

# RIVERSIDE

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## SPEECH & DEBATE

Riverside High School cordially invites you to the Warrior Invitational, a NIETOC bid tournament to be held November 8, 2025. Competition will be in-person at Riverside. We hope you will join for competition in the following events\*:

Children's Literature

Declamation

Dramatic Interpretation

Duo Interpretation

Expository

Extemporaneous Speaking

Humorous Interpretation

Impromptu Speaking (Novice and Varsity)

Informative Speaking

Novice Reading

Original Oratory

Program Oral Interpretation

Lincoln Douglas Debate (Novice and Varsity)

Public Forum Debate (Novice and Varsity)

Congressional Debate (Novice and Varsity)

*\*We may consolidate events (including novice and varsity events) if we do not have enough entries in those events.*

# Schedule:

## Tentative Schedule for Registration and Events

### Wednesday, November 5, 2025

5:00 PM—Registration Deadline

### Friday, November 7, 2025

5:00 PM—All judge entries should be finalized and all competitor substitutions made.

Drops on Saturday morning will be charged a one-time drop fee of \$25, substitutions will be taken without charge.

### Saturday, November 8, 2025

8:00 AM—9:00 AM: Meeting

9:00 AM: Round One - (Congress Session 1)

11:00 AM: Round Two

1:00 PM: Round Three - (Congress Session 2)

3:00 PM: Round Four

6:00 PM: Awards Ceremony (*or earlier, if possible*)

# Rules and Fees:

## Rules and Fees

### Registration:

To avoid errors, **no** phoned, mailed, faxed or e-mailed registrations will be accepted.

To register for the tournament, go to the [Warriors](#) page.

### Double and Triple Entry Limitations:

**Double-entries:** Competitors in Congress, LD, or PFD may not double-enter or triple-enter; competitors in extemporaneous speaking may not triple-enter but can double-enter in any speech or interpretation event.

**Triple-entries:** Competitors may triple-enter, provided one of their events is **not** extemporaneous speaking, a debate category, or Congress.

Students double and triple-entered should go first to the round in which they are posted highest.

Students may not enter the same work of literature in more than one event. Students may not give the same prepared speech or a version of the same speech in OO, IS, or Expos.

### Tournament fees are as follows:

- \$24 per entry in Public Forum and Duo Interpretation.
- \$12 per entry in all other events

### Judge requirements:

- One judge for every five entries (or fraction thereof) in non-debate events and congress
- One judge for every four entries (or fraction thereof) in Lincoln/Douglas
- One judge for every four entries (or fraction thereof) in Public Forum Debate

Please make a note when a judge is qualified to be placed in multiple judging pools (an interp judge who can also evaluate PFD, for example).

The names of your judges must be registered and linked in Tabroom on Friday, November 8, 2025 to guarantee their usage in the computer program. Please bring only qualified judges.

### Changes:

Changes to entries may be made without penalty until **November 5, 2025 at 5:00 PM**. Changes may not be made by Tabroom after **Friday, November 7, 2025, at 5:00 PM**. **Changes Friday afternoon and evening may be e-mailed to [ddejesa@greenville.k12.sc.us](mailto:ddejesa@greenville.k12.sc.us) or texted/called in to Coach David Dejesa at (864) 905-5019. Drops made Saturday morning will be charged a one time drop fee of \$25, although substitutions for dropped entries will be taken without further fee.**

Questions may be e-mailed to [ddejesa@greenville.k12.sc.us](mailto:ddejesa@greenville.k12.sc.us) or [stewartmcgregorcook@gmail.com](mailto:stewartmcgregorcook@gmail.com)

### Penalties:

- Schools that make changes between 5:00 PM, Wednesday, November 5th and 5:00 PM, Friday, November 7th, will forfeit their original entry fees.
- Schools will be charged a one time \$25.00 drop for each drop made on Tournament Day, November 8th, in addition to the original entry fee.
- No adds will be accepted at registration.
- Substitutions may be made at registration with no penalty.

#### **Awards**

Trophies will be awarded in events based on the number of entries. Three Overall Sweepstakes Trophies will be awarded. One percentage award will be given. Schools must have at least six competing students AND at least six entries to be eligible for the percentage award; schools placing in the top three will not be considered for this award. An Ironman Award will be given to the individual that earns the most sweepstakes points.

#### **Questions**

**David Dejesa (864-355-7842)**

**9:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M.**

**After 5:00 P.M. text/call (864-905-5019)**

# Event Rules and Descriptions:

## Event Rules and Descriptions

**Student Congress** See the Congress section below for specific rules. **At this year's Warrior Invitational, we will be using the November 2025 NSDA Legislation.**

### Lincoln/Douglas Debate

*NFL Description:* This popular style of debating features one person on each side. Propositions of value are debated with the emphasis on developing logical argumentation rather than an accumulation of information. You will learn values analysis, argumentation skills, sound and ethical uses of persuasion, and clear audience centered communication. You will have the opportunity to debate several topics during the school year.

Good debaters construct value-driven cases that are consistent, coherent, combine original analysis with carefully chosen evidence, and tackle the issues in the resolution head-on. Over the course of the debate, they thoroughly defend and expand their own arguments while meticulously deconstructing the arguments of their opponents.

In the spirit of the debates of Lincoln and Douglas, LD Debate should be a clash of ideas rather than personalities. Competitors are expected to be assertive rather than aggressive.

### Nov/Dec Varsity LD Resolution:

**Resolved: The United States ought to rewild substantial tracts of land.**

### Public Forum Debate

*NFL Description:* Public Forum Debate is audience friendly debate. You and a partner will debate controversial issues that are "stripped" from the newspaper headlines. A new topic will be announced the first day of each preceding month at [www.speechanddebate.org](http://www.speechanddebate.org). A Public Forum Debate round begins with a flip of a coin between the competing teams to determine your side and speaker position. Public Forum will test your skills in argumentation, cross-examination, and refutation.

This event is not sit-down Policy Debate or two-person LD. It should be far more accessible to the lay public than those events. Debaters should be rewarded for their ability to explain facts, policies, ideas, and issues in clear, imaginative, and thoughtful ways. Excellent communication should be rewarded, as should team members' abilities to work together throughout the round. While clash and conflict are both expected and required, contestants must present their cases in a civil manner. Judges should award wins to the pair who demonstrates superior *overall* persuasiveness.

**NOTE:** Both team members must be novices to compete in the novice division.

### November/December PFD Resolution:

**Resolved: The United States federal government should require technology companies to provide lawful access to encrypted communications.**

## **Extemporaneous Speaking**

*NFL Description:* A contestant will be given three questions on a current events topic, will select one, then has 30 minutes to prepare an answer to the question. The contestant uses a set of files that he or she has built as a resource for answering the question. Only published materials may be used as resources (books, magazines, newspaper, and online resources).

*From the National Ballot:* The extemp speech should not be regarded as a memory test of the material contained in any one magazine article, but rather as an original synthesis by the speaker of the current fact and opinion on the designated topic as presented by numerous sources.

The contestant therefore should be held accountable for strict adherence to the precise statement of the topic drawn and discounted severely for shifting to some other phase of the topic on which he or she might prefer to speak. The information presented should be well-chosen, pertinent, and sufficient to support the central thought of the topic.

The material should be organized according to some logical plan to produce a complete speech within the time allowed. Delivery should be free from marked defects in the mechanics of speech - poise, quality and use of voice, enunciation, fluency, bodily expressiveness - and should be effective in enlisting and holding the interest of the audience.

The best extemporaneous speech combines clear thinking, good speaking, and interesting presentation to establish a definite thought with respect to the subject chosen.

Judges should not require contestants speaking on a controversial subject to take a personal stand on that issue. They may do so, or they may elect to present both sides of the controversy as currently set forth in the public press. Extemp contestants may use hard copy files and/or laptops for extemp prep.

*Time Limit:* 7 minutes, with a 30 second grace period. (Presentations that exceed the grace period may not receive first place in the round. Any other penalty is at the judge's discretion.)

## **Original Oratory**

*From the National Ballot:* Since orations have been written by the contestants delivering them, the judges should consider **thought, composition, and delivery**. However, since this is a contest in speech rather than in essay writing, the emphasis should be placed on the speech phase. Thought and composition should be considered primarily in the way they are employed to make effective speaking possible.

The orator should not be expected to solve any of the great problems of the day. Any appropriate subject may be chosen, but the orator must be truthful. Any non-factual reference, especially a personal one, **MUST** be so identified.

Although many orations deal with a current problem and propose a solution, the judge is expressly reminded that this is not the only acceptable form of oratory. The oration may simply alert the audience to a threatening danger, strengthen its devotion to an accepted cause, or eulogize a person. The orator should be given free choice of subject and judged solely on the effectiveness of its development and presentation.

The composition should be considered carefully for its rhetoric and diction. The use of appropriate figures of speech, similes and metaphors, balanced sentences, allusions, and other rhetorical devices to make the oration more effective should be noted especially. Use of American English should be more than correct; it should reveal a discriminating choice of words and altogether fine literary qualities. It should be especially adapted to oral presentation.

Delivery should be judged for mastery of the usual mechanics of speech - poise, quality and use of voice, bodily expressiveness, and for the qualities of directness and sincerity which impress the oration upon the minds of the audience.

No particular style of delivery is to be set up as the one correct style to which all contestants must conform. Rather, each contestant is to be judged upon the effectiveness of his/her delivery, free to choose or develop whatever style will best give him/her that effectiveness with his/her particular oration.

*Time Limit:* 10 minutes, with a 30 second grace period. (Presentations that exceed the grace period may not receive first place in the round. Any other penalty is at the judge's discretion.)

## **Declamation**

**Open to students below the 11th grade. Students must use a speech or portion of a speech previously given by another person. Students may read from a manuscript with no penalty, but they need not.**

*From the Catholic Forensic League Ballot:*

**Introduction:** The introduction must name the work and author, provide necessary background information and establish the mood. If using a teaser, or if lines from the selection are used in the introduction, the speakers must adhere to the rules of the event.

**Presentation Style:** The speaker should convey the message in a sincere, honest and realistic attempt to recreate the spirit of the original presentation. Although the style of delivery chosen by the speaker should be judged in light of the purpose of the speech, artificiality is to be discredited. The message should be conveyed credibly and convincingly as if the words were the speaker's own. This event is an interpretation, not an impersonation.

**Vocal Delivery:** The speaker should be articulate and fluent. The speaker should make use of contrast, making use of the elements of vocal variety: pitch, volume, rate, pausing, phrasing, stress, tone. The speaker should be conversational and concerned, passionate and pleasing. The speaker should be in control of the words and the emotions. The speaker should sound confident and self-assured, and seem eager to enlighten the audience. The speaker should convey the message in a sincere, honest, and realistic style in an attempt to recreate the spirit of the original presentation.

**Physical Delivery:** The speaker should be physically open to the audience and use body language that invites the audience into the world of the declaimer. The speaker should vary facial expression to accentuate the natural flow of thoughts and feelings. The speaker should make eye contact with the audience. The speaker's stance should be erect and controlled, without distracting movements. Movement, if used, should be motivated by transitions in thought or mood. Gestures should be visible, effectively used for emphasis, and varied.

**Overall Effect:** The speaker should project an understanding of the speech's message. The speaker should instill in the audience a concern for the speech's content. The original speaker's message should not be overshadowed by the delivery. Consideration should be given to the oratorical merit of the selection.

*Time Limit:* 10 minutes, with a 30 second grace period. (Presentations that exceed the grace period may not receive first place in the round. Any other penalty is at the judge's discretion.)

## **Expository Speaking**

*From the National Ballot:* Expository speeches are the original compositions of the contestant. The Expository speech is a speech to inform, not a performance. It should describe, clarify, illustrate, or define an object, idea, concept, or

process. A fabricated topic/subject may not be used. No props or visual/audio aids are allowed. Items of dress put on or removed during the course of the performance are considered visual aids.

*What Makes Expository Distinct:* Other events ask students to be persuaders, entertainers, or analysts. Expository speaking asks students to be teachers first, sharing interesting information in a compelling and memorable way. The judge should ask herself at the end of the speech, "What did I actually learn?"

*Note:* Students doubled in original oratory may not use any portion of their orations in the expository speech or informative speech.

*Time Limit:* 5 minutes, with a 30 second grace period. (Presentations that exceed the grace period may not receive first place in the round. Any other penalty is at the judge's discretion.)

### **Informative Speaking:**

**Purpose:** An informative speech is an original speech designed to explain, define, describe, or illustrate a particular subject. The general purpose of the speech is for the audience to gain understanding and/or knowledge of a topic. Any other purpose such as to entertain or to convince shall be secondary. The use of audio/visual aids is optional. (See # 4 on Aids.)

**Contest:** This contest comprises only memorized speeches composed by the contestants and not used by them during a previous contest season.

**Subject:** Effective speeches provide new information or perspectives on a topic, including those that are widely known. The responsibility for choosing a worthwhile topic rests with the contestant. A fabricated topic may not be used. Any non-factual reference, including a personal reference, must be so identified.

**Optional Audio /visual aids:** Audio/visual aids may or may not be used to supplement and reinforce the message. During the presentation, no electronic equipment is permitted. The use of live animals or any additional people as visual aids is not allowed during the speech. **Audience interaction (having question and answer periods, asking for a show of hands, giving the audience a quiz, etc.) is likewise not allowed because it treats audience members as audio and visual aids. Food and drink are not permitted.** Items of dress put on and removed during the course of the presentation are considered costumes and may not be part of the contestant's presentation. Visual aids may not violate law (weapons, drugs, etc.) The host school is not responsible for providing any facilities, equipment, or assistance in a contestant's use of visual aids. Expedient set up and take down of aids is expected. **Students will have up to one minute of "prep time" to set up aids before the ten minute "speech time" begins. "Speech time" is continuous and will not stop for the student to adjust, or take down aids.** If a visual aid displays published pictorial material, the source must be included in the work-cited page but does not need to be cited orally.

Visual and audible aids are **optional**. They should be judged favorably only in so far as they help make good *speaking* possible. If a contestant chooses to use aids, he or she should select materials appropriate to the speech, smoothly integrate such materials, and use them with **restraint**. Visual and audible aids should not be a distraction from--or a substitute for--good public speaking.

**Length:** The time limit is ten minutes with a 30 second "grace period." If there are multiple judges in the round, all must agree that the student has gone beyond the grace period. Should a student go beyond the grace period, the student may not be ranked 1st. There is no other prescribed penalty for going over the grace period. The ranking is up to each individual judge's discretion. Judges who choose to time are to use accurate (stopwatch function) timing devices. No minimum time is mandated.

### **Dramatic Interpretation**

*NFL Description:* This is an individual category in which the selections are dramatic in nature. Selections shall be cuttings from published-printed novels, short stories, plays, poetry, or any other printed-published materials. Presentations must not use props or costumes. Actors will utilize stationary blocking to enhance the interpretation.

*From the National Ballot:* The art of interpretation is regarded as recreating characters in the story presented and making them seem living and real to the audience.

A selection for interpretation must be a cutting from a single literary work: one novel, or one short story, or one play, or one or more poems (from the same published volume). Monologues are acceptable. The selection should be judged for its appropriateness as contest material and its suitability to the particular contestant(s) using it. The use of good literature should be noted favorably and a selection devoid of literary merit graded lowest.

Narrative, if included, should be vivid and animated so as to be an interesting and integral part of the story rather than just "filler" between portions of dialogue.

Contestants are evaluated on poise, quality and use of voice, inflections, emphasis, pronunciation, enunciation, physical expression, and especially the ability to interpret characters correctly and consistently.

The final test of good interpretation is the ability to use all these factors so successfully and unobtrusively that the hearer forgets that this is a contest and in a created atmosphere is carried away to the time and place of the story being unfolded.

*Time Limit:* 10 minutes, with a 30 second grace period. (Presentations that exceed the grace period may not receive first place in the round. Any other penalty is at the judge's discretion.)

### **Humorous Interpretation**

*NFL Description:* This is an individual category in which the selections are humorous in nature. All other rules are the same as Dramatic Interpretation.

*Time Limit:* 10 minutes, with a 30 second grace period. (Presentations that exceed the grace period may not receive first place in the round. Any other penalty is at the judge's discretion.)

### **Duo Interpretation**

*NFL Description and excerpts from the National Ballot:* This is a two-person category in which the selection may be either humorous or dramatic in nature. Each of the two performers may play one or more characters, so long as performance responsibility in the cutting remains as balanced as possible. If the selection is prose or poetry and contains narration, either or both of the performers may present the narration. Focus may be *direct during* the introduction [the performers may look at each other] but must be *indirect [offstage]* during the performance itself. Performers may not touch. All other rules are the same as Dramatic Interpretation.

*Time Limit:* 10 minutes, with a 30 second grace period. (Presentations that exceed the grace period may not receive first place in the round. Any other penalty is at the judge's discretion.)

### **Impromptu Speaking**

*NFL Description:* A contestant is given three prompts designed around a general topic, selects one, then has up to two minutes to prepare a speech on the topic. The Impromptu speech should be regarded as an original interpretation by the speaker of the designated topic as supported by varied materials and gives a contestant opportunity to be creative and imaginative. An impromptu speech should reveal the student's ability to organize his thoughts in a logical manner.

*Time Limit:* 5 minutes total (for both preparation and speaking). Competitors may use up to 2 of their 5 minutes for preparation.

### **Program Oral Interpretation**

POI is a program of oral interpretation of thematically-linked selections chosen from two or three genres: prose, poetry, plays. A primary focus of this event should be on the development of the theme or argument through the use of narrative, story, language, and/or characterization. Competitors are encouraged to devote approximately equal time to each of the genres used in the program. At least two pieces of literature that represent at least two genres must be used. The use of a manuscript is required. An introduction should set the stage, enhancing the interpretation of the literature to the audience, providing information and analysis to the chosen theme. All selections must be verbally identified by title and author; however, where, when, and how these are accomplished are the speaker's decisions. The manuscript may be used by the contestant as a prop so long as it remains in the contestant's control at all times. No costumes or props other than the manuscript are permitted. Adaptations may be made only for the purposes of transition.

This is a contest in oral interpretation. The contestant should be evaluated on poise, quality, and use of voice, inflection, pronunciation, and the ability to interpret characters consistently. In developing a creative, thematic program, attention should be given to the design and organization of a cohesive and carefully conceived whole by linking authors and ideas inherent to the literature. The contestant must address the script; however, introduction and transitional materials may be memorized.

*Time Limit:* 10 minutes, with a 30 second grace period. (Presentations that exceed the grace period may not receive first place in the round. Any other penalty is at the judge's discretion.)

### **Children's Literature**

A single published, printed story, anecdote, tale, myth, or legend must be retold without notes or props. The student may not tell a story that he or she used in a previous academic year. Gestures, pantomime, and characterization may be used; but the focus should be on the narrative. The storyteller may "re-tell" the original story or deliver it verbatim. However, even a retelling must be true to the tone, plot, characters, and style of the original tale; the contestant may **not** make material changes to the content of source material. Appropriate stories for this event include children's literature, tall tales, ghost stories, legends, or any other narrative literature designed for a listening audience of all ages. The student will use a manuscript; it may be used as prop but must stay in the student's control at all times. During the interpretation, the student may use her whole body, including the feet; however, she should not walk around.

*Time Limit:* 10 minutes with a 30 second grace period. (Presentations that exceed the grace period may not receive first place in the round. Any other penalty is at the judge's discretion.)

### **Novice Reading**

In this event for novices, the competitor reads from a manuscript a selection of prose or poetry. The reader may choose to perform a single story or poem, a work of children's literature, an excerpt from a longer work, or a program of works.

The selection should **not** be memorized, but the competitor should demonstrate clear familiarity with the piece. Limited movement is allowed, and the speaker may depict characters in the work. However, emphasis should be placed on vocal performance and the effective use of narration. Excellent posture, evocative hand gestures, good eye contact, and the graceful handling of the manuscript are to be rewarded. The manuscript **may** be used as a prop, so long as it stays in the student's control at all times.

*Time Limit:* 10 minutes, with a 30 second grace period. (Presentations that exceed the grace period may not receive first place in the round. Any other penalty is at the judge's discretion.)

# Congress:

We will be using the **2025 November** bills and resolutions from the NSDA website. The tournament docket is posted on Tabroom and below:

## Session 1 Docket

A Bill to Ban the Payment of College Athletes

The AI Manhattan Project Act (AIMPA)

A Resolution to Amend the Constitution to Strengthen Religious Liberties

## Session 1 Reserve

A Bill to Ensure Competency in the Department of Education

A Bill to Fund Air Conditioning in Developing Nations

## Session 2 Docket

A Bill to Invest in Meteorite Prevention

A Bill to Protect SNAP for U.S. Citizens

A Resolution to Encourage the Establishment of ICE-Free Zones

## Session 2 Reserve

The Presidential Library Ethics Act (PLEA)

A Bill to Demand Accountability from the UN

## Explanation of Congressional Debate

Congressional Debate is a simulation of a legislative day divided into 2 sessions of about 3 hours each. At the beginning of each session a student gets elected by his fellow competitors to be the "presiding officer" (PO), and he or she calls on speakers fairly. (For our tournament purposes, we will get an experienced competitor to preside.)

If a student wishing to speak stands and is chosen by the PO, the student has 3 minutes to give a speech about a bill or resolution at hand.

After each speech, the speaker will be "cross-examined" for 1 minute by his fellow competitors, selected by the PO. This cross examination time is divided in 30 seconds segment per questioner, in which the questioner and the speaker will interact back and forth. The only exception to this format is the cross examination after the first Affirmative speech on each bill and the first Negative, for they will have 2 minutes of cross examination as opposed to just 1 minute as explained above.

While the PO will be judged based on his or her ability to effectively run the session, the speakers will be judged on their ability to effectively play the role of a Senator or House Representative, on the content of their speech, on their style of presentation, and on their activity and presence within the chamber. All students receive one score per speech from 1 to 6, 6 being the best.

At the end of each session, each judge will rank the top 6 competitors independently of their speech scores, and the lowest cumulative rank at the end of the day will place the highest.

There is also a "Parliamentarian" that stays for the whole day and serves the dual function to resolve disputes within parliamentary motions and procedure, as well as breaking ties with his or her rank given at the end of the whole day. The Parliamentarian also collects votes at the end of the day to elect the "Best Presiding Officer Award".

Here is a sample speech:

First, start with a basic outline

Intro: Too many cooks spoil the stew

C1: NATO not cohesive

WARRANT: **John Feffer**, co-director of Foreign Policy at the Institute for Policy Studies, notes that *"over the past 10 years, the member countries of NATO have not been motivated to transcend boundaries and ideologies to grope their way toward effective bargains to address security issues."*

IMPACT: self interested countries make NATO inconsistent and this harms compromise

C2: NATO harms US-Russian Relations

WARRANT: **A Cato Institute analysis published last year** points out that *"Russia has always deemed NATO as a political threat because the USSR has disintegrated, therefore NATO has outlived it's original purpose. The alliance only puts Russia on a proactive mode to undermine US hegemony both politically and economically."*

IMPACT: A hostile Russia harms our global standing and Foreign Policy

C3: Private Military Firms are better

WARRANT: According to **Suzanne Simons**, a CNN Executive Producer, *"Private security firms provide specialized capabilities and surge capacity to U.S. government in flexible, cost-effective packages, and building capacity for friendly foreign governments continue to be more competencies of our industry."*

IMPACT: Private Military Firms are a flexible and effective alternative to achieve our foreign policy agenda

The above outline would translate to the following debate speech:

As an Italian, I love good cooking and I hate bad one. Good cooking is when one professional chef has a clear agenda in the kitchen. Bad cooking is done when too many ideas are thrown on the plate. I would like to offer this bill is a recipe to disaster and offer an alternative menu to success.

Moving on to my first point: how lacks the cohesion necessary to be effective.

There are too many countries within NATO that not only pay a minor share when compared to the US, but they also promote their own self-interest which causes inconsistency within the organization as a whole.

**John Feffer**, co-director of Foreign Policy at the Institute for Policy Studies, notes that *"Over the past 10 years, the member countries of NATO have not been motivated to transcend boundaries and ideologies to grope their way toward effective bargains to address security issues."* In essence, the United States foreign policy objectives cannot actually be achieved through NATO because its members lack any motivation to compromise and support the US initiatives. As it always happens, too many cooks in the kitchen end up spoiling the stew

This leads me to my second point, how NATO harms our relationship with Russia.

**A Cato Institute analysis published last year** points out that *"Russia has always deemed NATO as a political threat because the USSR has disintegrated, therefore NATO has outlived its original purpose. The alliance only puts Russia on a proactive mode to undermine US hegemony both politically and economically."* We cannot rely on such an organization if we truly want to maintain our standing in the global community. If we are not careful with the recipe for foreign policy, disaster will happen. This is the reason why we have to explore different alternatives that allow the US to pursue its interest in a efficient way.

This leads me to my third point: how Private Military Firms are a better service provider. According to **Suzanne Simons**, a CNN Executive Producer, *"Private security firms provide specialized capabilities and surge capacity to U.S. government in flexible, cost-effective packages, and building capacity for friendly foreign governments continue to be more competencies of our industry."* Today, private security firms perform a number of roles from executive protection and static security, to training partner nations, all in dangerous environments. This is exactly why PMFs are what we can rely on for our foreign objectives abroad instead of NATO.

# Novice:

## SPECIAL NOVICE NOTES

**Definition of a Novice:** In all events except for Novice Lincoln Douglas Debate, we consider a novice to be a student who has not competed in high school National Speech and Debate Association competition prior to the 2025-26 school year. Students who participated in middle school speech, summer speech camps, mock trial, Youth-in-Government, children's theater, or any other activities not connected to high school forensics may be considered novices. Both members of a duo or public forum team must be novices in order to be considered a true novice team.

**Novice Lincoln Douglas Debate:** Any student may participate in Novice Lincoln Douglas Debate unless he or she competed in Lincoln Douglas debate in a previous contest year.

**Student Judges:** If needed, varsity Riverside students with the degree of distinction or higher will be used to judge some novice reading or novice debate rounds. Student judges will not be used in rounds that combine novice and varsity students. This option will be considered **only** if participating schools do not meet their judge burdens.

**Novice Awards:** We may combine novice and varsity events due to low entries in a category. However, top novices will still receive trophies at the awards ceremony.

# Topics:

## **Extemporaneous Speaking Topics:**

Round 1. Climate

Round 2. U.S. Economy

Round 3. International Organizations & Treaties

Round 4. U.S. Politics

## **Impromptu Speaking Topics:**

Round 1. Fall

Round 2. Personality Traits

Round 3. Society

Round 4. Song Lyrics

## **Nov/Dec Lincoln Douglas Resolution:**

Resolved: The United States ought to rewild substantial tracts of land.

## **Nov/Dec Public Forum Resolution:**

Resolved: The United States federal government should require technology companies to provide lawful access to encrypted communications.

# Judges Training:

For rules and guidelines concerning particular events, go to the "Events" page. For a list of debate, extemporaneous speaking, and impromptu topics, go to the "Topics" page.

For national videos and judging resources, check out this link at the National Speech and Debate Association website:

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/judge-training/>

The following is a user-friendly guide to help new judges get through the day.

## **Here Comes the Judge! Mr. Cook's Field Manual for Getting Through the Day**

### **This is long. Do I have to read it all before the tournament?**

Only if you are in the doctor's office, your phone has died, and the newest copy of *People* has Abraham Lincoln on the cover. Use this on the day of the tournament to answer your questions.

### **How do I know if I am judging the first round?**

Check Tabroom for your current and upcoming ballots. In our waiting area, listen for your name or a butchered and insulting mispronunciation of your name. We will probably need to replace judges.

### **My name wasn't called. Can I go to the lake?**

There are still three more rounds. No.

### **My name wasn't called. Can I go to the grocery store?**

Wait. Some judges will not show up and will need to be replaced. You might be used as a replacement judge. Don't feel bad. Robert Downey Jr. was the second choice to play *Iron Man*.

### **The tab room people say that all rounds have started. Can I go to the grocery store?**

Yes.

### **I have a ballot, but I don't know the event? Should I tell the tab room that I can't judge?**

No. At the Riverside tournament, the rules for each event are posted on the ballot. They also appear on Tabroom. Just read the event rules. If something doesn't make sense, remember that you are surrounded by experienced judges. Ask someone.

### **I have read the ballot but still do not think I am qualified to judge. These kids work so hard!**

#### **What if I make a mistake? What if I get this wrong?**

Hey, settle down there. A scalpel is not in your hand. You don't have to decide between cutting the red wire and the blue wire. And you are not needed on the flight deck. This is a high school speech

tournament. You are a caring adult who will listen attentively, try to be fair, and make your best judgment. Over the course of the day, each competitor will have four judges. Over a year, she will have dozens. As long as you do not write something cruel on the ballot, you will not ruin someone's life...or even her day.

**Okay! I have a ballot. I know I can judge. What now?**

Follow the instructions on Tabroom.

**I am in my debate room. Everyone is here. What now?**

Make sure that the people in your room are the same ones listed on your ballot. If they are not, send them back out to check the posting. Do this even if they swear on their grandmother's cookie recipe that they are in the right place. They probably are not.

In Lincoln Douglas, the name listed first on your ballot is the Affirmative; the second name, the Negative. In Public Forum, the students will need to flip a coin to determine sides and speaking order. Let them flip the coin and you will discover why they are in debate rather than an activity requiring fine motor skills. Coin toss winners can choose either to be Pro or Con, or to go first or second. Losers of the toss make the remaining decision. Make sure that you have everything correct on the ballot: who is doing what. Check with the students to make sure the speaking order is correct.

**A debate competitor just asked me what my "paradigm" is? Should I say, "Ares?"**

They just want to know what you are looking for in the round. Can you handle really fast speaking? Do you prefer a more aggressive style, etc.? I find that students ask this question out of courtesy. They are going to do their thing no matter what you say. You can say, "Be clear. Be civil. Be smart." That's enough. I always say the same thing: "Debate the actual resolution. Tell me why it matters and what the stakes are. Actually listen to each other's arguments and respond to them assertively but without being uncivil and without willfully misinterpreting each other. General persuasiveness matters more to me than any single point, although I will flow the debate. Brisk talking is fine, but this is *still* a speaking event." They always look at me like I'm a moron. If they give you that look, then we are in the same club; there are no dues.

**I am in my speech room. What should I do now?**

Call roll. If some people are missing, that's okay. They are probably double or triple entered. If someone says that she is supposed to compete in your room but is not on your roll, this person probably in the wrong place. This could happen even in an online tournament. Have her check her posting or link. They make mistakes. Call competitors to perform. First, ask if anyone is double or triple-entered and still has other rooms in which to perform. Watch triple-entries first—in the order on the ballot. Watch double-entries next—in the order on the ballot. Watch single entries last—in the order on the ballot. Allow double/triple entries to leave after they have performed; they have other rooms to get to. If someone is missing, don't wait for him. Move to the next person. If you skip someone because he was double-entered in another room, watch him at the first opportunity when he arrives in your room.

**I am judging impromptu. A lot of that stuff above did not make sense. What do I do?**

The special impromptu instructions are on the ballot.

**I am judging extemp. A lot of that stuff above did not make sense. What do I do?**

Extempers will come in one at a time, give their speeches, and leave. The rules are on the ballot.

**Everyone in my room has performed but I am still missing some competitors. Should I wait for them?**

Yes, but you can dismiss the other competitors. After ten minutes, send a note to the tabroom. But your late person is probably double or triple entered.

**Should I take notes on the ballot or transfer the comments at the end of the round?**

In speech, type your comments directly on the ballot. Bullet points are absolutely fine. In debate, take some notes on a separate sheet, write the “comments to debaters” during their prep time, and write “The reason for decision” at the end. Don’t turn in a blank ballot. Don’t write *Moby Dick*. Three or four helpful comments or sentences will do the job. I find that students get angry at blank ballots, don’t read long ballots, and pay most attention to ballots with a few very clear points.

**I am a speech judge. How do I rank six people? It’s too many!**

It’s often easier to figure out the top three and the bottom three; then decide on the order. Reward overall effectiveness rather than a best or worst moment. Let the ballot help you.

**What are speaker points for?**

They help us break ties. Use them to show how good the round was (or wasn’t) and how close the round was (or wasn’t).

**Can I tie ranks or give two wins?**

No.

**I have not judged all day. Do they hate me in the tab room? Is something wrong?**

No. Well, maybe. You can always check to make sure that we have your name.

**I have judged every round. Do they hate me in the tab room? Is something wrong?**

No.

**I signed up to judge PF but they have me in LD. Why?**

The tab room makes such changes to avoid judge conflicts or to cover missing judges from other schools. Usually we make such a change only if the coach at your school tells us that it is okay. You’ll be fine.

### **Why am I just waiting around?**

Larger teams often have many entries in many events. The high entry count means that they must provide more judges than most schools; but since they cannot judge their own students, they spend a lot of time waiting. You are still saving your school money in judge fees. Enjoy your round off at home.

### **Mr. Cook's Unsolicited Advice For Judges**

#### **Are you having trouble ranking students? Here are some questions to ask yourself:**

- *If these debate students were attorneys, which one would I hire to defend me in court?* “Neither!” I can hear you say after watching a couple of fourteen-year-olds yell at each other. But it’s still a useful thought experiment, particularly if you have strong opinions about the resolution. “Who would I hire?” can help break us out of the habit of siding with a student simply because she has been assigned to position that we supported before the round even started.
- *Which speech performance would I like to see again?* I don’t mean, “Which speech piece would I like to see again so that I can figure out what the heck was going on?” There’s no need for that kind of suffering. I mean that sometimes it’s easier to rank pieces from most engaging to least engaging, or perhaps—let’s admit it—least irritating to most irritating.
- *If I were a casting director, who would I cast in my theater company?* Imagine that the interpretation round is an audition to join repertoire theater group. Decide which student you would offer a job to first, then second, and so on. This approach can help us break out of deciding which piece we like best and focus instead on which performance was most compelling.
- *If I were a producer, who would I put on my news program as an analyst?* I find this question is a good way to approach extemporaneous speaking. A good news analyst is informed, trustworthy, interesting, clear, and pleasant to listen to. As the speakers present, I ask again, “Who would I hire first based on this audition?”
- *Who could win with someone else’s piece?* As Bum Phillips said of the great football coach Bear Bryant, “He can take his’n and beat your’n, and he can turn around and take your’n and beat his’n.” Ask yourself which competitor demonstrates enough ability that she could probably do her opponents’ pieces as well as they could.

#### **Do you wonder what you should write on the ballot? Here are some pointers:**

- Be kind. Students will read your comments in the meanest voice, so take extra care in how you phrase things. Remember that what you write will be read by students, parents, and coaches. They will forgive all, except deliberate meanness. A low rank will not ruin someone's day. A cruel comment will.
- Actually write comments. A blank ballot helps nobody and gives the student the impression that you don't care. You don't have to write profundities. Three or four comments will do the job.
- Be concise. The blank ballot is bad, and the cruel ballot is worse. But a Joycean torrent of words isn't much better. The student looks at the sea of comments, turns his back, and takes his surfboard home. The prospect of diving into that is just too daunting. College students are the worst offenders here. They have a deep knowledge of and love for speech and debate, and their writing hand has been trained by hours of note-taking and in-class essays. They are word machines. But I beg them, "Show restraint. A few well-chosen comments will do the job. Honest."
- Be specific. "You mispronounced some words" doesn't tell the students which words are being butchered. "Some characters are hard to tell apart" tells less than "I couldn't tell Jim and the bus driver apart in the restaurant scene." "I really like some of your physical stuff" tells less than "Your acting out of the jogging fire hydrant was great." "The Affirmative won because she was more persuasive" is less useful than...almost anything else you could write.
- Be broadminded. You are a unique person with a unique perspective, but don't demand that the performer adapt to your very specific set of preferences. Nothing is more frustrating to read than comments like "I never liked this story" or "That is not the argument I would have made" or "I'm tired of pieces about child abuse; get something else" or "I ranked you last because I don't like puns." In each of these cases, the judge seems to demand that the competitor create a performance designed for an audience of one. That way madness lies.
- Be a chronicler of your own impressions. Perhaps the most helpful comments are the ones where you note, specifically, when you were confused, bored, persuaded, or engaged. While over-prescribing a performance based on your own whims is a bad idea, telling the competitor your honest impressions of particular moments is absolutely helpful.
- Be positive. Many of your comments will be about how the student can improve, but try to find something that he is doing well, too.
- Be clear. Your comments should obviously suggest the kind of rank the student will receive. The comment for a last place should not be "You were awesome!" In a similar way, if you write only negative comments for the winning side of a debate, the readers will be justifiably confused.

**Here are some comments to avoid on the ballot:**

- I wish I could have given 6 first places. (This is usually written on the ballot of the sixth place competitor.)
- You are great, but the piece lets you down. (This is often a way to give the student a lower rank while still trying to praise her. Of course, if the piece was that bad, it would have concealed the greatness of the mini-Streep in your round.)
- Some people might be offended by.... (Who are these people? If something offends **you**, tell the competitor exactly what and why. Be honest. But don't hide behind the fiction of "Some people.")
- My phone number is.... (I'm looking at you, college freshman boys.)
- Your novice reading is great. You should move it into DI. (This might be acceptable if you think that this piece could win Dramatic Interpretation, but usually you mean that the competitor shows polish. Do you really want to throw her in the deep end in a new event with a piece that might not be suited for the new event? Probably not. However, you could say, "I think you could try DI in the future.")
- Back when I was competing/judging at Harvard/coaching the national champion.... (Please! We know you are great, but let's keep it focused on these students in this round.)
- As a first time judge.... (Let the students think you are a pro. They'll be more comfortable.)

**Think you are a bad judge? No way. You would never write any of these Awful Things That I Have Actually Read on Ballots:**

- You are so fake!
- I don't like your face.
- I just don't think Negative can win with this resolution.
- The only reason I didn't rank you lower is that I feel sorry for your parents.
- I have seen other people do this SO MUCH BETTER!
- Please dress like you cared. Where did you find that jacket?
- Maybe Speech and Debate isn't right for you.
- Could you fix your lisp?
- I think Asians are better suited for debate.
- I am so tired of hearing how bad Hitler was.

**A Brief Discussion about Inappropriate Material:**

If you believe that something violates tournament rules, ask the tab room. If a student says something vulgar, profane, or grossly offensive in a speech, you should note this on the ballot in specific terms. Please don't write something general like, "Some people might be offended by some

of the content.” Describe the particular offense and tell the consequence: “Your two references to women as b\*\*\*\*es was unnecessary in the context of the speech and it cost you two places in the round. “ A comment like that tells students, parents, and teachers exactly what the offending behavior was.

**A Brief Discussion about Inappropriate Behavior in Debate:**

Usually a judge wishes to be an invisible auditor in a round. But in debate, if a one student harasses another student in a personal and aggressive way, I think we have an obligation to be adults and immediately caution the offending student. Spirited debate is great. Meanness is not.

**On the Lighter Side, A Brief Discussion about Humorous Interpretation:**

Humor is a broad category. Some people love the 1950s sitcom *I Love Lucy*; and for others, the height of humor is Thomas Carlyle’s spiritual autobiography *Sartor Resartus*. Some people love PG Wodehouse, Jane Austen, Dave Berry, Douglas Adams, Tina Fey, or Christopher Moore. Few love them all equally. Some people find Amy Schumer to be a hilarious standup comedian; others prefer Bob Newhart. Some find *The Hangover* to be great; others laughed more at *Some Like it Hot*. Maybe you love puns, whimsy, bawdy humor, character comedy, or slapstick. Maybe you hate one of those categories. You probably don’t love them equally.

You get the point. Humor is subjective. That is why I hate the comment “This is not funny” on HI ballots. You and Queen Victoria may not be amused, but someone might be. It seems to me that in HI, as in all events, we should ask, “How well was this done?” before asking, “How many times did I laugh?” After all, some people laugh more at the bad acts on *America’s Got Talent* than they do at a Shakespeare comedy. Fair enough. But most of us would agree that a good production of *Twelfth Night* is of greater quality than Deranged Man Falls Down While Singing “Stayin’ Alive” out-of-tune. I would urge you to reward quality whenever possible.