



# Catholic Forensic League of Erie

Local Affiliate of the National Catholic Forensic League

January 25, 2026

Dear Colleague:

The end of the regular season is quickly approaching, and we are a little over a month away from the CFL of Erie National Qualifying tournament, scheduled for Saturday, March 7 at Gannon University's Palumbo Center on the southwest corner of Peach and 8<sup>th</sup> Streets in downtown Erie.

## ELIGIBILITY:

- **Each** student registered for the qualifying tournament **must** have competed in at least **two** tournaments in any event throughout the current school year.
- **Each** school **must** have participated in at least **two** regular season tournaments during the current school year.

## QUALIFIERS AND AWARDS:

- The top **THREE** finishers in each category will qualify to represent the Erie Diocese at the Grand National Tournament to be held in Washington, DC over Memorial Day weekend. Fourth place finishers are recognized as our alternate should one be unable to attend.
- The top four finishers in every category earn scholarships from Gannon: \$2,000 for first place, \$1,500 for second place, \$1,000 for third place, and \$750 for fourth place.
- Season Champions will also be recognized with a plaque at the awards ceremony.

## JUDGING GUIDELINES:

- Schools **MUST** meet judge quotas. If unable, they can only bring the number of students who can be covered by the number of judges they have.
- **An *a.m.* only judge must have a *p.m.* only judge to count as one judge towards the quota.**
- It is vitally important for the integrity of the tournament that only judges who have been **trained** in and judged CFL rules be utilized. **Former competitors can be used as judges, but they must be trained in all Speech events or their perspective debate events.**
- We cannot accept any judge who has not had CFL of Erie training and judged in at least one regular season tournament. Select your judges carefully.
- Make sure all judges are aware of the rule changes from the last few years. The newest ballots can be found on <http://ncfl.org/NCFLnew/pages/ncfl-events.html>. Note: the ballots for this year's changes will be finalized and available by mid February.
- Please make sure your judges have either a laptop, tablet, or phone and are established as a judge on Tabroom.com with an account linked to your team for online balloting.
- **Remind your judges of the commitment they are making when they agree to help as judge drops and changes create rescheduling delays the morning of the tournament. If they cancel and you cannot find a replacement, you may face a fine or be forced to drop students if you are below your quota.**

## **DEADLINES:**

- Registration is due on Tabroom by **4 p.m. on TUESDAY, March 3rd**. Additionally, the League Director must receive your payment for registration and lunches. All fees freeze at that time even if you drop students after the deadline.
- Student Congress Bills and Resolutions should be submitted to Susan Peebles via email by **Monday, February 23 at 4 p.m.** to give students ample time to prepare. Please make sure the legislation is in the proper format. Congress templates can be found on the NCFL website. All schools competing in Congress must submit legislation, preferably two pieces per school so we can fill the day. Any legislation leftover from regular season tournaments will be debated first, unless withdrawn by author.
- If a student drops after the deadline, you can **replace** the student by Thursday, March 5 at 8 a.m. After that, no changes in student registration are permitted except for drops. Remember, your quota requirements freeze at the March 3<sup>rd</sup> registration deadline. A drop between March 3 and March 5 doesn't change your judge quota requirement as we are already scheduling and planning to use that judge.
- If a judge drops after the registration deadline, you **MUST** find a replacement judge or drop students to meet the number of entries you can cover
- If you have extra judges above the quota, please register them! We are always in need of extra judges, especially from smaller schools to help keep rounds neutral.

## **TOURNAMENT FACILITATION:**

- The Tab Room will be staffed by the Diocesan Director, current Board Members, and/or anyone else specifically asked by the Director.
- The categories of competition include Policy Debate, Lincoln-Douglas Debate, Public Forum Debate, Extemporaneous, Original Oratory, Oral Interpretation, Dramatic Performance, Duo Interpretation, Oratorical Declamation, and Student Congress.
- Three judges will be used in every room in each round.
- Oral Interpretation will have four rounds to enable students to compete twice with each piece. A coin toss will occur Saturday morning at the opening assembly to determine Prose or Poetry first and then it will alternate from there.
- As with previous years, coaches may submit questions for possible use in Extemporaneous. All questions should reach me **by 4 p.m. on Monday, February 23**. Please send them by e-mail as a Word or PDF document attachment to [Susan.Peebles@NCFL.org](mailto:Susan.Peebles@NCFL.org).

## **ENTRIES, JUDGE QUOTAS, AND ENTRY FEES:**

- Each school may register **up to five** contestants in each category for a total of no more than **28 total school entries**. Remember, Duo Interpretation, Policy Debate, and Public Forum Debate teams count as one entry each.
- **JUDGE QUOTAS:**
  - Speech: 1 judge for every 2 entries, or fraction thereof
  - Student Congress: 1 judge for every 4 entries (may be pulled to judge other events if needed)
  - Debate: 1 judge for every entry up to three. For four entries in one debate event, the quota becomes 1 judge for every entry plus 1.
- The entry fee is **\$6/per student or \$30.00** (whichever is greater).
- **In addition**, there is a **school entry fee of \$20.00**. If you register three students, your registration is \$50 (\$30 minimum registration + \$20 school entry). If you register 10 students, your registration is \$80 (\$60 for students + \$20 school entry).
- Please make registration checks payable to **CFL of Erie**. Fees must be paid **on the registration deadline 4 p.m. on TUESDAY, March 3rd**.

## **GENERAL TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE:**

- 7:45-8:15 am: Check-in Registration @ Gannon Bookstore lobby
- 8:30 am: Opening Assembly
- 8:45 am: Judge Meeting
- 9:00 am: Round 1 for all events
- 10:15 am: Round 2 for Speech, LD, PF
- 11:30 am -12:30 pm: Lunch break
- 12:15 am – Session 2 for Congress
- 12:45 pm: Round 3 for Speech, LD, and PF
- 2:00 pm: Round 4 for Oral Interpretation and Run-offs (if necessary)
- 3:30 pm: Awards Assembly

## **LUNCH**

- Lunch will be catered by Serafin's Food Market again. Options are Chef Salad (meat, cheese, vegetables), Garden Salad (vegetables), Turkey/Provolone Sub (turkey, cheese, lettuce, tomato), and Combo Sub (salami, ham, cheese, lettuce, tomato).
- Cost of lunch is \$9.50/person and includes one of the above listed main items plus drink, cookies, fruit, and snacks. It's quite a meal! All orders are done on Tabroom.com and must be completed and paid for with your registration. **Order for students, judges, and coaches.**

## **FINAL REMINDERS**

- All deadlines are **final** and must be met based on the length of time it takes to schedule this tournament.
- No changes will be accepted after the registration deadline, unless it is to change a name to replace a student (by 8 a.m. on Thursday, March 5) or to replace a dropped judge.
- All judge quotas and registration fees are frozen at the close of registration on Tuesday, March 3 at 4:00 p.m. **If you have student drops after the deadline, neither your judge quota nor your registration costs change.**
- All registration **fees** must be **PAID** by 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, March 3. You can either mail the check or drop it off at my home.

## **JUDGE LOUNGE**

The CFL of Erie Coaches usually stock the judge lounge with drinks and light snacks. Please decide on what your team would like to supply for our judges throughout the day. I will provide the coffee and donuts in the morning as well as plates, napkins, utensils, and cups.

If there are any questions, please contact me. On the morning of the tournament, I can be reached on my cell phone at 814-602-7417.

Sincerely,

Susan C. Peebles  
Director, CFL of Erie



