



SR STATE SPEECH TOURNEY INVITATION 2026

February 2026

Dear Coaches and Students:

You are cordially invited to the 2026 KHSSL Senior State Speech Championship, which will be held **MARCH 13 and 14** at Murray State University. We are sponsored by the Murray State Speech and Debate Union, and we truly appreciate their hospitality.

Please read this invitation thoroughly and carefully.

TOURNAMENT PHONE NUMBER

(Emergency and otherwise) KHSSL: 859-927-1100

TOURNAMENT WEBSITE

<http://khsslstatesenior.tabroom.com>

REGISTRATION AND ENTRIES

Registration is on Tabroom: <http://khsslstatesenior.tabroom.com> .

Registration soft deadline:

5 PM Eastern on Wednesday, March 4.

SR STATE SPEECH TOURNEY INVITATION 2026

This is a soft deadline for judges and entries – and does not change even if there is a blizzard or school's not in session for anything else. This will allow the tournament to know how many entries and judges to expect (needed for rooms, sections of limited prep events, judge lounge food orders, etc.) and plan accordingly. T-shirt pre-orders are also due at this time.

Coaches will be allowed to change names of entries/judges until 5 PM Eastern Monday, March 9, with no financial penalty, so feel free to put in a random judge name knowing you'll put the real one in by Monday, etc. But if you change the number of entries in an event or decrease the number of judges you're bringing, the drop/change fees here (copied and pasted from the current Handbook) apply.

- a. Contestant substitutions between the Registration Deadline and the Final deadline = free.
- b. Drops and Adds between the registration deadline and the Final deadline = entry fee plus \$10.
- c. Substitutions after Final deadline through start of tournament = \$10 + entry fee.
- d. Drop/Adds after the Final Deadline and prior to the first day of the tournament = \$25 + entry fee.
- e. Drop/Adds the first day of the tournament = \$50 + entry fee.
- f. Judge Name Changes at any time = free. New judges must be fully qualified as rules require.
- g. Judge drops after registration deadline and before Final Deadline =\$10 fee plus hired judge fees for the shortage.
- h. Judge drops after Final Deadline and prior to the first day of the tournament = \$25 + hired judge fees for the shortage.
- i. Judge drops at the start of or at any time during the days of the tournament = \$100 fee + hired judge fees

SR STATE SPEECH TOURNEY INVITATION 2026

Hard Deadline:

Monday, March 9, 5 PM Eastern.

After the hard deadline, changes go through the KHSSL email address ONLY (khssl@khssl.org -- no texts or calls for changes, and you'll be blocked from changes on Tabroom). After this deadline, see the list on the prior page for how the fees work. There are no excuses from fees for illness or family emergencies or anything else as any changes cause considerable time spent adjusting the tournament for KHSSL, no matter what the reason.

Entry fees are \$20 for each individual entry, \$40 for each duo team entry.
All fees are due when schools register. Schools may not compete until all fees are paid including drop fees, t-shirt fees for pre-orders, etc.

The KHSSL Handbook contains extensive information about how the State Tournament is put together and how tabulation is done to determine advancement. Coaches are responsible for understanding these procedures (or for asking for clarifications as needed) and for explaining them to your team and their parents, your judges, etc. Anyone in the world can access it at the KHSSL website: <https://www.khssl.org/handbook-and-constitution> Please make sure all coaches have reviewed how State tournament works before you come to campus.

In each speech event, schools may enter up to three (3) entries. Each individual student may enter up to three (3) events.

Students must have qualified in an event as noted above. **Coaches may ONLY enter as many entries as schools entered and paid for at Regionals (or fewer).**

Please just reach out to the Executive Director if you have any questions at all about your entry or who's qualified for State.

SR STATE SPEECH TOURNEY INVITATION 2026

LODGING

KHSSL is no longer involved in making 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 hotel chains 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. I did reach out to the Murray area tourism group, and they gave us this list of hotels and prices. Please know these are not guaranteed, and there is no room block set. **YOU ARE STRONGLY ENCOURAGED TO MAKE ROOM ARRANGEMENTS ASAP** – better to book too many rooms now and cancel some later if that’s a concern. Murray is not as large as most places we usually hold State. Rooms may get tight.

Hotel Name	12th Price	13th Price	14th Price
<u>Marriott Springhill Suites</u>	\$159.00	\$229.00	\$169.00
<u>Hampton Inn & Suites</u>	\$184.00	\$251.00	\$166.00
<u>Holiday Inn Express Hotel & Suites</u>	\$156.00	\$181.00	\$144.00
<u>Best Western University Inn</u>	\$120.00	\$125.00	\$125.00
<u>Quality Inn</u>	\$119.00	\$125.00	\$109.00
<u>Murray Inn and Art Gallery</u>	\$70.00	\$80.00	\$80.00

Also, if it’s of interest, the nearby KenLake State Park in Hardin <https://parks.ky.gov/explore/kenlake-state-resort-park-7792> is 21 minutes from MSU. They have some cute cottages that might suit some smaller teams.

SR STATE SPEECH TOURNEY INVITATION 2026

FOOD

Coffee and light snacks **for judges** will be provided on Friday evening with coffee/tea/water only on Saturday morning (plus any leftovers from Friday). All students and judges are on their own for meals. **Everyone should eat breakfast OFF CAMPUS on Saturday** as many restaurant options will not be open when students are due on campus.

We are working with the Murray State University dining group and will post [on the Tabroom site for the tournament](#) a list of restaurants and times they are open during the span of the tournament once we have that information available.

JUDGES

Judge Obligations:

- The judge quota is set at one judge required per six entries or fraction thereof.
- 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; if you only owe one judge, YOU MUST PROVIDE THAT JUDGE. And we really need your judges.
- All judges are obligated through the full tournament unless assignments are split between two judges who make up one judge. Please note that judges must be available the full day to count for the day, so no “Please no finals” requests unless you’re willing to pay the full day’s charge for a judge.
- You may not request exemptions from particular events (like “no limited prep.”).

SR STATE SPEECH TOURNEY INVITATION 2026

- If you have two judges who wish to share a judging assignment (Boris can come on Friday and Natasha can come on Saturday), please sign up BOTH judges and also email me who's doing what by the Hard Deadline (5 PM Monday the 9th) so I can adjust them in the tournament for you. Friday costs \$50 and Saturday costs \$100 if you have judges who can only do one day and have no other portion; the judge must be present all of Saturday to count as a ½ judge in your “you must bring at least half your judges” quota.

Reality of Judges:

Judges should expect to judge every round of the tournament. They must also bring their own laptop or tablet. Judging on a phone is impossible at this tournament; paper ballots will NOT be available.

Extra Judges:

If you have extra judges who can judge, even if just for one of the two days, we will gladly accept them. You will be doing a huge favor to everyone attending! Thanks!! You're the best! You rock! You're amazing!!!

Judge Training:

The Handbook states that all judges must be trained prior to State tournament. The Board voted to require **anti-bias training** as this training for this year. 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](#).

A [hodgepodge video](#) of various judge trainings is also available on the KHSSL website and may be of use to rookie judges if coaches wish to use that as additional judge training they provide to their judges (with follow-up for questions, advice, etc.).

KHSSL also requires all judges – from head coaches and Hall of Famers to brand new folks -- to complete [the NFHS judging course](#) that's on the KHSSL homepage and at the Judging Tips page (see next page).

SR STATE SPEECH TOURNEY INVITATION 2026

A judge's best friend is our [Judge Tips webpage](#). On this page, Judges can see the full (the paper version) ballots for the events, the judging guidelines, and a 3-ish minute video from a KHSSL Coach explaining what they look for when they are judging that event. There are even sample performances of each event on this page if judges have time to see what an event looks like before they go in a round.

[A handout](#) with a good review of the judging process and suggestions of comments is also posted at the top of this page.

PARKING/MAPS/ORATORIES/INFORMATIVES/ SAFETY AND ACCESSIBILITY INFO

PARKING AND MAPS

Our hosts at MSU are working on providing us with parking and building maps. These will be posted on the Tabroom site (and coaches alerted) when they are finalized. Info for parking buses and cars as well as drop-off points will be included.

ORATORIES AND INFORMATIVES

Don't forget that students' speeches in Oratory and Informative must be physically available on paper or easily downloadable electronically should a copy be needed.

SAFETY INFORMATION

Here is the link to locate AED locations at Murray State University:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1V43Lt0_R17XXnbck_IXIMn-rugfWRnx/view?usp=sharing

SR STATE SPEECH TOURNEY INVITATION 2026

AWARDS

ALL students who advance to Quarterfinals / Semifinals / Finals will be recognized and handed awards during the Awards ceremony and are expected to be in attendance. Awards will be held in Lovett Auditorium. Awards will NOT be mailed to those who do not attend the ceremony.

CONTEST MANAGEMENT

The tournament will be managed by the Executive Director and the Board of Directors present from KHSSL with some help in draw rooms from other coaches/judges.

BREAK ROUND QUOTAS AND PLANS

A Quarterfinal round will take place in ALL EVENTS with 48 or more entries, measured as of the Soft Registration deadline.

The top 24 students in order will advance to the Quarterfinal round. No adjustments for students from the same school competing in the same section are made.

This round will have four sections of six competitors.

a. The four sections will be seeded as follows:

Section 1—1st, 8th, 9th, 16th, 17th, and 24th

Section 2—2nd, 7th, 10th, 15th, 18th, and 23rd.

Section 3—3rd, 6th, 11th, 14th, 19th, and 22nd

Section 4—4th, 5th, 12th, 13th, 20th, and 21st

b. Only in the event of an absolute tie shall an additional contestant be advanced to the Quarterfinal round, and such contestant would be placed in a random section.

Advancement to and Pairing of Semifinals.

Semifinal rounds are paired as set forth below. No adjustments for students from the same school competing in the same section are made.

SR STATE SPEECH TOURNEY INVITATION 2026

For events with Quarterfinal rounds.

The top-three Quarterfinalists advance out of each Quarterfinal section. Semifinal Section 1 includes advancing Semifinalists from Sections 1 and 4 of Quarterfinals. Semifinal Section 2 includes advancing Semifinalists from Sections 2 and 3 of Quarterfinals.

For events advancing directly to the Semifinal round. The top twelve students after the preliminary rounds advance into two Semifinal sections, paired as follows:

Section 1: 1st, 4th, 5th, 8th, 9th, 12th

Section 2: 2nd, 3rd, 6th, 7th, 10th, 11th

Only in the event of an absolute tie shall an additional contestant be advanced to the Semifinal round, and such contestant would be placed in a random section.

SOUVENIRS FOR SALE AT STATE THIS YEAR

- Blyton Bears in the 2026 color t-shirt (teal ombre) \$25
Blyton Bear's t-shirt is a stylish jade/ombre combination look that's all the rage in Greenland this year. Don't get him started about politics, though. He growls.
- **NEW:** small beanbag-based giraffes named Aff Giraffe \$10
- Enamel pins in black, blue, pink, and purple \$5
- Sunglasses \$5
- Stickers galore – we literally have dozens of options this year -- donated by [You're Awesome Design Machine](#) -- \$1
- Water bottles \$20
- Spiral-bound notebooks \$10
- T-shirts (black) – short sleeve \$12 and long sleeve \$20 (sizes vary) plus some very small gray t-shirts for kids not in adult sizes yet that say State Tournament but no year. These are different from the official 2026 State Tournament shirts (see next page) in teal.
- Magnets \$5
- **NEW:** Mugs \$10
- **NEW:** Pocket Mirrors \$3
- **NEW:** Buttons (large and small sizes) \$2

SR STATE SPEECH TOURNEY INVITATION 2026



Introducing **Aff Giraffe!**

He's ready to debate AND do Storytelling AND Extemp
(he sticks his neck out and tries everything).

[A flyer with pictures](#) is posted on the [Tabroom site](#).

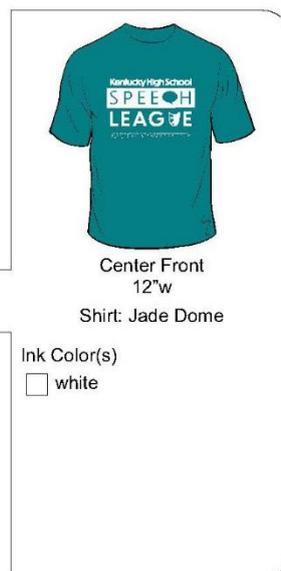
T-SHIRT PRE-ORDERS

Customer:

Design/Event: Kentucky High School Speech Tournament 2026

WO# AR GD

Screen Print



The shirts are short-sleeved cotton t-shirts. KHSSL is ONLY selling these by pre-order for \$12. You order shirts as part of your registration (see CONCESSIONS) and pay for them at registration by either a separate check or cash OR as part of your registration check. **These shirts will NOT be available for sale at the regular tournament.** Pre-ordered shirts will be handed to you at Registration as you pay. All other merch is first come first served.

SR STATE SPEECH TOURNEY INVITATION 2026

From the Director

I have high hopes that all coaches and students will have their best experience ever at KHSSL Senior. Our planned schedule is on the penultimate page of this invitation, and I hope you'll also go through the "classy" expectations for tournaments with your students (the last page of this invite). Let's make it our shared goal that we'll run efficiently and smoothly. We want our kids to make happy memories.

May the words be with you! 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!

STEVE

Steve Meadows, Executive Director, KHSSL khssl@khssl.org 859/927-1100
talk or text www.khssl.org



Sneak preview of some of the new buttons & stickers!

SENIOR STATE SPEECH TOURNAMENT INVITATION



**TOURNAMENT
PHONE/TEXT
NUMBER**
(Emergency and otherwise)
1-859-927-1100

<http://khsslsr.tabroom.com>

Friday, March 13

1:30 - 3 PM **Registration**
3:30 PM **Opening Hooha!**
4:00 PM **Judges' Meeting**
4:30 PM **Extemp Draw R1**
5:00 PM **Round 1 all events**
6:15 PM **Extemp Draw R2**
6:45 PM **Round 2 all events**

Saturday, March 14

7:30 AM **Extemp Draw R3**
8:00 AM **Round 3 all events**
10:30 AM **All QF + some SF**
12 PM **All other SF**
2 PM **All Final Rounds**
4 PMish **Awards Ceremony**

WHEREABOUTSES

Registration:

Student Center 2nd Floor

Opening Hooha! and Judges' Meeting:

Lovett Auditorium

Merchandise Sales:

Student Center 2nd Floor

Advocate / Quiet Room:

At Merch Table; Mississippi Room (Student Center)

Judge Lounge:

Student Center 100 N

Tabulation Room:

Student Center, Cumberland Room

Extemp Draw:

TBA

Broadcasting Draw:

TBA

Food and "Hangout" Space:

Student Center, 2nd Floor

Awards Ceremony:

Lovett Auditorium



SENIOR STATE SPEECH TOURNAMENT INVITATION

HOW TO BE CLASSY AT A CONTEST

Be a polite audience member – watch your competitors with attention (and laugh and clap when appropriate). This applies for all other contestants – **don't leave anyone out.**

Be sure to **tell your judges if you are doubling or tripling** and need to go early in your room to leave.

If you are doubling/tripling & in extemp or a 3rd round of broadcasting, **go to extemp/broadcasting before you go to other events.** Tell the person running the draw room you are headed to other events as well.

If doubling or tripling in a duo event, **make plans with your partner** about when to meet them at the duo room (before other events or after other events) so you don't leave partners stranded waiting on you.

Don't touch anything in the classrooms other than the desk you sit in and chairs you use for Duo Improv. And avoid using the teacher's desk, even for judges.

Bring the supplies you need with you: index cards, black book, pen/pencil, bottle of water, etc.

Wait quietly in the hallway until the judge arrives and invites you into the room. Once the contest starts, before you enter a room, wait in the hallway and listen carefully to make sure you are not entering a room while someone else is performing. No one wants to be that kid who interrupts.

Make sure your **phones are OFF** and won't vibrate or make noise during a round.

At awards, be happy for everyone, even if you don't win your event. You're on display, after all, for everyone – including other kids' friends, judges who will be evaluating you next tournament, etc. – and we work together to make ourselves better at communication using competition to inspire us, not to beat other people down. Use those acting skills if you are a finalist but don't get the place you want – many others watching would like to be a finalist getting a trophy, after all. Show grace. And go get 'em next time!

Teams stand up for any students on their teams who win awards, but they don't whoop and holler as this is a dignified event, not a rodeo (no offense to rodeos). Also, teams stand up for all 1st place winners as a tournament-wide recognition of the event champions and the overall team champions. It's just classy.

And we always **choose classy** when we have options.

This is the way.