



Dear Coach:

The Natick High School Speech and Debate Team cordially invites you and your team to the 2025 Holly Festival, to be held at Natick High School on Saturday, December 20, 2025. The Holly is a state-qualifying tournament for the Massachusetts Speech and Debate League.

Twenty-three events will be offered as well as our Holly Pentathlon, which is open to one student from each participating school. Double entry is permitted with certain restrictions. Also, subject to restrictions, students may enter Multiple as a third event. Please see specific information on the Holly Pentathlon and entry restrictions below.

We expect to be using our building to its maximum capacity. Please note that all entries will initially be placed on a waitlist, and we will accommodate as many entries as our space allows. We encourage you to register your teams as early as possible. Entries will be accepted from the waitlist in batches until we reach capacity in our building. Please do not enter TBAs as these confuse our planning and will be removed.

A variety of foods, including gluten-free and vegetarian options, will be sold throughout the day in our cafeteria. A menu and price list will be provided in the LiveDoc a few days before the tournament.

IMPORTANT DATES:

- **MONDAY, DECEMBER 8th at 5:00 PM - Holly Pentathlon registration deadline**
 - Holly Pentathlon registration should not be completed online. Please email the student's name and events to Joyce Albert at jeba78@verizon.net by 5:00 PM on Monday, December 8, 2025. Each school may also submit one entry for the Pentathlon waitlist by this deadline. We will confirm if we are accepting waitlist entries the evening of December 8th.
- **TUESDAY, DECEMBER 16th at 5:00 PM - Registration deadline at www.tabroom.com**
 - Registration is online at www.tabroom.com and will be available through 5:00 PM on Tuesday, December 16, 2025. Please e-mail any drops to jeba78@verizon.net on Wednesday, Thursday, or Friday. You may also text or call in any drops to 508-397-5143.

REGISTRATION FEES:

- \$10 per entry (discounted to \$25 total for each Holly Pentathlon competitor)
- \$20 for Duo and Public Forum Debate teams.

All schools should have submitted a signed MSDL Participation Agreement prior to attending the tournament.

SATURDAY MORNING CHECK-IN:

Every team must send one text to 508-397-5143 by 8:00 AM on the day of the tournament to confirm their registration. This check-in assists us in getting the tournament started on time. Please remember to identify your school. Please include the coach's contact phone number (cell or home) with your initial online registration, should tournament staff need to contact you outside school hours or while you are en route to the tournament.

DIVERSITY & INCLUSION:

The Natick Speech and Debate Team fosters a culture of diversity and inclusion. We expect all members of our community to treat one another with respect. Should any participant have any issues they wish to discuss, TAB room staff would be happy to connect them with our equity officer. Additionally, standard rules of professionalism and etiquette will be expected at all times.

EVENTS OFFERED:

The following events will be offered at the Holly:

- Broadcast Editorial
- Children's Literature
- Congressional Debate
- Declamation
- Drama Audition
- Dramatic Performance
- Duo Interpretation
- Extemporaneous Literature
- Group Discussion
- Impromptu Speaking
- Informative Speaking
- Multiple Reading
- Novice Extemporaneous Speaking
- Novice Public Forum Debate
- Original Literature
- Original Oratory
- Play Reading
- Poetry Reading
- Program Oral Interpretation
- Prose Reading
- Radio Broadcasting
- Varsity Extemporaneous Speaking
- Varsity Public Forum Debate

A final round will be held in Novice Oral Interpretation for all non-advancing novices in Children's Literature, Play Reading, Poetry Reading, and Prose Reading.

ENTRY RESTRICTIONS:

The following entry restrictions will be in place:

- Students may enter only one prep room draw event – Extemporaneous Speaking (VX), Novice Extemporaneous Speaking (NX), Radio Broadcasting (RB).
- Students entering Group Discussion (GD), Congressional Debate (CONG), Varsity Public Forum Debate (VPF), or Novice Public Forum Debate (NPF) may not double enter or participate in Multiple (MULT).
- Students in a prep room draw event (VX, NX, RB) may double enter or enter Multiple (MULT), but not both.
- Each school may enter up to two students in Drama Audition (DA).
- Each school may enter up to two Multiples. We will have a waitlist for additional Multiples. Holly Pentathlon competitors may not participate in Multiple.
- Each school is guaranteed only one Holly Pentathlon entry. One additional student may be indicated as a waitlisted entry, but there is a significant chance that we will not be able to accommodate waitlist entries due to space considerations. When Holly Pentathlon registration closes on December 8th, we will determine whether we are able to accommodate any waitlisted students.

JUDGING REQUIREMENTS:

- In speech events and Congressional Debate, one judge for every five entries (or fraction thereof), based on the total number of entries when registration closes on December 16th. Holly Pentathlon entries will not be counted for judge requirement purposes.
- In debate events, one judge for every two entries (or fraction thereof) in each division, based on the total number of entries when registration closes on December 16th.
- Extra judges are welcome!
- As always, we will be using electronic balloting at the Holly. All judges will need an electronic device, preferably a laptop, and will need to register for a free account at Tabroom.com.
- Judges are expected to be present at the judges' briefing at 8:15 AM on the morning of the tournament and to stay for the duration of the event.

SWEEPSTAKES AWARDS:

Team awards will be presented to the top finishing schools based upon the best single entry in each of the twenty-three events plus the next two highest scoring entries. Therefore, a total of twenty-five scores will contribute to the sweepstakes total. (Because of double entry and the Holly Pentathlon, however, it takes as few as eleven students to receive these twenty-five scores.)

The Holly Pentathlon winners will earn extra sweepstakes points for their teams as follows:

- 1st place – 10 points
- 2nd place – 7 points
- 3rd place – 3 points
- 4th place – 2 points
- 5th place – 1 point

CATEGORY SPECIFIC INFORMATION & DESCRIPTIONS:

Drama Audition (maximum of two entries per school): This category is intended to simulate the audition process and will consist of a memorized humorous monologue (one character), a memorized dramatic monologue (one character), and up to two minutes of music – either sung or danced. These selections combined cannot exceed six minutes. You must provide your own accompaniment if you wish to have it. Vocalists are reminded that only instrumental accompaniment is permitted. This restriction does not apply to dancers. A chair or stool may be used, but otherwise props and costumes are not allowed. Competitors will compete in one initial audition during preliminary rounds. Callbacks will take place during final rounds.

Declamation: Speeches originally written for forensic competition are not acceptable in this event.

Group Discussion: The topic for the 2025 Holly is Kindness. Questions will be drawn from the following articles:

- <https://chiefexecutive.net/the-strategic-value-of-kindness/>
- <https://www.cyberwise.org/post/the-science-of-kindness-how-positive-online-interactions-shape-mental-health#:~:text=A%20study%20found%20that%2079,to%20report%20feeling%20less%20isolated.>
- https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/world_happiness_report_highlights_everyday_kindness#:~:text=Although%20there%20was%20a%20decline,Helliwell%20and%20his%20team%20write:

Broadcast Editorial (3-minute maximum with a 5-second grace period): In advance of the tournament, the contestant should select a topic derived from recent news events. The student should construct a 3-minute editorial piece that reflects their thoughts on this topic. The editorial will be read, from a sitting or standing position, as if on a television broadcast.

Original Literature (six-minute maximum with a 30-second grace period): The contestant is given six minutes to read his/her original literature. The literature may be in any genre or combination of genres: prose, children's literature, free verse/poetry, drama.

Extemporaneous Literature: In each round, the contestant will receive a brief selection of literature prepared by the tournament staff with each round representing a different genre: prose, children's literature, free verse/poetry, and drama. The material is read from a manuscript with only a momentary preparation time.

Multiple Reading (twelve-minute maximum with a maximum of two entries per school): Students entering in Multiple may not enter Group Discussion, Congressional Debate, Varsity or Novice Public Forum Debate or the Holly Pentathlon. Students in a prep room draw event (VX, NX, RB) may double enter in another individual event or enter Multiple (MULT), but not both.

Congressional Debate: The 2025 Holly Festival Congressional Debate will convene during the full day. Students entering Congressional Debate may not double enter or participate in Multiple Reading. Congressional Debate will cover bills which have not been debated at previous MSDL tournaments and which have been designated for the Holly Festival by the MSDL Congressional Debate Chair. **Bills should be submitted to joe.bowden@gmail.com by Friday, December 11, 2025 at 5:00.** Bills will be available at www.tabroom.com prior to the tournament.

THE HOLLY PENTATHLON: Each Pentathlon competitor must participate in one event in each of the following four areas:

- Platform: VX, NX, RB, OO, DEC, IMP, INFO
- Memorized/Interpretation: DP, DUO, DEC, OO, INFO
- Reading: PR, PO, PL, KL, POI
- Holly Special Events: BE, DA, OL, XLIT

Please note that students participating in the Holly Pentathlon may not compete in Multiple, Group Discussion, Congressional Debate, or Public Forum Debate.

Several of the events are included in more than one area; students should enter four different events and must use different material in each event.

The fifth event is a creative platform event in which each student will be addressing a group of people, such as a press conference or board. Tournament staff will provide specific instructions and background materials; students may not bring additional materials for use in the prep room except that a note card or sheet of paper may be used during the preparation and presentation. Each student will have 15 minutes to prep for a 2-minute presentation followed by a brief question-and-answer session.

All other categories will follow standard MSDL rules and regulations.

TENTATIVE TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE:

Mandatory Text Confirmation of Entry	By 8:00 AM
Registration	8:15 AM
Judges' Briefings (all judges)	8:15 AM
Opening Meeting	8:45 AM
Preliminary Rounds	9:00 AM - 5:00 PM
Final Rounds	5:00 PM - 7:00 PM
Awards	7:30 PM
Departure	8:30 PM

We look forward to your participation in the 2025 Holly Festival!

The Natick Speech & Debate Team