

2026 University of Michigan H.S. Debate Tournament Invitation

Friday, October 30th- Sunday, November 1st, 2026

- Tournament of Champions (TOC) Octafinals Bid Tournament- Varsity Policy Division
- Tournament of Champions (TOC) Finals Bid Tournament- Varsity Public Forum Division

On behalf of the University of Michigan and Michigan Debate Program, we are pleased to invite you to participate in the 30th annual University of Michigan High School Debate Tournament.

The tournament will provide in-person competition in the varsity, junior varsity and novice divisions of policy and online/remote competition in the varsity and novice divisions of public forum (PF) via Zoom.

The tournament has been certified as an OCTAFINALS Tournament of Champions qualifier for policy debate in the varsity division and FINALS public forum qualifier in the varsity division. There is no hybrid entry for any in-person event.

When we get closer to the tournament, we will post information on recommended parking locations, maps with buildings we will be using, food recommendations, etc.

Registration and Payment to Get off the Waitlist

Registration for the tournament is already open on Tabroom.com. We will accept as many entries as we can while maintaining the tournament schedule, elimination rounds, etc. This means we may have to impose entry caps on divisions.

All teams entering will initially be placed on the waitlist. To get off the waitlist and into the tournament, you need to pay the appropriate tournament entry fees associated with your account. Registration and Tournament Entry/Judging Fees will be frozen on Friday, September 25th. **No refunds will be provided after this date.**

Check should be made out to Michigan Debate or University of Michigan and mailed to:
Debate Program- Attention Aaron Kall
Michigan Union Building- Suite 3480
530 South State Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

You may also pay via credit card at <https://michigandebate.com/payment-gateway/>.

If you don't already have a username and password to pay via credit card, please email Aaron Kall at akall@umich.edu

Last year we reached capacity in all divisions and had to turn several entrants away, particularly those who registered informally. Please enter early to assure your teams a spot at the tournament. All registration and entries should be done at www.tabroom.com. The exact URL for our tournament registration can be found at <http://umich.tabroom.com>.



The tabroom.com online registration system will be enabled the morning of Friday, October 30th.

Policy Divisions Tournament Format

Policy competitors will debate the 2026-27 topic:

Resolved: The United States federal government should establish national health insurance in the United States.

The schedule is always subject to change based on entries. We plan to clear full elimination rounds provided all teams qualifying for elimination rounds have a winning record.

The varsity policy division will consist of six preliminary debates: two preset rounds on Friday, four additional preliminary rounds on Saturday. The top 32 teams with a 4-2 or better preliminary record will clear to a Double Octafinals starting on Sunday morning.

The junior varsity policy division will consist of six preliminary debates: two preset rounds on Friday, four additional preliminary rounds on Saturday. The top 8 teams with a 4-2 or better preliminary record will advance to a quarterfinal unless numbers warrant more elimination rounds. If there are not enough JV teams to make the division function, it will collapse into the varsity division.

The novice policy division will also consist of six preliminary debates: two preset rounds on Friday, four additional preliminary rounds on Saturday. The novice division could clear to Double Octafinals or Octafinals on Sunday morning depending on the entry numbers.

We require novice teams to use the NDCA Novice Packet and whatever official updates have been released prior to the start of the tournament.

Both teams will receive 8 minutes of prep time. There is no “tech time” for in-person divisions.

To maximize judge preferences, each team entered has a 3 round prelim judging obligation and a single judge can cover the commitment of two teams. All judges are obligated for the first elimination round. Judges are further obligated to judge one round after the elimination of their last team. Schools whose judges do not meet their obligations are subject to a penalty fee of \$75/missed round.

Student judges in their junior or senior year of high school may judge the novice division and MUST be marked as NOVICE ONLY. They can ONLY cover your NOVICE ENTRIES and may not cover your commitment in other divisions.

Judges must have a tabroom.com account, are required to enter their ballots online, and must have a public philosophy online by Monday, October 26th.



Public Forum Divisions Tournament Format

Competitors will debate the forthcoming November/December Topic.

The elimination round break point will be appropriately determined by the number of teams entered, but a maximum amount of 32 teams would reach the elimination rounds if we break to Double Octafinals.

Each team entered has a 3 round prelim judging obligation and a single judge can cover the commitment of two teams. All judges are obligated for the first elimination round. Judges are further obligated to judge one round after the elimination of their last team. Schools whose judges do not meet their obligations are subject to a penalty fee of \$75/missed round.

Judges must have a tabroom.com account and are required to enter their ballots online.

The 2026 PF divisions online schedule can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17MCa9Fo7WA4XkcJfj4COaEPIR2rfuGK9zPS5sU9nxXg/edit?usp=sharing>

Junior and Senior Round Robins

If there is sufficient interest, we will host the Michigan Junior and Senior Policy Round Robins online over Zoom on Wednesday October 28th and Thursday October 29th. If you are interested in an invitation to the Michigan Juniors or Michigan Seniors Round Robins, please email Aaron at akall@umich.edu.

The number of pods and rounds will be determined by the number of entries. If there is not sufficient interest for two separate Round Robins, we will condense down to one division.

The 2026 Junior and Senior Round Robin schedules can be found here:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17MCa9Fo7WA4XkcJfj4COaEPIR2rfuGK9zPS5sU9nxXg/edit?usp=sharing>

The schedule is subject to change based on the structure and number of rounds that make sense for the given entries.

Novice Eligibility

We cannot verify the experience of each individual entrant in our tournament, so it is incumbent upon individual coaches to ensure their students are entered in the right division. Entrants found to be in violation of eligibility rules may be removed from the tournament at the Tournament Directors' discretion.

Please note that to compete in any division labeled, "novice," a student or students must be the first year of high school debate. If a team has previously won the novice division of a



Tournament of Champions qualifying tournament, they must enter the varsity division.

If there are any students that may have special circumstances regarding these eligibility definitions, please email Tournament Director Aaron Kall at akall@umich.edu

Tournament and Judging Fees

Fees for the tournament are \$150 per team for in-person policy debate.

For online public forum, the fee is \$100 per team.

Fees for online round robins are \$100 per team.

A limited number of hired judges will be available at \$75/round in both policy and public form. In other words, a full judge would cost \$450.00 and cover two teams. It would cost \$225.00 for a 1/2 judge.

Tabroom

Chris Palmer, of the National Speech and Debate Association, has graciously agreed to tabulate the tournament.

Contact Information

Aaron Kall, Lee H. Hess Director of Debate, akall@umich.edu

Michigan Debate
Michigan Union Building- Suite 3480
530 South State Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

(734) 239-3996- Aaron Kall cell

2026 Dates and Deadlines

Early August, 2026 - Tournament Registration Opens

Friday, September 25th - Registration and Tournament Entry/Judging Fees Frozen - **No refunds will be provided after this date**

Monday, October 26th - All policy judge philosophies must be posted/available on tabroom.com

Wednesday, October 28th - Judge Preferences for applicable divisions will open on tabroom.com

Friday, October 30th - The tabroom.com online registration system will be enabled in the morning



Hotel Block Information

Hotel Block #1- Hampton Inn Ann Arbor-South, \$124 USD per night, 925 Victors Way, Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Phone: (734) 665-5000

Booking link:

<https://www.hilton.com/en/book/reservation/rooms/?ctyhocn=ARBVWHX&arrivalDate=2026-10-30&departureDate=2026-11-01&groupCode=CHH90C&room1NumAdults=1&cid=OM%2CWW%2CHILTONLINK%2CEN%2CDirectLink>

Hotel Block #2- Sheraton Ann Arbor, \$149 USD per night, 3200 Boardwalk Drive Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Phone: (734) 996-0600

Booking link:

https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1786474466949&key=GRP&app=resvlink&_branch_match_id=1618381061549890124&_branch_referrer=H4sIAAAAAAAAAA8soKSkottLXTywo0MtNLCrKzC8p0UvOz9UvSi0uy0wtN7IHytICODmZedlqmSm2huYWZibmJiZmZpYmlmrZqZW27kEBanVFqWmpQO156fJRfnlxlFts4ZRfm5qQC2Rwn8YQAAAA%3D%3D

Hotel Block #3- Hyatt Place Ann Arbor, \$134 USD per night, 3223 S. State St., Ann Arbor, Michigan, 48108

Phone: (734) 995-1234

Booking link:

<https://www.hyatt.com/events/en-US/group-booking/DTWZA/G-UD26>

Hotel Block #4- Residence Inn by Marriott Ann Arbor North, \$179 USD per night, 3535 Green Court Ann Arbor, Michigan, USA, 48105

Phone: (734) 327-0011

Booking link:

https://www.marriott.com/event-reservations/reservation-link.mi?id=1786400822053&key=GRP&app=resvlink&_branch_match_id=1618381061549890124&_branch_referrer=H4sIAAAAAAAAAA8soKSkottLXTywo0MtNLCrKzC8p0UvOz9UvSi0uy0wtN7IHytICODmZedlqmSm2huYWZiYGBhZGRgamxmrZqZW27kEBanVFqWmpQO156fJJRfnlxlFts4ZRfm5qQAWasJsYQAAAA%3D%3D

Recommendations for Online Divisions

We strongly encourage debaters to operate from direct Ethernet connections, as opposed to Wi-Fi.

We strongly encourage every debater to wear a headset with a microphone or to use similar technological equipment.

Debaters are required to have their web cameras on during the time that they are speaking. Judges are required to have their camera on at any point when students are speaking and while



giving RFD/comments. If there is a technological issue that prevents this from happening, limited exceptions are permitted; otherwise, this is the expectation of the tournament.

The use of Zoom backgrounds are permitted, but must be age and content appropriate.

debatehelp@umich.edu is the email address for technological assistance/questions that arise during the tournament.

2026 In-Person Varsity, JV and Novice Policy Divisions Schedule

Friday, October 30th:

7:00 AM – Online registration opens on Tabroom

3:30 PM – Deadline for any entry changes.

4:30 PM – Pairings for Rounds 1 and 2 will be released

5:10 PM – Round 1 Start Time (Decision Time 7:10 PM)

7:40 PM – Round 2 Start Time (Decision Time 9:40 PM)

Saturday, October 31st:

8:00 AM – Round 3 Pairings Released

8:30 AM – Round 3 Start Time (Decision Time 10:30 AM)

11:00 AM – Round 4 Pairings Released

11:30 AM – Round 4 Start Time (Decision Time 1:30 PM)

1:30-2:30 PM – Lunch

2:30 PM – Round 5 Pairings Released

3:00 PM – Round 5 Start Time (Decision Time 5:00 PM)

5:30 PM – Round 6 Pairings Released

6:00 PM – Round 6 Start Time (Decision Time 8:00 PM)

9:00 PM – Release list of teams clearing, judge list and standby judges for Sunday morning

Sunday, November 1st:

7:30 AM – Varsity Double-Octafinals/Novice Octafinals Pairings Released

8:00 AM – Varsity Double-Octafinals/Novice Octafinals Start Time (Decision Time: 10:15 AM)

10:30 AM – Varsity Octafinals/Novice Quarterfinals Pairings Released

11:00 AM – Varsity Octafinals/Novice Quarterfinals Start Time (Decision Time: 1:15 PM)

1:30 PM – Varsity Quarterfinals/Novice Semifinals Pairings Released

2:00 PM – Varsity Quarterfinals/Novice Semifinals Start Time (Decision Time: 4:15 PM)

4:30 PM – Varsity Semifinals/Novice Finals Pairings Released

5:00 PM – Varsity Semifinals/Novice Finals Start Time (Decision Time: 7:15 PM)

7:30 PM – Varsity Finals Pairings Released

8:00 PM – Varsity Finals Start Time (Decision Time: 10:15 PM)



2026 Online/Remote Public Forum Divisions Schedule

All times below in ET – The full 2026 schedule in U.S. time zones can be found at <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/17MCa9Fo7WA4XkcJfj4COaEPIR2rfuGK9zPS5sU9nxXg/edit?usp=sharing>

SUBJECT TO CHANGE BASED ON ENTRIES

Saturday, October 31st:

10:00 am – Pairings Release for Rounds 1 and 2
10:20 am – Round 1 (Room check-in at 10:10 am)
11:50 am – Round 2 (Room check-in at 11:40 am)
12:45 pm – 1:30 pm – Break
1:30 pm – Round 3 Pairing
1:50 pm – Round 3 (Room check-in at 1:40 pm)
3:10 pm – Round 4 Pairing
3:30 pm – Round 4 (Room check-in at 3:20 pm)
4:55 pm – Round 5 Pairing
5:15 pm – Round 5 (Room check-in at 5:05 pm)
6:30 pm – Round 6 Pairing
6:50 pm – Round 6 (Room check-in at 6:40 pm)
8:00 p.m.- Release list of teams clearing, judge list, and standby judges for Sunday morning

Sunday, November 1st:

10:00 am – First Elim Pairing
10:20 am – First Elim (Room check-in at 10:10 am)
11:50 am – Second Elim Pairing
12:10 pm – Second Elim (Room check-in at 12:00 pm)
1:30 pm – Third Elim Pairing
1:50 pm – Third Elim (Room check-in at 1:40 pm)
3:00 pm – Fourth Elim Pairing
3:20 pm – Fourth Elim (Room check-in at 3:10 pm)
4:30 pm – Fifth Elim Pairing (*if needed)
4:50 pm – Fifth Elim (Room check-in at 4:40 pm *if needed)

