian's judging commitment, they rank their eight (8) most preferred legislators (which may include presiding officers); the parliamentarian also ranks all students in the chamber.
 - e. All judge/parliamentarian ballots must be checked carefully by tournament officials to ensure eight (8) names were listed, and that names were not repeated.
4. Protests. Judges assigned by the tournament committee shall be final unless protested before the tournament has begun. If a judge(s) is added to the judge pool after the tournament has begun, any protests must be made prior to the session in which that individual(s) is assigned to the judge. If protested, the Section Manager or MDTA Tournament Jury Committee shall hear the protest, and its decision shall be final. The Tournament Committee or MDTA Tournament Jury Committee member(s) should recuse themselves if involved in the protest.
5. Setting up the Congress.
- a. Rooms must allow for all contestants to be seated appropriately as to be seen by the presiding officer, with no barriers between.
 - b. Seating charts should be prepared in advance based on the entry forms received from the schools. Assign alternate students to the seats assigned to the non-attending delegates.
 - c. The Tournament Committee and/or State Debate Tournament Director should create a time schedule to facilitate the minimum number of floor debate hours enumerated above in item 2.

- d. Obtain gavels.
- e. Obtain needed materials/supplies:
 - i. Seating charts: a minimum of five (5) (presiding officer, parliamentarian, and scorers) for each chamber on which the names of legislators are written in the pattern of seating as one faces the assembly
 - ii. Timers or stopwatches
 - iii. Ballots for voting (generate an official form or have slips of paper)
 - iv. Table of Parliamentary Motions, amendment forms, and recency charts
- 6. Disqualification. In the case of a disqualification of a contestant in a section or state tournament series event, all previous scores, ranks, and decisions of other contestants stand, and no revision of past sessions will take place.
- 7. Assigning Students to Chambers
 - a. All participating schools can choose to enter zero (0), one (1), or two (2) students to participate in the Section Congress Tournament. When assigning students to a chamber, every effort will be made to separate students from the same school, or same section.
 - b. A chamber shall seat no more than 15 contestants with 12 being the most ideal number.
 - c. Chamber assignments shall be made at registration and are final.
 - d. No changes in the Congress entry or in those seated in the Congress may be made once a chamber has convened.

8. Presiding Officers

Presiding officers will be nominated from the floor with either a parliamentarian and/or tournament official to conduct the election. Before precedence is established, the presiding officer should recognize speakers fairly and consistently. They may not link recognition of speakers to previous recognition of students asking questions, moving motions, or longest standing (standing time).

9. Tabulating Ranks

To tabulate Congressional Debate, scorers' ranks are inputted, with non-ranked students considered as ranks of 9. The parliamentarian's ranks, up to eighth are inputted as well, with subsequent ranks considered as ranks of 9. Each individual chamber is tabulated independent of the others. Legislators with the lowest cumulative rank total advance to the next level of competition, employing the following tiebreakers:

- a. Judges' preference
- b. Reciprocal fractions
- c. Adjusted cumulative rank total after dropping highest and lowest ranks
- d. Judges' preference of adjusted cumulative rank total
- e. Rank by the parliamentarian

If two or more competitors are still tied and have never met in the same chamber, then the average speaker score (not including Presiding Officer points). If the entries are still tied, a blind draw will be used.

D. Running the LD, PF and CX Tournament:

Round 1 and 2 will be preset, with students meeting students from their own section where possible. If a section has an odd number of students, a student will be randomly assigned against another student from another section. At a minimum, students will debate one entry from their section. Rounds 3, 4, 5 and 6 will follow the MSHSL State Tournament pairing procedure as outlined in this document.

- E. State Qualifiers:** The MSHSL shall determine the number of debate entries qualifying from each section into the State Debate Tournament.

Procedure:

Twenty-four (24) entries qualify from the Section Tournament in Lincoln-Douglas, Public Forum, Policy, and Congressional Debate. They include the top two (2) teams from each section and the remaining top sixteen (16) finishing entries in LD, PF, Policy, and Congressional Debate.

In all Section Policy, Lincoln-Douglas, and Public Forum Tournaments, ranking of entries shall be by the following:

1. The number of decisions won.
2. In a two-way tie, the result of a head-to-head competition between the entries wins.
3. The number of total speaker points dropping the highest and lowest speaker points.
4. The number of decisions won by your opponents during the tournament.
5. The total number of speaker points.
6. Random draw of number

In all Section Congressional Debate Tournaments, ranking of entries shall be by the following:

1. Cumulative rank total
2. Judges' preference, if all tied students were in the same chamber, both days
3. Reciprocal fractions
4. Adjusted cumulative rank total after dropping highest and lowest ranks
5. Judges' preference of adjusted cumulative rank total, if all tied students were in the same chambers, both days
6. Combined rank by the parliamentarians
7. Random draw of number

As soon as the Section Tournament is over, the Tournament Manager shall notify the State Tournament Manager and the Associate Director of the League who provides leadership for Debate, of the qualifying entries. The Director will proceed to arrange the State Tournament for the qualifying teams.

- F. Rules and Disputes:** The Tournament Committee should establish written rules of conduct for the Section Tournament; these rules should be distributed to all participants prior to the tournament.

All disputes, except eligibility, involving Debate Section Tournaments shall be settled by the Tournament Committee. Committee decisions are final.

MSHSL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SPECTATOR CONDUCT (8/9/05)

In order to, elevate standards of sportsmanship and encourage the growth of responsible citizenship among the students, member schools, fans and school personnel, the MSHSL held a Sportsmanship Summit and asked student participants to identify behavior expectations they felt should be in place at every school event.

These minimum behavior expectations provide a foundation upon which member schools, conferences, administrative regions and the League's Board of Directors can build specific guidelines for activities under their control.

MSHSL Bylaw 409, **RESPONSIBILITY FOR PARTICIPATING TEAMS, STUDENTS AND SPECTATORS**, speaks to this issue directly, and Bylaw 409-2 specifically states that, **“School officials shall be held responsible for the proper conduct of teams, team members, students and home spectators regardless of where the contest is being held.”**

In all MSHSL activities, each participating school shall designate a person or persons from that school to serve as crowd control supervisors or chaperones. MSHSL tournament staff may require school administrators to contact the tournament manager prior to the start of the tournament game so that they can be immediately contacted to respond to behavioral issues regarding their team members, students and/or spectators at the tournament site. Each supervisor or chaperone should be immediately identifiable to the students and to the tournament site ushers and other security personnel. This will help to coordinate crowd control between school supervisors and tournament site personnel.

MSHSL MINIMAL BEHAVIOR EXPECTATIONS FOR REGULAR & POST-SEASON TOURNAMENT COMPETITIONS:

- Respect the American flag and the National Anthem.
- Spectators must wear clothing that covers the entire torso. Those who do not comply or who wear clothing that is vulgar, obscene or that in some other way inappropriate, as determined by school/tournament personnel, will be removed from the arena/stadium if they do not cooperate with this behavior expectation.
- The use of appropriate language is expected at all times. Profanity, negative chants, booing, trash talk, name calling, personal attacks or other acts of disrespect are unacceptable and must be immediately addressed by school and/or tournament administrators.
- Respect the game/contest. Under no condition shall anyone other than the members of the official squad enter the playing surface. No one may interfere with the contest in any way.
- Hand held signs, which do not obstruct the view of others, will be permitted provided they are in good taste. Signs, message boards, “white” boards or other similar items contest/tournament officials deem to be in poor taste will be removed.
- Signs on sticks, balloons, or any other type of artificial, celebratory items are not permitted.
- Artificial noise makers (i.e. megaphones, cowbells, sirens, whistles, thunder sticks, and other similar items) are not allowed.
- Laser lights are strictly prohibited.

THANK YOU for supporting your student athletes and fine arts participants and for providing a positive environment in which educational activities are conducted.

III. STATE DEBATE TOURNAMENT

A. State Tournament Organization

1. Qualifying Entry

The entry that advances to the State Policy and Public Forum Debate Tournament must be the entry that competed at the Section Tournament (unless a hardship can be shown such as extreme travel distance or illness). The alternate for an entry in Policy or Public Forum Debate shall be designated at the conclusion, of the Section Tournament. No alternates or substitutions are permitted at the State Lincoln-Douglas or Congressional Debate Tournament.

2. School Information Packets

Each school will receive a registration packet with general tournament information. Debate ballots and partial results will be made available once the final round has begun.

3. Informational Meetings

An informational meeting or multiple meetings will be held prior to Round 1 or Session 1 to review the rules of the State Tournament and will coaches, competitors, and judges.

4. Schedules

Schedules for individual debates on both days of the State Tournament will be made available to coaches, judges and the public ten (10) minutes before the beginning of each round.

5. Announcement of Results

A public announcement of entries advancing to the quarterfinal rounds in debate and the Super (Final) Session of Congress will be made immediately after the completion of preliminary rounds.

Approximately thirty (30) minutes prior to the beginning of the semifinal and final debates, a public announcement of the results of the previous round shall be made by the MSHSL. After that time, coaches of remaining teams shall be summoned to the tournament headquarters for the drawing of sides and the selection of judging panels.

6. Public Observation of Debates

All rounds of the State Debate Tournament shall be opened to public observation, flowing, and note taking by observers. Judges are not to observe any debates other than those they are judging. Observers shall not attempt to influence the debate through verbal or nonverbal reaction.

7. Rules and Disputes

a. Board of Directors

In case of a dispute as to the interpretation of the Constitution or Rules of the League, the Board of Directors of the League shall be the final authority. The tournament management staff may deviate from the announced schedule, policies or procedures if unforeseen events occur.

b. Tournament Jury

The Tournament Jury will review judge-initiated authenticity challenges, fabrication challenges in panel rounds, and disputes involving the State Tournament procedures. The jury will, conduct an investigation of the dispute and make its recommendation to the Tournament Manager; the jury can make any recommendation to the Tournament Manager, up to and including a loss with no speaker points, in any round for violation of the rules. Such procedures must be initiated prior to any succeeding round. The decision of the Tournament Jury shall be communicated (by the Tournament Manager) to the coaches involved and upon the recommendation of the Tournament Jury, to other tournament participants.

Procedure: The jury is made of the President of the MDTA and two (2) at-large members appointed by the MSHSL. Equal representation of coaches from all activities is encouraged.

8. Forfeiture

Any entry which does not appear for a round within ten (10) minutes of its posting may be disqualified from that round. If a bye is necessary, the entry receiving the bye shall be awarded speaker points equal to the average speaker points they received in all other rounds of the tournament. If a forfeit is given, the losing entry shall receive no speaker points, and the winning entry shall receive a bye.

B. State Tournament Debate Pairings Policy, Lincoln-Douglas, and Public Forum Debate

1. Preliminary Rounds of Policy, Lincoln-Douglas, and Public Forum

The MSHSL shall develop a six (6) round schedule for the preliminary rounds in Lincoln-Douglas and Public Forum Debate and a five (5) round schedule for Policy Debate. The following guidelines will be used in developing the schedule:

- a) In Lincoln-Douglas and Public Forum Debate, each entry will debate three (3) times on each side of the resolution. In Policy Debate, each will debate at least two (2) times on each side of the resolution.
- b) Entries will not meet for a second time.
- c) Entries will not meet another team from its own school.

Procedure:

Rounds 1 and 2 - Entries will be randomly placed in a schedule for rounds 1 and 2 based on the following criteria: Entries will be put into three groups. Group A will consist of the Section Champion and Runner-Up from each section. Group B will consist of at-large entries that finished 9th to 16th place. Group C will consist of at-large entries that finished 17th to 24th.

Entries shall uphold each side of the resolution; entries shall debate two different groups than their own.

Rounds 3 through 6 – Will be paired high/low within win-loss records. Entries within each bracket will be ranked in order based on wins, drop high/low speaker points, total speaker points then by draw. If a group has an uneven number of entries, the entry with the lowest opponent wins shall be drawn up and ranked accordingly.

Round 4 and 6 – Entries will be scheduled with respect to side-constraints to ensure an equal number of affirmative and negative rounds occur.

2. Preliminary Sessions of Congressional Debate

The MSHSL shall develop a four (4) session preliminary schedule for Congressional Debate. The following guidelines will be used in developing the schedule:

- a) An entry should not be in a chamber with another entry from the same school.
- b) Each chamber will have two Section Champions and two Section Runner-Up contestants.
- c) Section Champion and Section Runner-Up from the same section shall not be in the same chamber
- d) Entries in a chamber will be placed randomly, while trying to prevent having two entries from the same school.

Procedure:

Sessions 1 & 2. Entries will be placed in a chamber for the preliminary sessions. Entries will remain in that chamber and compete against the other entries. Judges will rotate, but parliamentarians will remain in place.

Sessions 3 & 4. Entries will remain in the same chamber. New parliamentarians will be assigned. Judges will rotate, but parliamentarians will remain in place for both sessions.

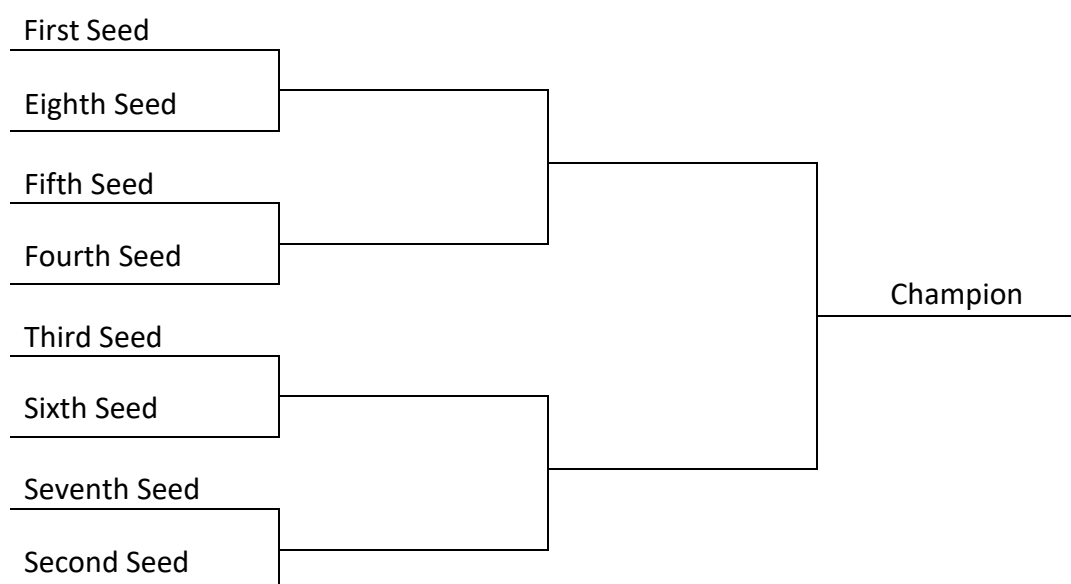
Each session length is two hours and is started the moment the parliamentarian or presiding officer calls the room to order.

3. Elimination Rounds of LD, PF and Policy

Eight (8) entries shall qualify for the elimination rounds of the State Debate Tournament in Policy, Lincoln-Douglas, and Public Forum Debate. The selection of these entries and their seeding will be determined by the following criteria (in descending order of use) based on the preliminary rounds.

- The number of decisions won.
- The number of total speaker points dropping the highest and lowest speaker points.
- The total number of speaker points.
- The total number of decisions won by your opponent.
- If the entries are still tied, the coaches involved shall draw for position.

The eight (8) teams selected shall be placed in the following bracket for the remainder of the tournament.



In elimination rounds, sides shall be determined by a blind draw by the coaches of the two (2) competing entries, unless they have previously met in the tournament, in which case they shall reverse sides from their previous meeting.

Entries from the same school which meet in the elimination rounds may declare a winner in their round without debating. This result must be declared prior to the completion of other debates. In the event two entries from the same school meet in the final round, the debate must take place.

4. Super Session in Congressional Debate

Twelve (12) entries shall qualify for the Super Session of the State Congressional Debate Tournament. Six (6) entries will advance from each of the preliminary chambers. The selection of these entries will be determined by the following criteria (in descending order of use) based on the preliminary sessions.

- Cumulative rank total
- Judges' preference
- Reciprocal fractions
- Adjusted cumulative rank total after dropping highest and lowest ranks
- Judges' preference of adjusted cumulative rank total
- Rank by the parliamentarian

Two sessions, of two hours of length each, will be held for the Super Session. The same judges and

parliamentarians will be used for both sessions. A single ballot will be submitted by judges and parliamentarian at the end of both sessions.

IV. STATE DEBATE TOURNAMENT JUDGING

A. Judge Assignments

1. Hiring of Judges

The MSHSL shall employ enough judges to manage the tournament within the judging guidelines. It is recommended at least eighteen (18) shall be chosen to judge Policy Debate, Lincoln-Douglas and Public Forum.

It is recommended that a minimum of at two (2) unaffiliated parliamentarians are hired for Friday and Saturday preliminary sessions, eight (8) judges shall be hired for Friday with six (6) judges for Saturday shall be chosen to judge Congressional Debate for each day. These judges may be active debate coaches or other qualified professionals, registered with the MSHSL.

Procedure: The MSHSL will solicit the recommended State Tournament Judges from the Minnesota Debate Teachers Association. Judges who are offered a contract by the MSHSL will be strongly encouraged in a letter to hear at least fifteen (15) debate rounds during the season.

2. Judge Conflicts

Judges hired for the State Debate Tournament shall notify the MSHSL of any potential conflicts they may have in judging particular entries. Judges will not be assigned to hear an entry which they have a conflict with (this will include hearing their own school).

Procedure: A judge may be disqualified from hearing an entry/school at the State Debate Tournament in one of two ways: the judge, when asked on his/her contract, requests to be disqualified from hearing an entry/school; or when the MSHSL staff, after consultation with the MDTA President, determines that a judge should be disqualified from hearing an entry/school.

An individual coach may request that a judge be disqualified from hearing an entry/school; that recommendation shall be made to the MDTA President and reviewed with the President-Elect prior to the President's consultation with MSHSL staff. In no instance will a judge be disqualified from hearing a team/school once registration has begun at the State Tournament.

Lincoln-Douglas, Policy and Public Forum coaches may strike 1 of 18 judges for both days or 1 judge on Friday and one different judge on Saturday. Strikes may not exceed one judging unit for the tournament.

Due to hiring unaffiliated judges for Congressional Debate, and that judge ranks are melded, strikes are not allowed in Congressional Debate.

Procedure: Coaches shall inform the MSHSL of their judge selection at the completion of their Section Tournament. This should be submitted by the Section Tournament Manager with the tournament results immediately after the Section Tournament.

3. Assignments for Preliminary Rounds

Judges will be assigned a code, which will determine their specific judging assignments on day one, in accordance with a schedule established by the MSHSL. Judge assignments shall be randomly determined, within the following rules:

- a) Judges shall only judge in the event(s) for which they are chosen.
- b) Judges should not hear an entry for a second time during preliminary rounds.
- c) Two Judges from the Congressional Debate pool will be chosen to serve as parliamentarians for the preliminary sessions.
- d) Judges serving as Parliamentarians in Congressional Debate will preside over the same chamber for both preliminary sessions.

Procedure: The following guidelines shall be followed, where possible, for the assignments in preliminary rounds: judge byes will be distributed evenly; Judges should not hear a school a second time. If the judge must hear a school again, it cannot be on the same side of the resolution; Judges should not hear a school from their own section. In Congressional Debate Judges may hear a school a second time but should not be used in the same chamber for both preliminary sessions (unless serving as a Parliamentarian).

4. Assignments for Elimination Rounds of Policy, Lincoln-Douglas, and Public Forum

- a) In the quarterfinal rounds of both events, panels of three (3) will be used to hear the debates. In the semifinals, panels of five (5) will be used; in the finals, panels of seven (7) will be used.
- b) In the quarterfinals of debate, no judge selection process will be utilized. In the remaining rounds, the following judge selection process will be used.

Semifinals-five (5) judges selected from panels of seven (7). Finals-seven (7) judges selected from panels of nine (9)

If two (2) complete panels of seven cannot be simultaneously compiled sequentially, begin with the debate with the highest remaining seed.

- c) The Judges assigned to panels should be chosen at random from among those available Judges who have not heard either entry.
- d) If necessary, panels shall be completed with dirty Judges, those who have heard entries in previous rounds or have students competing in the tournament still. The priority for assigning Judges shall be:
 - 1) Judges who have heard both entries, and given both a win
 - 2) Judges who have heard both entries, and given both a loss
 - 3) Judges who have heard one (1) entry, and given it a win
 - 4) Judges who have heard one (1) entry, and given it a loss
 - 5) Judges who have heard both entries, and gave one (1) a win and one (1) a loss

Procedure: A judge may hear an entry for a third time during the tournament. A judge who coaches entries still competing shall not be excluded from use. Measures such as placing the judge on the far side of the bracket may be used to minimize any potential conflict but is not a priority.

- e) For the semifinal or final rounds, as soon as the potential judges have been selected for a given debate, the two coaches of the entries involved will be given three (3) minutes in which to select a panel either by mutual consent or by each coach striking one judge.

5. Announcement of Judge Assignments

- a) One of the judges in the Congressional Debate pool will be selected to serve as the Parliamentarian of the Super Session.
- b) In addition to the Parliamentarian, a panel of four (4) judges will score and rank the Super Session.

6. Announcement of Judge Assignments

Judge assignments for rounds on both days of the State Tournament shall be posted (in the judge's lounge) on the schedules ten (10) minutes prior to the beginning of the debate.

JUDGES' BALLOTS

Ballots for each round should be picked up at and returned to the designated Tournament Headquarters. Judges not assigned to a round are not to observe any round of debate unless they have completed their judging obligation.

Ballots should be thoroughly completed with the following information:

- a. Designation of round
- b. Room
- c. Judge code
- d. Judge name
- e. Judge affiliation
- f. Affirmative and negative code numbers
- g. Affirmative and negative speaker names
- h. Individual speaker totals
- i. Entry speaker totals (in Policy Debate)
- j. Winning entry number and side

Please check to make sure all of this is included on your ballot before handing it in at Tournament Headquarters.

In the event of a tie in speaker points in Policy Debate or Lincoln-Douglas Debate, a win may be awarded to either entry.

Use your professional judgment in assigning individual and team speaker points. Remember, the total speaker points will be influential in determining the qualifying entries for the elimination rounds of the tournament. Judges may award whole or half points when assigning individual speaker points.

The reason for decision should be written specifically, in reference to the key issues affecting the outcome of the debate. While comments regarding speaker style and delivery are appreciated, emphasis should be placed on the content and issues presented in the debate. Your reason for decision should be very explicit as to why one entry won and the other entry lost the debate. You should ignore personal prejudices and decide on the merits of the debate itself.

TIMING/PREP TIME

(See section 1 – General Debate Rules for Speech and Prep Time)

OBSERVERS: All rounds of the State Tournament shall be open to public observation.

FLOWING: Judges are expected to flow the arguments and issues in each debate. All debates at the State Debate Tournament shall be open to flowing and note taking by observers under the rules of the tournament.

RULES OF EVIDENCE:

(Section C - General Debate Rules Section & Debate Tournaments.)

GENERAL CONDUCT: During the tournament, it is unethical for a judge hired for the tournament to reveal his/her decision, to reveal his/her reasons for decision, and/or to discuss the content of any debate judged with students, coaches, and other judges. It is also unethical for any coach, student, observer or judge to attempt to influence the decision of a judge before, during or after a round.

A coach shall not seek an unfair advantage or behave in an otherwise unethical manner in a MSHSL-sanctioned event in his/her conduct regarding coaches, judges, teams, tournament officials or any other aspect relating to the operation and management of the tournament.

Charts, maps, etc. shall be admissible and shall be accessible to both teams during the debate.

DISPUTES: Any disputes involving tournament rules in a round shall be reported to the Tournament Director.

COACHING AIDS: The following materials will be posted on the MSHSL Website:

1. Fine Arts Master Calendar
2. Rules & Policies for Debate
3. Sanction Forms
4. Current Debate Topics
5. Competitive Section Assignments
6. Contest Manager Information
7. School Information for State Tournament

AWARDS POLICIES: Awards for all activities sponsored by the MSHSL are determined by policies adopted by the Board of Directors. The awards are regularly reviewed by the Awards Committee.

It is a violation of MSHSL policy for a member school or a representative of a member school to establish, distribute or accept any awards not provided by the MSHSL for Section or State Tournaments.

AWARDS

Event – Lincoln-Douglas Debate

	Medals	Trophies	Certificates	Plaques
Section	To 1st place, 2nd place, & semifinalists	To champion & runner-up schools		
State	To champion, 2nd place, semi-finalists, & quarterfinalists	To champion & runner-up	To each student Participant (online)	To the semifinalists

Event – Congressional Debate

	Medals	Trophies	Certificates	Plaques
Section	To 1st place, 2nd place, & semifinalists	To champion & runner-up schools		
State	To champion, 2nd place, semi-finalists, & quarterfinalists	To champion & runner-up	To each student participant (online)	To the semifinalists

Event – Policy and Public Forum Debate

	Medals	Trophies	Certificates	Plaques
Section	To champion team, 2nd place team, & semifinalist teams	To champion runner-up schools		
State	To champion team, 2nd place team, semi-finalists, & quarterfinalists	To champion & 2nd place teams	To each student member of each official team (online)	To the semifinalist teams