



2025 Needham High School Speech and Debate Tournament



Dear Friends:

We are pleased to invite you to the Needham High School “Day at the Oscars” aka “March Merry-ness’ Speech and Debate Tournament, on Saturday, March 15, 2025

This year, to continue to celebrate the bonds that exist between our schools and our students, we shall be offering students participating in varsity Public Forum Debate the option to debate ‘hybrid’ style with a partner from another school.

In addition, this year, in continuing celebration of the returning to the in person community and in honor of two decades plus of hosting, we will once again offer the ‘Show Them Greatness’ award. This shall go to the students who ‘show them greatness’ in both a MSDL event AND a Needham ‘special event’. In those cases of students who are double-entered in the regular event pattern, the best performance shall be used to determine who is so honored.

We are also pleased to offer an exclusively middle school division in Big Questions.

Please know that ‘special events’ entries DO NOT count against the judge quota, in order to not penalize students who do, in fact, ‘wish to show them greatness’ in this way. Special events are \$5/entry.

Both of our special impromptu events, Impromptu Sales and Impromptu Storytelling, shall be open to alums, judges, graduates, and members of your entourage in attendance. Students only in ‘regular’ impromptu.

We represent the penultimate opportunity to qualify for States in both speech and debate, while striving to offer a ‘fun and festive’ venue for all. So be it in fine dress dancing shoes, or bowling shoes (or all three!) we look forward to seeing you!

-Greg Cunningham and PJ Wexler, Tournament Directors

- , Student Hosts
The (entire) Needham Speech and Debate Team
and Family

REGISTRATION

Please register at Tabroom.com by Wednesday, **March 12th at 5 pm.**

When registering, please indicate the coach's mobile phone number for emergency contact.

Middle school students are welcome in all divisions. but must compete as part of their middle school. In accordance with MSDL bylaws, in the event that the middle school is part of the high school, students must still attend as part of a distinct school entry. There is a middle-school only division of BQ,

Double Entry: Students may enter **two MSDL:**speech events, **and** one special event.

- Students in Group Discussion and Congressional Debate may not double enter within the MSDLevents pattern. They MAY enter special events.
- Students may not compete in both Multiple and special events because both occur at the same time.
- Students entered in debate events may not enter speech events.

Fees: Registration fees are due at the time of registration.

- LD and PF: \$20/entry.
- MSDL Speech Events and Congress: \$10/entry
- ‘Special’ speech events: \$5/entry
- Big Questions- \$10/entry

ADULT SUPERVISION

Students must be accompanied by an adult, approved by their administration, who will be responsible for them the entire time they are present at “March Merry-ness.” Said adults are expected to be physically present during the entire time students from their school are on site.

Said adults should carry out the physical registration- no students please!

DROPS AND CONFIRMATION

Changes made after the drop deadline can affect scheduling and complicated events. Please do your best to finalize plans by March 13th.

Wednesday, March 12th at 5pm: All students must be registered.

Thursday, March 13 at 5pm: Last chance to drop without entry fee.

Email all drops to pjwexler06@gmail.com **after** 5pm on Thursday, March 13th up until 10pm Friday, March 14th.

Drops after that should be handled in the following matter.

PLEASE NOTE: Teams must check-in (report as on site) on the day of the tournament *on Tabroom.com* as soon as students and judges are on the way to Needham and no later than 7:45 am. (Please do not wait until you arrive.) Coaches will have access to drop student entries

until 7:45 a.m. Saturday morning. Any drops after this deadline will incur a \$10 fee in addition to the registration fee.

All student drops should be done by the coach on Tabroom.com. Please text Greg Cunningham at 781-588-2258 **ONLY** if you have a last-minute judge drop. Please indicate the school, the name of the judge, and the division (speech or debate). Please also indicate who the replacement judge will be.

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JUDGING OBLIGATIONS

Speech -- One judge is required per five entries in speech.

*Entries in special events **DO NOT** count against the judging quota.*

Debate -- One judge per three entries PER DIVISION in LD, PF, and Big Q.

i.e, two entries in varsity PF and one in novice PF mean two judges are owed.

Adult judges only in varsity LD, varsity PF, and Big Questions

Late drops DO NOT change the judging obligation.

Judges are expected to be present through finals

Fees will be assessed for schools that fail to meet obligations.

Please – do NOT rely on the fee. We count on each school to do its part.

Fees – to be made out to Needham High School and paid at the check-in desk:

Missing judge for speech: \$50/judge

Missing judge for debate: \$75/judge

Judge absent for final round in any event: \$50/round.

Invoices for missed final rounds shall be sent directly to the principal of an offending school.

Online ballots: All judges will be required to have their own individual tabroom.com account to which they should be “linked” (with an email) as a judge on your judge roster. In addition, all judges will need to have a WiFi capable device with them at the tournament (preferably a tablet or laptop). Information on creating a Tabroom account as well as the online ballot process can be found at: <http://docs.tabroom.com/Judging>

COMPETITIVE EVENTS

Debate Events: The applicable NSDA topics will be used in all forms of debate. At least four preliminary rounds shall be held. We HOPE to offer a ‘magic happy fun’ fifth round. The decision between additional preliminary rounds and elimination rounds will be based on tournament registration numbers.

We ARE offering **Big Questions** this year, pending sufficient registration. Both HS and MS.

We **will not** be offering Worlds-style Debate this year

Students competing in debate events may not participate in speech events.

TOPICS

Big Questions Resolved: Creativity is a more powerful force than intelligence.
Lincoln-Douglas: <i>Resolved: The development of Artificial General Intelligence is immoral.</i>
Public Forum: <i>Resolved: In the United States, the benefits of the use of generative artificial intelligence in education outweigh the harms.</i>

Speech Events: We will be offering all MSDL Speech and Debate events, plus special ‘March Merryness’ events.

Congressional/Student Congress legislation will be available on the MSDL website. It should be submitted to Congress Chair Joe Bowden by early afternoon on Friday March 7. joe.bowden at gmail.com

Special Speech Events: Special events will occur during a flight between MSDL event prelims and finals. **All** speech students who are NOT competing in Multiple may enter a single special event. All who do so are eligible for the ‘**Show Them Greatness**’ award. Events described below.

Group Discussion: Topic Area: US Foreign Relations with a focus on Ukraine, the Middle East, Canada and China

DROP DETAILS

Please drop entries up until 7:45 am Saturday, March 15th. Remember, judging obligation is based on your original entry.

PLEASE NOTE: Teams must check-in (report as on site) on the day of the tournament *on Tabroom.com* as soon as students and judges are on the way to Needham and no later than 7:45 am. (Please do not wait until you arrive.) Coaches will have access to drop student entries

until 7:45 a.m. Saturday morning. Any drops after this deadline will incur a \$10 fee in addition to the registration fee.

All student drops should be done by the coach on Tabroom.com. Please text Greg Cunningham at 781-588-2258 **ONLY** if you have a last-minute judge drop. Please indicate the school, the name of the judge, and the division (speech or debate). Please also indicate who the replacement judge will be.

Please make all checks payable to Needham High School (note change from past years) and put Speech and Debate in the memo field.

SWEEPSTAKES

Sweepstakes will be awarded to the top five schools based on their top ten entries in ten separate events, plus their next top three scores.

AWARDS

Students in 'Special Events' shall receive 'Heirloom' awards. Finalists will be able to choose from a variety of old 'heirloom' trophies, along with a trophy plate suitable for 'affixing' to their chosen heirloom trophy.

Schools interested in cleaning house and donating their old trophies (that one topped with a fish from the 1998 South by South West Yankee Swap Invitational) should feel free to reach out to the Needham coaching staff to make suitable arrangements. Many Thanks!

'Show Them Greatness' Award

This shall go to the students who 'show them greatness' in both a MSDL event AND a Needham 'special event'. In those cases of students who are double entered in the regular event pattern, the event with the best performance shall be used to determine who is so honored.

Talia Newfield Award

The Talia Newfield Award, in honor of the late Talia Newfield, whom we miss greatly. Talia was a member of the NHS Class of 2019.. This honor shall be earned by the top novice in Congressional Debate at the tournament.

Superlatives!

We will be offering 'Superlative' voting such as 'most likely to miss their round' and 'most likely to do their homework ...at \$1 a ballot the price is right. Vote early, vote often

BEHAVIOR & CLEANLINESS

Students and adults are expected to abide by standard principles of professionalism and etiquette throughout the day. Students who do not model these codes will be dropped from the tournament. Students should stay in areas specifically designated as tournament spaces, and may not use school equipment without permission, including but not limited to computers, printers, refrigerators, etc. No device should be unplugged. If you have to ask, chances are you shouldn't even look at it, let alone use it.

Once again, the expectation is that no objects be unplugged. Students or adults who unplug Needham High School devices shall be asked to leave the tournament.

No food or drink of any sort, except water, is allowed in the classrooms and other competition spaces.

Coaches- Please inform your judges that no person, including adults, may sit, breathe, or even gaze upon a teacher's desk. We may station a trained team of (hungry) gorgons at each teacher's desk to enforce this rule.

Statement on Implicit Bias

We are all influenced by implicit bias, or the stereotypes that unconsciously affect our decisions. When judging, our implicit biases negatively impact students who are traditionally marginalized and disenfranchised. Before writing comments or making a decision, please take a moment to reflect on any biases that may impact your decision-making process.

Equity Officer

The Needham Speech & Debate Team and the MSDL foster a culture of diversity and inclusion. We expect all members of our community to treat one another with respect. Should the need arise, we have an equity officer available to speak with tournament participants.

Judge Information -

Rooms: We will be checking rooms throughout the day. If a room is found to be in poor condition, the tournament will be delayed until that room is sufficiently neat. Repeat offenders will be dropped from the tournament. **Students after round three, round four, and finals are asked to erase the board of all tournament related markings.**

SCHEDULE

Registration is at 8am. Please arrive no later than shortly after 8am so that we can finish registration by 8:15. Rounds will begin as expeditiously as possible, we hope to have the opening draw in speech no later than 9am, coinciding with the beginning of draw.

Mandatory Text/call-in Confirmation of entry:	By 7:45
Registration:	8:15
Judge Meetings (all judges):	8:30
Speech Round One Draw (report)	9:50
Debate Round One	9:15 (or as close to it as possible)
additional debate rounds to follow expeditiously after the first round	

Speech Round One	9:00 (or as close to it as possible)
additional speech rounds to follow expeditiously after the first round	

Multiple/specials, Finals and Awards to follow as soon as possible.

Awards will be as close to 6:00 pm as possible.

Scrumptious food will be sold throughout the day!

We will expedite the schedule if logistics allow.

We look forward to seeing you in Needham on March 15th!

The Needham Speech and Debate Team and Coaching Staff

MARCH 'MERRYNESS' SPECIAL EVENTS

To be held during the off round with one round of competition. Alums and other attending HS graduates may participate in Impromptu Sales, Impromptu Storytelling, and Tabloid Extemp.

Mixed Duo... Shaken AND Stirred (aka: mixed duo)

Teams will be randomly generated from all event participants. All materials will be provided. You and your new partner will have 15 minutes of prep time for cutting and practice. The presentation must include an introduction that cites the name of the piece and the author. You may only touch and make eye contact during your introduction. The author's words as published in the literature may not be altered for this presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted. This is a scripted reading event.

Time limit: 15 minute- prep, 7 minutes, 30 second grace- presentation

Tabloid Extemp -aka Aliens Have Landed in Needham

Pulled right from the tabloid headlines. You may have already won! 15 minutes of prep time will be allotted to create a "factual", yet light hearted extemp speech. You will have 7 minutes to convince your judge that bat boy lives, and that aliens have indeed landed in Needham. Some topics may come from the Weekly World News or so we say- but if they are shut down by the Conspiracy we will make do. This is a limited prep event, (except for those who can see into the future...)

Time limit: 7 minutes, 30 second grace

Impromptu sales pitch (aka :Sold! to the Highest Bidder)

You will randomly select one item to use as the impromptu topic. 7 minutes of prep time will be allotted to create and present your sales pitch.

Impromptu Storytelling

This event is open to all students and alumni. A mixture of history, pop culture, and dashing insight (provided by the contestant). Students will be assigned a protagonist and a setting. Seven minutes to prepare and deliver a story. Example: Cruella Deville guest stars (as herself) on 'How I Met Your Mother.'

Freeze Improv aka "Don't Think Twice"



https://www.google.com/imgres?imgurl=https%3A%2F%2Fclickamericana.com%2Fwp-content%2Fuploads%2Fthe-year-without-a-santa-claus-snow-miser-1-750x572.jpg&imgrefurl=https%3A%2F%2Fclickamericana.com%2Fmedia%2Ftelevision-shows%2Fsnow-miserheat-miser-song-the-year-without-a-santa-claus-1974&tbnid=7AO5QaE14KsV4M&vet=12ahUKewir5-HJ8dnnAhW1IN8KHr-fByQQMygCegUIARCTAg..i&docid=RV0ss_K_HTaHZM&w=750&h=572&q=mr%20freeze%20mister&ved=2ahUKewir5-HJ8dnnAhW1IN8KHr-fByQQMygCegUIARCTAg

Based on a random physical pose made up by the judge, two players create a scene together without conferring or preparing in advance. During the scene, the players must create (a) who they are, (b) what their relationship is, (c) what they want from each other, and (d) where they are. Players are encouraged to build a scene and a crisis together, accepting, using, and building upon each other's ideas. After a scene has gone for at least 30 seconds, but before it reaches 60 seconds, the next person in line calls "FREEZE" and taps out one of the players. The newcomer begins a new scene based on the frozen positions. Once everyone in the round has performed once, then any player may yell "freeze" after 30 required seconds of performance time per scene. No props, costumes, or furniture are allowed. The time limit for the round is twenty minutes.

Students Revenge (aka: student judging competition)

We regret that we shall not be offering Students Revenge in 2025

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