

February 2025

Dear Coaches and Students:

You are cordially invited to the 2025 KHSSL State Debate Championship, which will be held March 1 at Transylvania University in Lexington. Please read this invitation thoroughly and carefully.

EVENTS AND REGISTRATION

State contests will be held in the following events.

Congressional Debate

Lincoln-Douglas Debate / Novice

Lincoln-Douglas Debate / Varsity

Public Forum Debate / Novice

Public Forum Debate / Varsity

In LD and PF, you may have **up to three (3) entries** at each level (Novice and Varsity). You may enter **up to 10 students** in Congressional Debate. **No doubling.**

Registration is on Tabroom at <http://khssldebatechampionship.tabroom.com/> and is due by **5 PM Eastern on Wednesday, February 19.** This is a soft deadline – entry names and judge names can be changed after this deadline, but any change in the number provided will incur charges (except for adding more judges, which is always welcome). Monday, February 24 will be the Hard Deadline for name changes. After February 24, drops and adds go through the KHSSL email address ONLY (khssl@khssl.org -- no texts or calls for changes.) Automatic and increasingly heavy penalties kick in for drops after the initial deadline, so please try to be accurate early. See [KHSSL Handbook](#) pages 115-116 for a complete list.



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DEFINITION OF NOVICE

A novice debater shall be defined as any student in his/her first year of debate. That means if a student competed at Congress one time in a prior year or in a debate round one time in a prior year, that student is now a Varsity debater.

SCHEDULE AND ROUNDS

Congressional Debate will have two 2-hour preliminary sessions and a 3-hour final session.

Varsity/Novice Public Forum and Lincoln-Douglas shall compete in 4 preliminary rounds plus a Semifinal (best 4) and Final (winners of Semifinals) unless numbers require larger numbers in outrounds. See chart:

Entries	Break to
7-8	Finals (2)
9-16	Semifinals (4)
17-31	Quarterfinals (8)
33-64	Octofinals (16)

If there are fewer than 7 entries in a debate event, a Round Robin schedule will be implemented for that event.

A full schedule of expected rounds is at the end of this invitation.



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ENTRY FEES

Entry fees are \$25 per Congress entry, \$25 per Lincoln-Douglas entry (Novice or Varsity), and \$50 per Public Forum (Novice or Varsity) team. If your school is a Wyatt Debate League member school, Wyatt is going to pay your entry fees! Yay! Also, if your school is NOT a Wyatt League school but IS a Title 1 school, we have a fund (donated by the student organization DebateSphere) that will also pay your entry fees. Kindly email KHSSL (khssl@khssl.org) notifying the office your school is a Title 1 school by the Hard Deadline to compete for free.

Please note that **these funds do NOT pay for judge fees**, just student entry fees. Schools must still provide judges or pay the fees to hire others to do their much-needed judging.

TOPICS

As the tournament is being held in March, KHSSL State Debate will use the March Debate Topics from NSDA for both VARSITY and NOVICE divisions.

Lincoln-Douglas Debate – 2025 March/April Topic

Resolved: The development of Artificial General Intelligence is immoral.

Public Forum Debate – 2025 March Topic

Resolved: In the United States, the benefits of the use of generative artificial intelligence in education outweigh the harms.

(Steve note – these are the coolest topics we’ve had for State in years. YES!)



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JUDGES

Judge Obligations and Hire Fees

- The judge quota is set at one judge required per five entries or fraction thereof for Congressional Debate.
- The judge quota is set at one judge required per two entries or fraction thereof for Varsity and Novice LD and for Varsity and Novice Public Forum.
- Teams may hire up to but not more than half your quota for \$150 each if you are bringing other judges, but you **must provide at least half of your judges required** regardless.
- It is considered standard operating procedure for the team coach to be one of the judges you bring as this is state tournament, and we want our best people in the judging pool to determine the state winners!
- **Please note** that judges must be available the full day to count for the day, so no “Please no finals” requests. And yes, it’s \$150 for the one day. It’s a really long day. *(The Board of Directors decided we’d have the State Debate Tournament all in one day this year. There will be an opportunity for feedback about this new schedule after the meet.)*
- It is not KHSSL’s norm to publish judge paradigms nor to honor requests for judge blocks without extraordinary circumstances. Contact the Executive Director with concerns.

Judge Training

REQUIRED ANTI-BIAS TRAINING

The Handbook states that all judges must complete our anti-bias training. The link for this training is [here](#) and on the homepage of the KHSSL website, www.khssl.org. Please make sure all judges have completed it no later than the registration deadline. If your judges already completed it for Regionals or in a prior school year, they’re good to go (no need to complete it again). You can check who has done so [here](#); be sure to read the note at the top about searching.



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QUALIFIED DEBATE JUDGES

From the Handbook regarding Debate Judges:

A qualified Debate judge is a judge who meets one of the following criteria:

- Debated in High School and/or College
- Currently coaching or formerly coached
- Judged at a minimum of one tournament during this season or during previous, recent seasons **and** was trained either through the League's Judge Training Program and/or by the coach of the School. State Debate is NOT for first-time judges.

Our current Judge Training Program is for judges to take themselves through these offerings by the NSDA:

[NSDA Intro to Judging Debate course \(10 minutes\)](#)

[Judging Debate overview page](#)

[Judging Congress overview page](#)

- KHSSL also highly recommends the following training program for all speech and debate judges (a free training from the National Federation of High Schools that doesn't actually take the three hours it says it does): <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/adjudicating-speech-and-debate>
- Judges can also greatly benefit from using this set of guidelines co-written by Wyatt Debate League and KHSSL:
https://www.khssl.org/_files/ugd/d25b56_c7a73cbc53694a1db09644e3b3577323.pdf
- Additionally, judges who would like to serve as Parliamentarians are STRONGLY urged to view this one-hour webinar hosted by Mr. Congress, Adam Jacobi:
<https://tinyurl.com/congressparli>



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TABROOM

New judges should browse [here](#) and [here](#) to establish a Tabroom account. Students without Tabroom accounts should browse [here](#) and follow instructions. All debaters and judges will have to have accounts AND be linked to their school's account to participate in the state tournament. Get this finished early, not near the start of the tournament.

Judges will be judging on Tabroom and will not have the option of paper ballots. They should bring their own tablets or laptops; they may not judge on smartphones.

CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE

Preliminary chamber sizes will be no larger than 24 per chamber per [the Handbook](#). They will be divided evenly at the Hard Deadline and announced after Registration on Saturday; if there are drops that make chamber sizes uneven, so be it. The Finals chamber will consist of either 15 or 16 students – 15 (top five advance) if there are 3 prelim chambers, 16 if there are 2 (top eight advance).

Only **NEW legislation** may be submitted for KHSSL Congress; it may not have been debated at a previous KHSSL-school tournament. Schools must **upload legislation through Tabroom** as part of their entry; limit of **three items per school**.

LEGISLATION DEADLINE IS THE SAME AS THE SOFT ENTRY DEADLINE: 5 PM EASTERN, WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19.

Legislation will be shared with schools by Sunday, February 23, hopefully earlier; dockets will be announced at the beginning of prelims (with the remaining published legislation naturally being reserved for finals, no more than one per school).

Students **MUST use KHSSL's established templates** to write legislation. That includes double-spacing, single page, and line numbers. See this website to download these templates:

www.khssl.org/congressional-debate



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TOURNAMENT RULES

[The KHSSL Handbook](#) contains extensive information about how the State Tournament is put together and how tabulation determines advancement. Coaches are responsible for understanding these procedures and for explaining them to your team and their parents, your judges, etc.

AWARDS

Awards will be presented at the end of the day on Saturday.

In addition to the winners and high placement honors given in each event, speaker awards will also be given based on preliminary rounds in Debate events. Team trophies and the Sustained Excellence trophy will also be presented at this ceremony.

Longtime Henry Clay High School coach Ryan Ray will be inducted into the KHSSL Hall of Fame at the 2025 Awards Ceremony.

EMERGENCY INFORMATION

*** TOURNAMENT TELEPHONE NUMBER: KHSSL 859-927-1100**

*** LOCATION OF AEDs on Campus: [click here.](#)**

TOURNAMENT HOSTS

Transylvania University's speech and debate team will be hosting us on campus. Coach Gary Deaton will be very happy to speak with anyone interested in pursuing collegiate speech and debate, at Transylvania University or not, while you are here.

P O BOX 23451 * LEXINGTON KY 40523 * khssl@khssl.org * (859) 927-1100 * www.khssl.org



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LODGING

KHSSL is no longer involved in lodging arrangements for state tournaments. As a former coach, my personal suggestion is to check with your school's athletic director for any special rates your school may have negotiated with hotels in town as that person will know; your bookkeeper is also a good source of such info. Remember too that many hotels will give schools what's called the "state rate." AAA and other such organizations also can give you a decent discount. If you are a new coach/school this year and don't have a set hotel you use in Lexington, this is a grand question for your Mentor for suggestions. You can also peruse all the Lexington hotels here: <https://www.visitlex.com/hotels>

SCHOLARSHIPS

Once again, KHSSL will be honoring two 12th grade students with \$1000 scholarships sponsored by [the Institute for Speech and Debate](#) and the Shelby Pepper and Elizabeth McCubbin Bale Scholarship Fund. Coaches may turn in application packets on behalf of their students as they register for either the State Debate OR the Senior State Speech Tournament. Honors will be announced at Awards of the Senior Speech Tournament. Packets should NOT be mailed in or emailed in – they may ONLY be handed in person as complete packets at Registration of one of these two meets. Full information/application here: <https://www.khssl.org/scholarships>

PARKING AND MAPS

Parking information and maps will be published on [the Tabroom site](#) for this tournament very soon.

FOOD

Judges will eat for free in Transy's cafeteria (lunch). Students and non-judge adults may purchase food in the cafeteria. Everyone should eat breakfast OFF CAMPUS before arriving for Registration and the opening ceremony as no food will be available on campus. Coffee and snacks will be available all day for judges.

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MERCHANDISE INFORMATION

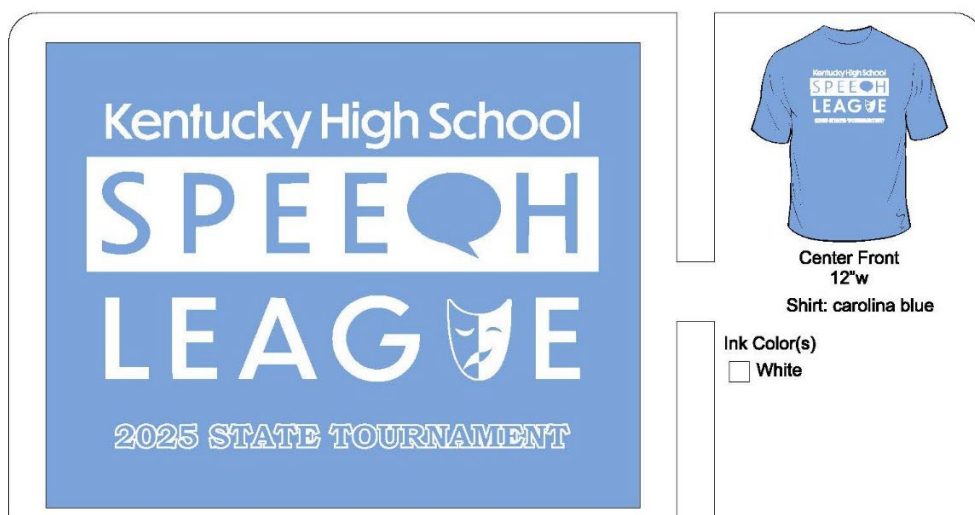
Merchandise will be for sale from the beginning of registration through the start of Round 1 / Session 1 ONLY at the State Debate Tournament. See note below about T-shirt Pre-orders. See items that will be for sale [HERE](#).

Customer:

Design/Event: Kentucky High school speech tournament 2025

WO# ar

Screen Print



NOTE: 2025 Blue State Tournament T-shirts are ONLY available as pre-orders through the team Head Coach as part of the registration process; they will NOT be available at the Merch Table. Coaches MUST order for their teams by using the Concessions tab that is part of the Tabroom registration process for the tournament.

BLYTON BOOK AWARDS

8th and 12th grade students are eligible to be nominated for the Blyton Book Awards, which will be presented at the Awards Ceremonies of the Junior and Senior Speech tournaments, respectively. Nominations must be submitted on paper by the nominating coach of a particular student no later than the start of the appropriate State Speech tournament; Debate-only students are eligible. All guidelines and the application are available to coaches here: <https://www.khssl.org/blyton-information>

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COACH OF THE YEAR

If you would like to nominate yourself or one of your fellow coaches to be the Kentucky Debate Coach of the Year, please email khssl@khssl.org with the name and school of your nominee and up to three sentences of support for your candidate. Voting will take place as coaches register at State.

From the Executive Director:

I am excited to return to Transy – they are wonderful hosts and did a great job for us in 2023. Also, I'm teaching a class there this term myself, so it's just extra fun.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me with any questions or concerns you have about the event, and good luck to you and yours at the State Tournament! May the words be with you!

STEVE

Steve Meadows, Executive Director

Kentucky High School Speech League khssl@khssl.org

859/927-1100 talk or text



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SCHEDULE 2025

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19

- Registration Deadline for STATE DEBATE, 5 PM Eastern.
- Congressional Debate Legislation Upload Deadline for Congressional Debate 5 PM Eastern (in Tabroom). Legislation released to schools later in the week.

Over the next five days, coaches can drop/add/sub. Drops/Add's pay registration fee plus \$10. Subs are free (name changes).

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 24 – HARD DEADLINE 5 PM EASTERN

SATURDAY, MARCH 1 STATE TOURNAMENT AT TRANSYLVANIA UNIVERSITY

Registration 7:30 AM to 8:15 AM / Campus Center Hearth Room

7:30 – 9 AM	Merchandise on sale by Hearth Room of Campus Center	
8:30 AM	OPENING CEREMONY, Campus Center	
9 AM	Round 1	VPF, NPF, VLD, NLD
9-11 AM	Session 1	Congress
10:15 AM	Round 2	VPF, NPF, VLD, NLD
12-2 PM	Session 2	Congress
12:45 PM	Round 3	VPF, NPF, VLD, NLD
2:15 PM	Round 4	VPF, NPF, VLD, NLD
3 – 6 PM	Finals Session	Congress
4:00 PM	SEMIFINALS	VPF, NPF, VLD, NLD
5:30 PM	FINALS	VPF, NPF, VLD, NLD
7 PM	AWARDS (earlier if possible) / CAMPUS CENTER	