

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

Invitation to the 2026 KHSSL Regional Speech Tournament

Contact person: J. Dustin Combs
Email: dustin.combs@knott.kyschools.us
Cell: 606-634-3878

The KHSSL Regional Speech 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 and explanations and reminders.

APPALACHIAN & MOUNTAIN REGIONAL TOURNAMENT LOCATION:

Knott County Central High School

APPALACHIAN & MOUNTAIN REGIONAL TOURNAMENT DATE AND TIMES:

Saturday, February 7, 2026

JUNIOR Division Tournament - 8:00 am to 1:30 pm

Saturday, February 7, 2026

SENIOR Division Tournament - 1:00 pm to 6:00 pm

REGISTRATION:

- Register your students and judges on our Regional tournament website on Tabroom.
- The registration deadline is 5 PM Monday, February 2nd.
- You may drop or add students and judges after this deadline, but nuisance fees attach (see below). Substitutions are free until 12 PM on Friday, February 6th, 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** are \$10 per individual event and \$20 per duo event.
- **Competitor Drops or Adds** Monday, February 2nd at 5:01 PM and Friday, February 6th, at 12:00 PM:
 - entry fee payable to KHSSL + a \$10 nuisance fee payable to **Knott County Central High School**.
- **No Competitor Adds after 12 PM February 6th. Please double-check your entry!**
- **Competitor Drops** after Friday, February 6, at 12:00 pm:
 - entry fee payable to KHSSL + \$25 nuisance fee payable to **Knott County Central High School**.
- **Competitor Name Substitutions** between Monday 5 PM deadline and Friday 12 PM deadline:
 - Free
- **Competitor Name Substitutions** after Friday, February 6, at 5:00 pm:
 - \$10 nuisance fee payable to **Knott County Central High School**.
- **Judge fees:**
 - Each school must provide the following 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 Name Changes** are always free, but all judges (even last-minute substitutions) must meet the current year's judge certification requirements (like the Implicit Bias training, etc.).
- **Judge Drop Charges:**
 - Between 5 PM Monday deadline and 12 PM Friday deadline: \$75 judge fee payable to KHSSL plus \$25 nuisance fee payable **Knott County Central High School**.
 - After 12 PM Friday deadline: \$75 judge fee payable to KHSSL plus \$50 nuisance fee payable to **Knott County Central High School**.

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 **Knott County Central High School** for any nuisance fees.
- Please remember that **no school can compete until all fees are paid**. This includes any other fees owed to KHSSL as well.
- Schools may also use cash for these transactions. Regional Managers should write / sign two clear receipts for any cash received – one for the school and one (on the tournament bill) for KHSSL.
- Schools may also pay online on the day of the tournament if needed at www.khssl.org/payment.

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 88-90 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 BOTH THE JUNIOR AND SENIOR HIGH TOURNAMENTS:

JUNIOR HIGH TOURNAMENT

8:00-8:30 am	Registration in the Lobby
8:30 am	Round I Extemp Prep in Library
8:30 am	Judges/Coaches Meeting
9:00 am	Round I
10:15 am	Round II Extemp Prep in the Library
10:30 am	Round II
11:45 am	Extemp Prep for final round/tie breaker (only if necessary)
12:15 pm	Regional Run-Offs if necessary (Only used to break unbreakable ties)
12:45 pm	Awards

SENIOR HIGH TOURNAMENT

1:00-1:30 pm	Registration in the Lobby
1:30 pm	Round I Extemp Prep in Library
1:30 pm	Judges/Coaches Meeting
2:00 pm	Round I
3:15 pm	Round II Extemp Prep in the Library
3:30 pm	Round II
4:15 pm	Extemp Prep for final round/tie breaker (only if necessary)
4:30 pm	Regional Run-Offs if necessary (Only used to break unbreakable ties)
5:30 pm	Awards

***NOTE: This tournament often runs ahead of schedule. Hopefully we will end the day early.**

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, but these documents no longer need to be turned in at Registration.

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, February 4.
- 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 8th & 12th GRADE STUDENTS

- We would like to honor our 8th grade and 12th grade students. Please email me a list of your 8th & 12th grade students on or before WEDNESDAY, January 28th so that we may recognize each of them.

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!

Warmly,

J. Dustin Combs