

Kentucky High School
S P E E C H
L E A G U E

Invitation to the 2026 KHSSL Derby Regional Tournament

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The KHSSL Derby Regional Tournament is fast approaching, so please read through this information carefully and reach out if you have any questions. Also, please keep watch on the KHSSL Weekly WWW for more tips, explanations, and reminders.

REGIONAL TOURNAMENT LOCATION:

- Trinity High School
4011 Shelbyville Road
Louisville, KY, 40207

REGIONAL TOURNAMENT DATE AND TIMES:

- Saturday, February 7, 2026 (7:00 AM - 1:00 PM)
- Snow-out date: TBD

REGISTRATION:

- Register your students and judges on our Regional tournament website on Tabroom.
- The registration deadline is 5 PM Monday, February 2, 2026.
- You may drop or add students and judges after this deadline, but nuisance fees will be added (see below). Substitutions are free until 12 PM on Friday, February 6, 2026, so if you want to put in one name now and change names later, that's easy enough to do.

NUMBER OF ENTRIES ALLOWED:

- Schools may enter no more than three students in each event.
- Individual students may enter no more than three events.

FEES:

- **Competitor entry fees:**
 - \$10 per individual event
 - \$20 per duo event
- **Competitor drop or add fees:**
 - Between Monday 2/2/26 at 5:01 PM and Friday 2/6/26 at 12:00 PM:
 - entry fee payable to KHSSL + a \$10 nuisance fee payable to Beechwood High School.
 - Drops after Friday 2/6/26 at 12:00 PM:
 - entry fee payable to KHSSL + \$25 nuisance fee payable to Beechwood High School.
 - No competitor adds allowed after Friday 2/6/25 at 12:00 PM. Double-check your entry!
- **Competitor name substitutions:**
 - between Monday 2/2/26 5:01 PM and Friday 2/6/26 12:00 PM:
 - Free
 - after Friday 2/6/26 at 12:01 PM:
 - \$10 nuisance fee payable to Beechwood High School.
- **Judge entry fees:**
 - Each school must provide at least 1 judge.
 - Each school must provide 1 judge per every 6 entries or fraction thereof; schools may hire only ONE judge for \$75 to cover required entries at the Regional Tournaments. Schools must provide other required judges.
- **Judge drop fees:**
 - between Monday 2/2/26 5:01 PM and Friday 2/6/26 12:00 PM:
 - \$75 judge fee payable to KHSSL plus \$25 nuisance fee payable to Beechwood High School.
 - after Friday 2/6/26 at 12:01 PM:
 - \$75 judge fee payable to KHSSL plus \$50 nuisance fee payable to Beechwood High School.
- **Judge name substitutions:**
 - Free, but all judges (even last-minute substitutions) must meet the current year's judge certification requirements.

IMPORTANT NOTE REGARDING PAYMENT:

- **Please have two checks available at registration:**
 - A check made out to KHSSL for all entry fees (and the \$75 judge fee if applicable)
 - A check made out to Trinity High School for any nuisance fees
 - Cash may also be used for these transactions.
 - Please remember that **no school can compete until all fees are paid.** This includes any other fees owed to KHSSL as well – for membership dues, SPEAK, the Blyton and Kentucky Keynote tournaments, etc. to KHSSL as well – for membership dues, SPEAK, the Blyton and Kentucky Keynote tournaments, etc.
 - Schools may also pay online on the day of the tournament if needed at www.khssl.org/payment
- **Please remember that no school can compete until all fees are paid.** This includes any other fees owed to KHSSL as well.

QUALIFYING FOR STATE, EXEMPTIONS, AND PENALTIES FOR TEAM DROPS OR ABSENCES:

- **Any Senior division school** that attends the regional tournament but does not attend the State Championship will, unless excused for good and sufficient reasons by the Executive Director, be deemed to owe State entry fees as if its entries at the Regional Tournament were entered at the State tournament; these deemed entry fees must be paid before the school may join KHSSL for any subsequent competition year. This rule no longer applies to Junior Division schools, though they are strongly encouraged to attend the State tournament as well as Regionals.
- **If a team drops from the Regional or State Championships**, they must pay all the drop fees or a nuisance fee of \$150 (whichever is lower) by the time of registration in KHSSL the following year unless excused for calamity by the Executive Director.
- **Qualifying for State Tournament and Exemptions** from the Regional Tournament:
Please read carefully through Rules 2 (Senior Division qualification), 3 (Junior Division qualification), and 4 (Exemptions from the Regional Tournament – either Division) on pages 84, 85, and 86 of [the Handbook \(linked here\)](#).
- **The Regional Exemption Request form is linked here.**

AWARDS:

- A Regional Champion and a Regional Runner-up will be named in all events.
- In the event of a tie for either Regional Champion or Regional Runner-up, ties will be broken in the following ways:

- Lowest composite rank
- Highest reciprocal composite
- Highest total rating points
- If there is still a tie after these three methods have been exhausted, then we will hold a run-off round in that particular event with one judge. That one judge will determine the Regional Champion and/or Runner-up, as the case may be.
- The top three schools in both the Junior and Senior divisions will be awarded trophies.

SCHEDULE FOR THE TOURNAMENT:

7:00 am - 7:30 am	Registration in the cafeteria
7:45 am	Opening meeting for students and judges in the cafeteria
8:00 am	Round 1 Extemp Prep
8:30 am	Round 1
9:30 am	Round 2 Extemp Prep
10:00 am	Round 2
11:30 am	Run-off round if necessary (<i>remember that run-off rounds are only used to break ties for the Regional Champion or Regional Runner-up</i>)
12:30 pm	Awards in the cafeteria

ONLINE BALLOTS:

- We are using online ballots at this tournament, meaning your judges should each bring a LAPTOP OR TABLET (a phone will not work) to type comments and score the rounds. If this is impossible for a particular judge, we can provide paper ballots, but it's our hope that judges will be able to manage online ballots. Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns here.

TOURNAMENT BEHAVIOR AND EXPECTATIONS:

- If your squad is new to competition or has new members, you are strongly encouraged to review [this list of tips](#) and expectations for behavior at tournaments with your students.

ORIGINAL SPEECHES:

- Coaches must have Oratory and Informative speeches electronically available for retrieval (or paper copies available) at Regionals and State tournaments should questions of originality arise.

COACH OF THE YEAR:

- Each region is tasked with submitting a name for the Coach of the Year Award for both the Junior and Senior divisions. [Please fill out this online form](#) by Wednesday 2/4/26.
- I will have Coach of the Year ballots available at registration.

JUDGE TRAINING AND RESPONSIBILITIES:

- Judges at the Regional Tournament must be available for all rounds.
- At the 2021 KHSSL Board of Directors meeting, the Board passed a requirement for all judges to go through a training regarding implicit biases. Your judges must complete this online training before your Regional tournament. Please don't wait until the last minute; if your judges are not trained before the tournament begins, they will be dropped, and you will have to pay the drop fee before your kids can compete, so please don't let this slide. Completing this training in prior years will suffice; it is unchanged. The Judge Training against Implicit Bias is available at this link and is also a link on the KHSSL homepage. <https://forms.gle/6MYsr2nTCSqRPzwe6>
- At the 2025 KHSSL Board of Directors meeting, the Board passed a requirement that all judges, even very experienced ones like me, your Regional Manager, must complete the online NFHS Judge Training Course: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/adjudicating-speech-and-debate> . Please do so.
- Additionally, these resources from KHSSL are also very useful to judges:
 - KHSSL Judging Tips page
(videos and ballots and sample performances):
<https://www.khssl.org/judging>
 - KHSSL Judging Video
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i8QSTj_OMjc
 - KHSSL Judging Tips handout
<https://www.khssl.org/.../489c6f...>
- Please make your judges aware that they may be assigned to judge ANY event - including limited prep events. Requests for exemptions from particular events will be ignored. They also can be assigned to judge Junior Division, Senior Division, or both.
- Coaches MUST inform the Regional Manager ahead of time of any judges with your squad who cannot judge students from other schools (students they are related to on other Regional teams, etc.).
- It is the coach's responsibility to ensure that all judges are properly trained in KHSSL rules prior to the Regional Tournament.
- While we welcome high school students as judges at Invitational Junior Speech tournaments, they are **not allowed** to judge at the Regional OR State Speech tournaments (or at State Debate).

STUDENT ADVISORY BOARD:

- Each Region will elect members of the KHSSL Student Advisory Board. Please click [here](#) to read the full description of the Board and its purpose and duties and expectations.

- Students should submit their letters and/or videos to me no later than the Regional entry deadline. We will hold elections as needed in the manner described in the linked document.
- Students run for the Board in the Division they are currently in, meaning high school seniors can run for Senior Division as can 8th graders for the Junior Division; most of the group's work will be completed between State Tournaments and the June Board meeting with some work happening at State meets.

RECOGNIZING OUR SENIORS:

- We'd love to recognize our graduating 8th graders and seniors again this year at the award ceremony. Please complete one slide on [this document](#) for each of your 8th graders and seniors! This will be displayed in the cafeteria throughout the day and during the award ceremony.

I know this is a lot of information, so please reach out if I can help you clarify any of these details. Looking forward to seeing everyone soon!

Ms. Amy Zuccaro

KHSSL Derby Regional Manager

Trinity High School