

2020 National Online Collegiate Forensics Festival

Dear Forensics Community,

In an effort to celebrate the 2019-2020 forensics season and provide a culminating tournament experience for students, we are proud to announce the **1st Annual National Online Collegiate Forensics Festival**. This will be a **synchronous** video conference style festival held Sat April 25-Sun April 26.

While the festival hopes to mirror much of traditional championship tournament practices, we should say from the start that we are **not** trying to replace CCCFA, Phi Rho Pi, AFA, NFA, etc... Online video conferencing is a far cry from the traditional forensics model. We do not aim to replace traditional forensics tournaments or championships - hence, the purposeful use of the word "festival" to describe this event. However, we also want to provide a space for students to showcase their talents and skills.

We also recognize that a synchronous tournament may not work well for all students and all programs. If it's not going to work, we strongly encourage you to enter the [ProtoCommunications Asynchronous Tournament](#).

Key Points:

- There will be no entry fees.
- Registration is due by Wed April 22 6pm Pacific time on [ForensicsTournament.net](#)
- Students will need to compete with the authorization and support of their school's coaching staffs. No independent student entries will be accepted.
- Each school is required to provide one judge for every 5 IE entries per pattern/2 debate teams. Uncovered entries will not be permitted. Please see [HiredJudge.com](#) if you need to arrange for judges.
- The tournament will use synchronous video conferencing. Please see the *Best Practices* section of this invite for tips on how to effectively use the platform.
- There will be a 4yr and 2yr division for all events. (Note: all students may compete in the 4yr division but only students eligible for Phi Rho Pi 2020 will be able to enter the 2yr division). Events with small entries may be collapsed.
- All 11 individual events (with some modifications) and NPDA, NFA-LD, IPDA, BP debate will be offered.
- Some final rounds and the Awards ceremony will be live-streamed on YouTube.

We hope you and your team can join us April 25-26 for a celebration of the hard work our forensics students have been doing all season. If you have any questions please feel free to email us at danny@forensicstournament.net

Sincerely,

Danny Cantrell Mt. SAC Tournament Director	Robert Cannon, Wilshire Academy Tab	Brianna Broady (PCC) & Jedi Curva (ELAC), Competitor and Judge Liaisons	Angelica Grigsby, Maricopa Speech & Debate Topics, Extemp & IPDA Prep	Jacqueline Yu (CSU Fullerton) & Jules French (IVC) Awards
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2020 National Online Collegiate Forensics Festival Tentative Schedule*

Friday, April 24 (all times Pacific)	Saturday, April 25 (all times Pacific)	Sunday, April 26 (all times Pacific)
4:00pm Email/Phone Verification Drops 5:00pm Opening Ceremony (live streamed on youtube) Tournament staff will be available in the Video Help Room.	8:00am (120 minutes) Pattern A Round 1 Extemp Prep: 8:00am 10:00am (105 minutes) Pattern B Round 1 IPDA Topic Strike NFA-LD Round Start 11:45am (90 minutes) Pattern C Round 1 NPDA/BP Topic Announce 1:15pm (90 minutes) Pattern A Round 2 Extemp Prep: 1:15pm 2:45pm (90 minutes) Pattern B Round 2 IPDA Topic Strike NFA-LD Round Start 4:15pm (90 minutes) Pattern C Round 2 NPDA/BP Topic Announce 5:45pm (75 minutes) Pattern A Round 3 Extemp Prep: 5:45pm 7:00pm (75 minutes) Pattern B Round 3 IPDA Topic Strike NFA-LD Round Start	(Schedule substantially changed due to collapsing events - PLEASE share with competitors) 8:00am (90 minutes) Pattern C Round 3 NPDA/BP Topic Announce 9:30am (75 minutes) IPDA/NFA-LD Round 4 10:45am (90 min) Pattern C Round 4 NPDA/BP Topic Announce 12:15pm (90 min) Pattern B Finals IPDA Bronze Topic Strike NFA-LD Bronze Round Start 1:45pm (90 minutes) Pattern C Elim 1 NPDA Bronze Topic Announce BP Gold Topic Announce 3:15pm (75 minutes) Pattern A Finals Extemp Prep: 3:15pm 4:30pm (75 minutes) IPDA Gold Topic Strike NFA-LD Gold Round Start 5:45pm (90 minutes) Pattern C Gold NPDA Gold Topic Announce 7:30pm Awards

* Schedule may be adjusted depending on entries

Pattern A: Informative, After Dinner, Prose, Poetry, Extemp

Pattern B: Persuasion, Comm Analysis, Drama, POI, DUO, Impromptu, IPDA, NFA-LD

Pattern C: NPDA, BP

Individual Events

- All 11 IE events will be offered (Informative, After Dinner, Comm Analysis, Persuasive, Extemp, Impromptu, Prose, Poetry, Drama, POI, DUO)
- Three prelims will be held on Saturday April 25.
- Students may enter a maximum of two events per pattern
- 1 Judge is required for every 5 entries per pattern
- Prelim Ranking: Ranks/Decimal/Points Elim Ranking: Total Rank/Decimal in Elim/Points in Elim
- Speaker Point Scale will be 100-70.
- Elims will be held on Sunday April 26. If an event has more than 30 entries a semi-final round will be held.
- Students will be recognized with *Superior*, *Excellence*, and *Honors* awards. The top 5% of students in each event will be recognized with a superior award, the top 10% Excellence, and top 20% with Honors. For example, if an event has 50 entries there will be roughly 3 superior awards, 2 excellence, and 5 honors depending on tiebreakers and breaks. All students in elimination rounds will receive recognition.

Limited Prep Events:

- Impromptu topics will be provided to each student in the Live Video Room (their competition room) chat box. Judges will need to copy/paste the topics (provided on the eBallots) in the chat window for the students.
- Each student will receive a different set of impromptu topics.
- Extemp questions will be provided for all speakers in a separate Extemp Prep Live Video Room. Students do not need to stay in the Extemp Prep Room after receiving the questions. The extemp proctor will copy/paste the questions into the chat window at the specified time.
- This is, admittedly, **not** the same as a face-to-face tournament. We appreciate your patience and willingness to still try it out.

Platform Events:

- While students are allowed to still use Visual Aids, they are encouraged to have them printed on 8.5x11 pages to show to the audience while presenting.
- Screen sharing to show a PowerPoint or image is **not permitted** due to various technology issues. Since not all students may be able to access the screen sharing function, we feel it's best to not allow that option.

Interp Events:

- These are likely the most difficult to translate to an online video conference style.
- **Books will be optional. Given the nature of the video conferencing system, holding books while performing can block many cameras. Students are encouraged to use them to hold true to traditional forensics tournaments but this adaptation is left to the students. Judges are instructed not to penalize students for not using books.**
- Students may, if they desire, stand up while performing to showcase blocking, but the technology works better sitting in front of the camera.
- Partners are encouraged **NOT** to be in the same room to respect social distancing recommendations.

- Partners, if in the same physical room, should share one live stream. Having multiple live video rooms open on the same WiFi causes poor connections.
- Students are encouraged to try out various methods of performance ahead of time and innovate!

Debate

- There will be two prelims on Saturday April 25 and two prelims on Sunday April 26. Standard pairing will be used with 1 random round followed by 3 HL rounds. In Elims, brackets will be broken to facilitate debating.
- Two final rounds will be held Phi Rho Pi Style. Teams not advancing from the first elimination round will receive Honors; teams advancing but not winning the final will receive Excellence; teams winning the final will receive Superior.
- Students may only single enter in one debate event per pattern (IPDA **or** NFA-LD in pattern B) and (NPDA **or** BP in pattern C).
- 1 Judge is required for every 2 debate entries
- Speaker Point Scale will be 100-70
- Prelim Ranking: Wins/Total Points/HL Points/Opp Wins/Z Score
- Speakers Ranking: Total Points/HL Points/Ranks/Z Score
- A 5 minute forfeit rule will be put in place for all debate rounds.

NPDA/BP:

- Students will receive the topic via a separate NPDA & BP Topic Live Video Room at the start time for Pattern C. It will also be posted on the main page of the tournament on ForensicsTournament. Students are responsible for ensuring they get the topic on time.
- Students do not need to stay in the Live Video Room after receiving the topics. The Topic Proctor will copy/paste the topic into the chat window at the specified round start time.
- Only one topic per round will be announced.
- Standard rules will be used including flex time for NPDA.
- Partners are encouraged **NOT** to be in the same room to respect social distancing recommendations.
- Partners, if in the same physical room, should share one live stream. Having multiple live video rooms open on the same WiFi causes poor connections.
- Top Teams and the top 10 speakers will be recognized

IPDA:

- Students will conduct topic strikes in the Live Video Room with their judge. Students and judges should be in the Live Video room (ie, competition room) at the start time for Pattern B.
- Judges will have the prompts available on the eBallot and should copy paste it into the chat window.
- Standard striking procedures will then be followed (Neg, Aff, Neg, Aff, 1 minute each). Prep time starts once the aff strikes their last topic.
- Students may double enter in IPDA and 1 pattern B IE, but must do their IPDA round first.
- Coaches may help IPDA students during prep time.
- No speaker awards will be given.

NFA-LD:

- Judges should start their NFA-LD round at the start time listed for pattern B.
- Evidence sharing can be facilitated through posting links in the chat window.
- Standard NFA-LD procedures will be followed unless noted.
- Students may double enter in NFA-LD and 1 pattern B IE, but must do their NFA-LD round first.

- Case disclosure is not required by the tournament nor will be facilitated by tournament staff.
- No speaker awards will be given.

Fees

- None!
- But this also means there will be **no** buying out of judging requirements. You must have one judge for every 5 entries per pattern and 1 judge for every 2 debate teams.
- If you have both IE and IPDA/NFA-LD entries in pattern B, you must cover ALL entries in that pattern. **The same judge cannot judge both an IE section and IPDA/NFA-LD section at the same time.**
- Please be careful to have enough judges to cover every 5 pattern B IE entries + every 2 pattern B Debate entries. So if you have 10 pattern B IE entries and 10 IPDA debaters, you will need to enter 2 IE judges + 5 IPDA judges for a total of 7 judges who can judge pattern B.
- Hopefully the online nature of the event makes finding judges easier. If needed, please see HiredJudge.com if you need to arrange for judges.

Round 0 - Test Round Friday

- This has been cancelled.
- ~~• The goal of the test round is to make sure all the text and email addresses are saved correctly.~~
- ~~• All students and judges will receive a sample ePosting or eBallot.~~
- ~~• Students and judges should check-in to their Live Video Room to minimize tech disruptions on Saturday morning. This round will not count for the final rankings but will let everyone do a quick trial run.~~
- ~~• Judges will not need to rank/rate on IEs or make decisions in debate. Please just click the 'no show' button for any students who are not in the live video room and we can follow up with them.~~
- ~~• The round will then be deleted and will not count towards the final rankings.~~

Competitor Logistics / Best Practices

- All competitors must have a verified text number or email saved on ForensicsTournament.net **Email is preferred**
- Coaches can save those (& verify) from the Student Roster page.
- Competitors will receive a text/email with their ePostings information.
- The ePostings will have a link to a Live Video Room where they will perform. Click that link to go to your round. No logins or passwords are required. Judges will be in the same Live Video Room to listen and rank the round. The tournament will be using the [8x8 video conference room software](#).
- If double entered, students should go to each room before competing and type in the chat window that they are double entered so judges know they will be coming back.
- Please do not immediately start to talk when entering a Live Video Room. Another student may be already performing. Please wait to be recognized by the judge.
- Students should remain in the Live Video Room as audience members with both video and audio on to the extent possible. Due to audio feedback loops or bandwidth issues, you may need to mute your audio or video feeds. But ideally, react to the performances like in a face-to-face round.
- Students can, if it fits their particular setup, sit while performing. Judges are instructed *not* to penalize students for sitting while speaking since the particular tech setup may work better while sitting.
- Students are also encouraged to use a mic/headphones since audio quality is much better than with an external mic. Judges are instructed *not* to penalize students for having mics/headphones on.
- We recognize this creates some challenges for certain events. But we trust in the ingenuity of the forensics community to adapt to this new environment. Some students may also have better quality video, lighting, sound, etc... We will all try our best.
- **If a student's internet connection drops or audio quality is poor**, they will be **required** to call into the video conference room and give their speech with audio only. While not ideal, it will ensure all student's speeches are listened to by a judge. You can get the dial-in information from the info icon in the bottom right of the screen.

Judge Logistics / Best Practices

- All judges must have a verified phone or email saved on ForensicsTournament.net
- Coaches can save those (& verify) from the Judge Roster Page
- Judges will receive a text/email with their eBallot link. Judges should click on that link within 5 minutes of receiving it to indicate that they have “picked up” their ballot.
- On your eBallot you will have all of the competitors in that round along with a link to a live video room. Click that link to go to your video conference room.
- Your eBallot will then have a feedback form where you can type your feedback to the student while they are performing or afterwards. The eBallot also has a timer to make it easy to time each speaker.
- If a judge’s keyboard is loud they are encouraged to mute their audio during performances but please leave the video feed on so competitors can receive your visual feedback.
- Judges are instructed *not* to penalize students for sitting while speaking since the student’s particular tech setup may work better while sitting.
- Judges are also instructed *not* to penalize students for having mics/headphones on since audio quality is usually much better using a mic/headset.
- Judges are also instructed *not* to penalize students for lighting, video/audio quality, video background to the extent possible.
- **If a judge’s internet connection drops or audio quality is poor**, they will be **required** to call into the video conference room and listen to speeches with audio only. While not ideal, it will ensure all student’s speeches are listened to by a judge. You can get the dial-in information from the info icon in the bottom right of the screen.
- For Impromptu/Extemp/IPDA/NPDA/BP, the eBallot will have the quotations/questions listed on it.

Sweepstakes

- The top five 2yr and 4yr schools will be recognized.
- Top three Debate Sweeps and IE sweeps will be recognized.
- ~~• Top three limited entry division (defined as less than 22 slots) will be offered if warranted (at least 10 schools meet that definition). Schools may not mark events as non-sweeps eligible. 2 person events count as 1 slot for sweeps calculations. Due to limited entry sizes, this award will not be given this year.~~
- IE/IPDA/NFA-LD Sweep points: Superior 10, excellence 7, honors 5
- Debate Sweep points: superior 20, excellence 15, honors 10. Only a school's top 4 debate teams per event will count towards sweepstakes.
- Top 5 individual event speakers will also be recognized. (IPDA/NFA-LD will be included for IE sweeps).

FAQ

(will be updated as more questions are sent our way)

- **How is this the same as AFA/NFA/CCCFA/PRP?** It's not. But it's an effort to afford students the chance to finish their 2019-2020 season and showcase their hard work.
- **How much does the tournament cost?** It's free!
- **How can I register?** Coaches will need to register their teams on ForensicsTournament.net
- **Can I have 2 uncovered IE entries/just 1 uncovered debate team?** No. All entries must be covered or they will not be accepted. Given that the tournament is not collecting entry fees we have no funds to pay for hired judges.
- **Where is the Extemp Prep/NPDA/BP Topic announce Room?** As we get closer to the tournament links will be sent out to a special video room for these events.
- **How will I get my impromptu quotation?** The judge will have the impromptu quotations on their eBallot. When it's your turn to speak your judge will copy/paste the prompts into the chat window in the Live Video Room.
- **How will we strike IPDA topics?** The judge will have all five IPDA topics on their eBallot. At the start of the round go to your Live Video Room. The judge will copy/paste the resolutions into the chat window. Each team will strike as normal. Turn off your audio/visual feeds in the room during prep. 30 minutes later the round will commence.
- **Where will we prep for NPDA/BP?** Each school has access to practice rooms through ForensicsTournament.net. Please use those rooms.
- **How will DUOs compete?** We are not sure. Interp is an especially tough format to translate to video conferencing. Please practice using the practice rooms on ForensicsTournament.net
- **What type of awards will be given out?** Digital certificates will be emailed to all elimination round participants. Sweepstakes awards will be sent out to each school following the tournament. Additional awards may be given to event winners...
- **Can NPDA debaters read from prepared files on their computer?** While the nature of a video conference room debate opens up a lot of different options, we would like NPDA to mirror as closely as possible the tournament experience. While it may be difficult to enforce, debaters should only be using material prepared during the preparation time and **not** reading from prepared scripts. If that's your jam, please enter NFA-LD.
- **What type of NPDA topics should we expect?** A variety of fact, value, policy, and possibly metaphor topics will be used at the tournament. Students will receive the topics 20 minutes before the debate round starts in a separate NPDA Topic Video Conference room that will be announced later.
- **Can coaches help prep during NPDA/IPDA prep time?** Yes. But coaches who are judging IPDA should first ensure their topic draw is completed before going to help prep their teams.
- **Can coaches help prep during BP prep?** Consistent with BP practice, coaches can not help during prep time.
- **What about poor internet connections?** In order for the video conference to work, your internet should be at least 6 Mbps. You can check your internet speed [here](#). There is also an asynchronous tournament being offered which may work better if you have a poor internet connection. Each Live Video Room has an option to "call in" via phone. While there will be no visual, at least you can still present the audio portion of your speech.
- **But isn't it unfair I can't compete because I have a poor internet connection?** Yes. We are sorry. But we see this as analogous to students who can't compete at national tournaments due to costs / entry limits / time

commitments / family or job obligations / etc... No tournament is accessible to all students. But we are trying our best to afford many students an end of the year tournament. Again, please see the Asynchronous tournament which may work better for people with slow internet connections.