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Invite: Urban Debate Dragon Invitational

Welcome Letter

Inaugural Urban Debate Dragon Invitational

Hosted by the Washington Urban Debate League

Welcome,

We are excited to invite you to the 2025 Urban Debate Dragon Invitational. The tournament will be held at BASIS DC (410 8th St NW, Washington DC, 20004)

This tournament is the first tournament that awards TOC bids (Semi-Finals this year) that is completely run by an Urban Debate League, something we are very proud and very cognizant of. Our goal is to offer high level competition and high-level judging for every entrant, with a focus on accessibility and equity. As a result, we will have a JV division, it will NOT be collapsed to inflate our Varsity #s. We will also put all JV / Varsity judges in a single judge pool to ensure that folks have the widest choice in their prefs, and that we have lots of experienced options for JV folks.

We've made some new connections and are excited for expanded judge lounge hospitality, including cookies from Tab staff once again

The tournament will feature 6 rounds of preliminary debate in 3 Divisions (Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Novice), which are open to entries from anywhere in the nation. Preliminary rounds will start on Friday and conclude on Saturday evening. We will break to Octo-Finals and conclude debates on Sunday with break rounds. We aren't hosting a concurrent local competition anymore, so the cafeteria won't be quite as crowded as before.

We look forward to bringing together the best competitors from across the North-East/ Mid-Atlantic region and beyond, and from urban debate programs across the country.

Sincerely,

Washington Urban Debate League Programming Staff

Please don't hesitate to reach out if you have any questions:

david.trigaux@wudl.org

Registration Information

Registration:

Registration will occur through Tabroom.com. All announcements and other relevant information will be communicated through this platform, and we encourage all participants (coaches, judges, and students) to sign up for individualized text and/or email alerts to ensure a smooth tournament.

Event Location: The tournament will be at **BASIS DC**, 410 8th St NW, Washington DC 20004

BASIS DC was originally a carriage house for folks visiting government buildings downtown, and now seamlessly integrates with its urban environment (people sometimes walk past and don't look at the sign, and thus don't realize it is a school).

Transit:

BASIS DC is literally one block from the Archives train station, making your commutes even easier. If you are commuting from the Red line on the Metro, BASIS is extremely walkable from the Chinatown station, a map will be added to the tournament invite with the directions. There is a parking garage around the corner from BASIS (and a more expensive one across the street) for those driving to the tournament. If you have a bus, please give me a shout, and we'll figure out a parking solution for y'all.

Chaperoning Information:

Students competing in the Urban Debate Dragon Invitational must provide the contact information of a legally responsible Adult Coach who is available during the entire tournament. This individual is expected to have the phone numbers of all of their competitors and their parents in case anything goes wrong during the competition.

Initial Entry Restrictions:

We have no initial restrictions on entries per school from any school.

Teams must provide **experienced** judging or pay for hired judging. Quality judging is one of the most impactful factors supporting both the educational value and the competitive fairness of each round. Furthermore, there is a higher standard and expectation for adjudication as a tournament awarding a TOC bid. Thus, every round will be judged by an experienced judge. This includes JV and Novice debates, who deserve high quality feedback and the ability to improve just as much as current Varsity entries. We'll discuss this more below under "Judging Information."

The tournament will actively recruit competitive attendance from urban debate leagues from around the nation and will save some space in the tournament for these entries. We will also ensure that programs that attended at least two of the following regional tournaments the previous year will have space for some entries in the tournament: Georgetown Day School, Pennsbury Falcon, NY Fall Face-Off, Lexington. We love competing regionally and are strong advocates for regional debate and want to make sure it thrives despite the pandemic.

Non-Traditional Entries:

All entries must represent a single, actual school, but don't have to use that school's moniker for their entries. We won't admit entries from independent tutoring services or prep programs. These programs run counter to our values as an institution and present liability concerns.

Hybrid entries will be allowed in the event of illness, but otherwise aren't permitted.

Competitive Information

Competitive Info:

We will provide competition in all divisions using this year's NFHS resolution.

This year's tournament has been designated a Semi Finals Bid for the Tournament of Champions at the University of Kentucky, so participants in the semi-final Varsity rounds will all receive bids to attend the TOC in the spring.

Awards will also be given to the top speakers in all divisions.

Eligibility for the JV Division:

This Division is designed for students in their formative years, and the eligibility requirements should reflect that. You may enter in the JV Division if you have participated in two or less years of High School Debate.

Please contact the tournament director regarding questions or special circumstances (which I know arise frequently).

WUDL will have teams from a variety of schools participating in all divisions. We will conflict any judges who have helped a team prepare as necessary.

Debate Times:

Constructive: 8 Minutes

Rebuttals: 5 Minutes

CX: 3 Minutes

Argumentation Prep: 8 Minutes

Tech Prep: 10 Minutes (Use only if you have technical difficulties)

Judging Information:

Every school must bring one experienced judge for every two entries.

This adult should have a professional relationship with the team (teacher, coach, etc.) and you will be responsible for their actions and attendance. WUDL has a deep bench of experienced, background checked, judges available for hire and may hire additional outside judges if needed.

Please do not hire judges that you do not have a prior professional relationship with. This creates challenging student protection issues. If an adult not affiliated with your program wants to judge for you, tell them to apply to be hired by the tournament. Those found in violation will forfeit their rounds and be asked to leave the competition.

We value a diverse, balanced judge pool and will keep these criteria in mind when hiring, if we do so.

If a judge fails to appear on time for a round or acts inappropriately, their school will be fined, and their team with the best record will take a forfeit if spare judges aren't available.

Judges are obligated one round past their elimination of the team that they are affiliated with. Only with permission from the Tournament Director can your judge(s) be released from the above commitments.

In Novice CX, student judges are allowed and must be explicitly designated as a student judge in your registration.

Qualifications: We expect that every judge in the Varsity Division has at minimum judged at least 15 rounds of CX on a local circuit in the last few years and offers a complete paradigm via Tabroom for students (and the tournament), describing their argumentative preferences and experience. This should be more than a single sentence or collection of memes.

Judges without paradigms will be dropped, and it will be considered an uncovered judging obligation.

The tournament will offer mutually preferred judging and offer strikes to each entry.

Hired Judge Information

A substantial amount of hired judging will be available (\$300/team). WUDL works with a deep bench of experienced former debaters who live and work in the DMV who are experienced judges, which we will make available for hire. This is not an inexhaustible supply and teams are encouraged to bring at least some of their own judging.

All hired judging requests must be made through the tournament staff. Only after explicit approval by the Tournament Director will you be allowed to hire judges. Please do not request to hire judging if you will be present at the tournament but not in the judging pool yourself. All hired judge requests must be made no later than two weeks before the tournament. After this date we cannot guarantee any hired judging requests and you will need to email the tournament directly and make the request.

Do not consider your judging request approved until you receive an email back from the Tournament Director. The tournament would love to hire out any additional rounds your program may have available. Please email the tournament director for more information.

Finally, if you hire a judge but later your entry falls below the necessary number of entries to need that judge, you will still be charged for that judge. It is a financial risk for the tournament to not hold you accountable for these hired judges. We must plan well in advance to hire judges and just because your entries change at the last minute doesn't solve the fact the tournament has already made arrangements on your part to provide competitive opportunities to your students.

Judge Conduct Guidelines

As an adult member of the debate community you must act as professionally as possible when attending and judging at a tournament. We require that all tournament judges observe the highest standards of professional ethics and be an appropriate role-model in this community.

This means:

Do:

- Be sure that conflicts are accurately entered on Tabroom.com before the tournament starts
- Review the rules of CX debate, know the community norms (such as about evidence sharing), and be lenient on those new to this level of competition (and the related online transition).
- Your best to judge the round solely on the arguments made before you and not any pre-conceived notions or information
- Understand that debate topics can be very personal for many participants. Debate should be a safe space for students to speak their minds and share their experiences.
- Consider how the digital divide impacts our community.
 - Don't hold it against a debater who cannot join via video, has connection issues, or other relevant manifestations of the digital divide. Online debate opens new horizons of accessibility and also creates other substantial issues. Let the round be decided on the substance of a student's arguments, not on their ability to access high speed internet.

Do Not:

- Tolerate sexist, racist, or other discriminatory acts by participants (or observers). These should be reported to Tab straight away and the round paused.
- Participate in outside activities while judging. You would want someone giving you their full attention while you spoke, so give these debaters the same respect.
 - I have seen a judge shopping for shoes during a round (and they delayed the round to ask the debater's opinion of their purchases). Do not be that judge.
- Be under the influence of drugs, alcohol, or other impairing substances while judging.
- Don't post disparaging comments about your rounds on social media during the tournament.
- Do not engage with students in an aggressive or bullying manner. We have a zero-tolerance policy for bullying in both student to student, and adult to student contexts.

Entourage Rule

A great policy we are borrowing from GDS: To ensure the highest quality of judging, we require that coaches brought along to the tournament be entered into the judging pool. We understand the difficulties of chaperoning and therefore we only require coaches who will be scouting other teams to be entered in the judging pool. In other words the following are exempt from this rule: (1) coaches/chaperones who wish to watch only their own students' debate and (2) coaches/chaperones who won't be watching any debates due to being busy with chaperoning duties. Violations will be fined the judging fee per day. Multiple violations will consider forfeiture of teams.

We are also adding a new provision for 2025 -- private coaches are also banned from the tournament. A "private coach" is defined as someone offering argument support to some, but not all debaters from a specific school.

Financial Information

Entry Fees:

Entering a Team: \$125

Hiring a Judge: \$300

Drop Fee: \$100 per team

Observer: \$5 per day (\$15 for the whole tournament)

*An Observer is defined as anyone who isn't in the judge pool or actively competing. To register an observer to enter, please email the tournament director with their full name, affiliation, and email address. Failure to do so will result in denial of admittance.

To Make A Payment:

- Credit Card
 - Payments may be made as donations to the Washington Urban Debate League on our website:
www.urbandebatewashingtondc.org/donate
 - Please include who you are and what you are paying for in the note section.
- Checks
 - Best brought with you, or if you must mail, please send by 11/01/25
 - Please mail to: PO Box 6319, Washington DC, 20015
 - Please make checks out to the "Washington Urban Debate League"
 - Checks made out to any other name will not be accepted. If your school check is made out incorrectly, you will need to provide a personal check for us to hold until your school can send us another check.

*If you need a W-9 for your school please contact the tournament director

Fees are due before competition starts, and we encourage you to do so ahead of time.

Urban Debate Teams:

If entry or judge fees will impact your attendance, please contact the Tournament Director, we will lower fees to make the competition accessible for you if possible, after consultation with your league staff or other applicable administrators.

Hospitality:

We are excited to be able to offer D.C. hospitality after several years of online competition. We have long-standing relationships with excellent caterers representative of the district that we hope to show-case. We will also offer a judge's lounge. This is a default space where judges should go when not in round, and will house the coffee, so this is where we go if we need to find folks to cover a round, so be findable.

Hotel Information:

We are exploring a tournament hotel deal, but in the interim, we encourage folks to check out hotels outside the city center, either in Silver Spring or near the airport.

Schedule:

Friday:

- Opening Assembly and Pairings: 4:15 PM
- Round 1: 4:45 PM
- Dinner
- Round 2:
 - Pairings: 6:45 PM
 - Start Time: 7:15 PM

Saturday:

- Round 3:
 - Pairings: 8:30 AM
 - Start Time: 9:00 AM
- Round 4:
 - Pairings: 11:00 AM
 - Start Time: 11:30 AM
- Lunch
- Round 5:
 - Pairings: 2:30 PM
 - Start Time: 3:00 PM
- Round 6:
 - Pairings: 5:00 PM
 - Start Time: 5:30 PM
- Awards and Break Announcements: 7:30 PM

Sunday:

- Octo-Finals:
 - Pairings: 8:30 AM
 - Start Time: 9:00 AM
- Quarter Finals:
 - Pairings: 11:00 AM
 - Start Time: 11:30 AM
- Lunch
- Semi-Finals:
 - Pairings: 2:30 PM
 - Start Time: 3:00 PM
- Finals:
 - Pairings: 5:00 PM
 - Start Time: 5:30 PM

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- All times are approximate and can change at the Tournament Director/Tab Room's discretion.
- Teams who do not show up 15 minutes after the posted start time forfeit the round. If a team does not show up 15 minutes after the posted start time for the first round on time, the drop fee will be applied.
- The 1AC should start at the posted start time, or as soon as the Aff team enters the room, whichever comes sooner.
- All debates are to be decided no later than 120 minutes/2hr after the posted start time. If we do not receive your ballot at this point, the tab room will flip a coin to decide the winner.
- All coaching should cease at least 5 mins prior to the rounds scheduled start time. We have built in 30 minutes of preparation time prior to each debate. As a result, we will aggressively enforce the start times, we will not delay the entire tournament because a coach has some last minute cards to share (Trust me, they won't make a difference anyway).
- All rounds may be accelerated on their own schedules due to flights, closeouts, etc. This schedule is only an approximation for when each round will begin. The tab room will determine the exact timing of each round.

Anti-Harassment Policies

We seek to provide students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying. This applies perhaps even more online than on school property, a school bus and/or physically at a school function. The WUDL maintains a firm policy prohibiting all forms of discrimination, harassment, or intimidation, based race, color, creed, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, military status, veteran status, disability, predisposing genetic characteristics or use of a recognized guide dog, hearing dog or service dog (as those terms are defined by law). Harassment by any person, which creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive environment will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

The tournament will have an equity officer/team, which will be announced closer to the event.