

2021-22 New Coaches Welcome Packet



First things first: Building a Team

Hopefully you already have some students in mind that may make the perfect additions to your first team. Maybe some have already come and talked to you. If so, you are off to a great start. If not, here are some suggestions.

Many students who end up in speech are active in such school activities as drama club, the musical, art and music. Creative personalities are great additions to your team as interpretive specialists. But don't forget those students that have an analytic nature, perhaps the kids that are really interested in what's happening in the news. Students that can analyze and critique can be wonderful debate, congress and platform event contributors. Asking drama, music, history, English teachers, etc. for referrals is often very useful. Some of these teachers might even allow a couple of varsity students to do a 5-10 minute presentation during their classes (or show a quick prepared video). Some of the most successful recruiting is done by varsity members. They can do this by talking to their friends, making posters, doing short presentations in class, or through referrals from others. Encouraging students to join with friends is also very helpful.

Most of us would say that we encourage anyone with the slightest interest to at least come by and talk. Those students who don't find a niche in other high school activities can often thrive in speech and debate. Make a case for how much fun can be had. Students usually love to meet other competitors. The chance to receive recognition for their efforts can also be a selling point. Let them know that students can even receive scholarship offers to continue their efforts after high school.

A good thing about speech is that you do not need to have any specific number of students to have a team. A single student can still benefit from the experience and find success. Many smaller schools have teams of less than 10. The important thing is to find students willing to put in the time, practice and polish their pieces and then have the courage to appear in front of an audience at a competition.

Recruiting ideas

You should schedule some “Informational Meetings” at which you talk about the events, perhaps show the video (listed below) about them. It’s helpful to have varsity members at these meetings to talk about events they do and what they have gained from participation in speech. You could also show these inspirational videos:

Intro Video: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G_wTco3ICfQ

Josh Gad Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7k14xmxhluo>

Find Your Voice Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mdV9AoTc4HY&>



Events to Select From

There are 12-14 events students can elect to compete in. Some meets may even offer more. These events generally come in three categories: Interpretive, Platform and Debate. Each event area attracts a certain skill set. Some students are very drawn to interpretation because of an interest in acting. Others find that writing their own thoughts generates personal satisfaction. Still others like the analysis and critical skills found in debate. Regardless of what your students may find interesting, there are plenty of challenges for them in a meet. Eventually, students will consider competing in multiple events as their confidence and expertise grows.

Interpretive Events: Humor, Poetry, Drama, Duo, Programmed Oral Interp

Platform Events: Oratory, Extemporaneous Speaking, Informative, Impromptu

Debate Events: Congressional, Lincoln-Douglas (LD), Public Forum (PF), Policy Debate (CX), Parliamentary, Big Question

A more complete listing of all the events, along with their time limits and expectations can be found at this link: Event Slideshow:



<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1XNchmmjmBCSZCTRhE-ARrJgrNSCEfBU0hC-0sEOGA7A/edit?usp=sharing>

For an even more specific event requirements and rules, please refer either to the Wyoming High School Activities Association (WHSAA) website (check under General Links in the left column and then click on the

Handbook – search for the speech section) or by going to the National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) website. The NSDA site also carries a listing of websites that have approved materials for competitive use. Interpretive events must use materials that are either printed or have an ISBN number, unless they are web materials from the approved sites.



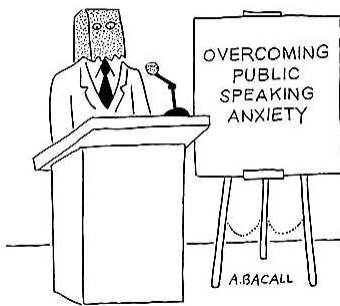
The Speech Season

Speech has the dubious distinction amongst high school activities of having the longest season and often the most required traveling. Many teams are gone every weekend and it is easy to get worn out if not tired of the entire process. Still, letting students know up front where and when the team may be traveling is critical. The WHSAA is limiting students to 10 meets per season. Teams may also travel by WHSAA regulations to the state meet and the NSDA national qualifier (district) meet. These limits apply to meets both inside and outside the state. Teams may travel outside the state (Utah, Idaho, Colorado, Nebraska, Montana, South Dakota), but these meets also count towards the maximum numbers. Different states have different procedures and rules that you will need to inquire about if attending these. Students may also attend workshops prior to the tournament start dates, but these should be non-judged events that are primarily for improving student skills. Most of these begin in October. The full season starts in week 17 of the WHSAA calendar year, which is usually the first week in November. The season wraps up in the middle of March. Pacing your team's participation can be critical to making sure your team is peaking at state or the national qualifier. The current WHSFA Tournament Schedule is available for your reference:

Please note that some of these dates may change after our business meeting or as the year progresses. Some new meets might be added. Some meets will be held virtually and some might be in-person. Being flexible is the key here. Try to set your schedule early (get your hotel room reservations made early for in-person meets) but be ready to shift if need be.

Students who are competing for their first season are in the "novice" category through December and tournaments try to schedule them to compete only

against other “novice” students. Starting in January, all students are considered varsity.



Practice Options

In order to have some success, a student must practice. This is not always an easy task to accomplish given our own commitments to our jobs and family. Depending on your situation, practice might look like:

After School: Many coaches do not have dedicated time to work with students during the school day.

After school practice can be arranged. A sign-up sheet with 20-30-45-60 minute slots can allow the student to practice in front of the coach, discuss improvements and ask any questions they might have. Longer time frames are usually required to practice debates. The down side of this is that students who must ride buses or work after school find it harder to sign up during these times.

The Speech Class: If you are fortunate, you may have a dedicated class for your students to practice in during the day. This is somewhat common in larger schools but less frequent as the school gets smaller. Structure this time to either have students present to the class or work in smaller groups to have more practice in the time slot.

During the Day (but not in a dedicated class): Some schools are starting to incorporate dedicated time during the day for focused recovery or reteaching for those students struggling in their normal classes. This time can also perhaps be used to allow students to practice, though they may be rehearsing for each other rather than the coach.

During Their Own Time: Some students and/or programs simply can't meet with everyone in the allotted time. Students should practice on their own time, but make some plan to focus this effort. Practicing in front of a camera and recording the effort for the coach is a good option. You can see (and compare, by saving recordings) the progress (or lack thereof) and comment on improvements. Students can also benefit from self-evaluating. Parents and/or siblings can make

good audiences, but be aware that their commentary may not be what you would recommend.

The bottom line here is that students need to rehearse and they need to do so regularly and frequently. However you make that happen, the students will grow.

Slideshow with some practice ideas:

<https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1wXVgvza0VsXFJVJIZddvL8v8eKbhZ0iacApDalQVdM/edit?usp=sharing>

District Policies

Speak to your activities director and to other coaches of other activities in your district, if you are new to sponsoring a team. Find out what the district policies are with respect to travel, behavior, travel costs and discipline. While speech students tend to be exceptional people, every coach can have a situation come up that requires reference to district policy. For the safety of students, and for your own safety and sanity, be aware of what your district's protocols are. Some areas you may need to be well versed in for "in-person" tournament include:

Transportation: You will be traveling frequently if your team is competing in a full season. This means you will need a bus. Are you required to arrange transportation or does an activities director take care of this? Make sure your transportation is large enough for all the students and yourself; as well as the large amount of luggage, case files, food boxes and team supplies you invariably will be carrying around. Also, are you paying for transportation out of your budget or the district's?



Meals: At least some meals will be required during travel. Determine what the policy is on meals for your team (district covers all costs, first meal is the student responsibility, district covers no meals at all). Some meals are available from the tournament, but often meals must be purchased off site after the meet. Will you need purchase orders for these or will you have a credit card? Or do you have to collect money from your students?

Lodging: Again, you will likely be having to stay overnight at many meets. Who makes these reservations? Is this done by the activities coordinator or are you responsible? If someone else is making reservations, make sure you are aware of costs for rooms. Also, do you need to count for your driver or are they separate?

Most hotels only allow 4/room so make sure you know the correct number of rooms you will need for students, coaches and drivers.

Travel Times: Some districts have policies that will not allow you to arrive home after a certain time. If this is the case, you may need to adjust your time for leaving a meet or make reservations for an additional night of lodging. Plan on leaving early and arriving home late for in-person tournaments.

Student Behavior

Most speech students are smart, well behaved and easy to work with. However, this is not always the case. It helps to have a clear set of expectations that can be handed to the student so they know in advance what is expected of them. This can also include a signature form for the student and their parent/guardian to sign to make sure all parties are on the same page. To see an example of Jackson's handbook, go to this link:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1kfszRvWHO3G-XBI2Rp0ycRRocYDNat67G5fTuOvD4Po/edit?usp=sharing>

If you would like to see what Greybull uses, please contact Joel Kuper at jkuper@bgh3.k12.wy.us. Other coaches are also willing to share their handbooks which could help you develop what you would like to use.

If you are writing your own, it might be wise to include the following areas.

1. *Dress Expectations* – Most speech students rock the suit at every meet. A simple black or navy suit is very common. While there is no required uniform, professional dress is expected by the judges, particularly in events such as debate, congress and oratory or informative. You can certainly allow students to dress comfortably, but encourage their professionalism as a matter of customary practice.
2. *Team Interactions* – Students sometimes need to be reminded that they need to be polite to members of other teams. Competition can be intense at times, but students should never resort to being rude. This includes speaking during other presentations, facial expressions or other things that might throw off a competitor, and blaming others for your placements or lack of success. All students are working hard – judges don't always agree with us, but students need to learn that life is not always what you expect.
3. *Trust* - Students will often be on their own at in-person tournaments as you might be judging a round or you may be in the tab room checking rounds and ballots. This means students must be trusted to behave themselves, be where they are supposed to be and do what is expected.

4. *Practices and Meet Attendance* – It may be useful to set some expectations for students about practice time and how that may affect being able to compete. Meets do have limited entries at times, so it may be important to have guidelines linking practice time to traveling.



5. *Covid19 procedures* required by your district
6. *Virtual tournament procedures*

It's Tournament Time!

Entering the First Meet

Regardless of when your first tournament appears on the schedule, you will need to register for the meet. Many of our state's high school meets have used "The Joy of Tournaments" website to enter students into the upcoming meets. However, many meets will be shifting to use "Tabroom." Training for how to use "Tabroom" will be offered at a workshop tomorrow, by Emily Farwell, a coach from Buffalo. By going to their website and establishing a free account, you can access the state of Wyoming's upcoming meets and then enter your students. Meets generally open for registration anywhere from a couple of weeks to a full month before the meet. Some college meets use specific other similar sites.

It is critical that you get students entered early. Many tournaments have a limit on either the number of students from a team or in a single event. Once those limits are reached, there may be no way to get into the meet. The entry process is reasonably simple. Enter student names into your account (or copy them from your NSDA site if your school is a member) and then simply check boxes to put students into their events. In addition to having limits on numbers of students, meets often have restrictions about students doubling or entering conflicting events in a pattern. You will need to check the tournament invitation to determine what restrictions there might be.

Once your students are entered, you need to check the fee pages to see what you will need to pay to enter the meet. Each entry generally has an attached fee. This can be anything from \$7.00 for individual events up to \$20 fee. If your budget is tight, the fees may limit your entries as much as tournament restrictions. Fees for a team of 20-25 entries can often balloon to over \$300/meet. Some meets also offer extras (such as meals, at in-person meets) which can also be arranged through the tournament website. Please consult with an experienced coach for further explanations of how typical tournaments run.



Going to Your First Meet

Most meets are hosted at a high school or college, and many will be held virtually. Please check the invitation as to when registration opens for each



meet. When you arrive at an

in-person tournament, find the registration table and inquire about your team's entries. While you are doing this, students are usually going to their base location to set up for the meet. The tournament invitation will include information about such procedures (including explanations of the procedures for virtual meets.)

Your task at the start involves checking your entries for accuracy, dropping or adding names (though this should be done ahead of time) and paying fees.

Schools most often expect a school voucher for these costs. At some meets, you may also be given a list of times that you will be judging. Coaches often help the hosts by judging a few rounds and filling in if needed to help the meet run better.

Once you get registered, for in-person meets, find your team and share with them the meet schedule (although this can be run off from the tournament website and copied ahead of time) and any school maps for room locations. If meal tickets

need to be distributed, this is an appropriate time. Some meets also list entries only by school code and a number, so if this is the case you need to inform

students of their codes. Even if names will be used, school codes are often used to distribute ballots to the teams, students should always know their school code.

Also make sure that students know the schedule and which pattern (HOPE, D's) will be running first. Approximately 30 minutes before the first round, postings containing the student codes and their rooms for the first round will be put up in one or two locations. Make sure students can find their codes and/or names and then make sure they know what room they need to find for their first round. The first time this happens, expect some chaos. It will smooth out after this. This

process will be repeated for the second round and/or pattern and will continue throughout the meet until semi-final or final rounds.



Students are generally assured 3-4 rounds (depending on the meet) and then may advance to semifinals or finals depending on their placements. Encourage students who are not in the current pattern to support their team members, but be careful with rounds that may be running behind. If a student is not sure when their next round is

beginning, they should wait to visit other events. Virtual tournaments usually don't allow for observations by non-participants.

Judges are community members, coaches, and accompanying judges and are usually unpaid volunteers.

You may be asked to judge a round. This may be done ahead of time (at registration) or someone may come and ask you at an in-person meet. It is also possible that your name be placed onto a room listing as the judge without your knowledge, so you may want to check each posting to see if you are needed that round. Virtual tournaments often put you in pools from which judge assignments will be made.

For those meets that run an open tab room, you may also check student ballots once they are posted and put into bags in the tab room. This does take some hosts time, so be patient. Your job here is to check and make sure things are accurate and no errors were accidentally made by the tab room. However, these results should NOT be shared with students until after the meet. It may be very tempting and exciting to alert a student about their round results, waiting is preferred.

Virtual tournaments have different procedures for ballot verification.



Once finals are done, the awards ceremony starts as soon as all finals are tabbed. Again, patience is key here. Some meets can be 1-2 hours late for any variety of reasons. When the awards are ready, at in-person meets, have your team sit together and politely wait. Awards are usually announced by event. The finalists from the first event go to the stage with another event waiting “in the



wings”. This continues through all events. Most tournaments have adopted a one clap rule, which means that after each placing is announced, everyone gives a single clap. Once the first-place winner is announced, teams stand and applaud the entire group. This moves things along faster than riotous clapping for each person and is simply polite. When all event winners are presented, team sweepstakes are announced. These are generally given in 4A, 3A and 2A/1A. Two or three places are provided, depending on the size of the meet and the director's needs. After the awards ceremony, the judge ballots are made available to take home, for the students to look at. Virtual tournaments have different procedures for awards and ballot distribution.

Tracking your Students Efforts

When you get back home, spend some time renewing and relaxing. When the week starts, you may want to have a team meeting to hand out ballots, although

many teams distribute these on the bus ride home. Discuss results, praise students for their efforts, and consider judge comments for improvement. If you are an NSDA school, you can enter the points earned for the meet (oftentimes these are “auto-posted” by the tournament hosts) and let students know if they

have earned any ranked within the students within

To enter “NSDA must have an you must have



new degrees or are state or regional that event.

points,” your school NSDA account and authorization to

access that information as the head coach or an assistant. Being part of NSDA also allows you to bring students to the NSDA qualifier meet and potentially qualify students to compete at the NSDA National Tournament. Find out which district your school belongs to (Hole in the Wall or Wind River) and contact the district chairperson (Marcus Viney or Londe Gagnon) for assistance.

The state tournament is much the same as any other. However, you are more limited in the number of total entries and students may have more rounds. This extends the state meet to three days. There are some very specific entry requirements, so when that time comes, check the invitation and registration materials carefully. The NSDA district tournament has several differences.

Your Contacts and Lifelines

Finding Some Mentors

Speech coaches are a helpful and supportive group. While we don’t always know all the answers, we can always find someone to provide what you need. This conference would be a wonderful time and place to find a mentor to assist you as the year goes on. If a former coach is still willing to help, s/he can be a good local source. There is probably a coach of a program close by that can also visit with you via email or maybe even stop by to help. You can also find help by searching the WHSFA email lists for coaches that may have similar circumstances and can share how they have overcome hurdles in their own programs. The list of emails, etc. for all the state coaches is:

https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/196xlnZvY2tZb0mW0gd6_0OHJYd6JUDn6xEv2_F4OA8E/edit#gid=721337350

The WHSFA has a Facebook page that can be accessed at

<https://www.facebook.com/WYOspeechanddebate/>. The association’s web site can be found at

<https://sites.google.com/site/wyomingspeechanddebate/calendar/hosting-tournament-resources>.

State Officers

Your state officers can also help answer your questions or clarify issues that might come up that are not within this brief review. Those individuals are elected every two years at the state WHSFA meeting. The current officers are:



Executive Committee

President – Marcus Viney (Cheyenne East High School)

marcuswayneviney@gmail.com

or marcus.viney@laramie1.org

Vice-President/Treasurer – Katie Roberts (Star Valley High School)

Katie@lampshadestudio.com

Secretary – Alan Pino (Cheyenne East High School)

pino.allen@gmail.com

PR and Media – Catherine Kellick (Natrona County High School)

catherine4584@myncsd.org

Thanks for joining our coaching community! Enjoy the conference!!!

<https://www.speechanddebate.org/new-coach-quick-start-guide/>