

You are responsible for the information in this document so read it carefully!

For those of you who are pursuing partnerships now, a few guidelines are in order. If you follow this advice, you might avoid a lot of unpleasant issues later in the year. For those of you who are new to Clash, families are responsible for forming their own partnerships. Parents must be the facilitators in partnership decisions. The leadership of Clash does not do that for you. **We are available and willing to give advice and help when asked, however.**

1. Clash has set up specific rules regarding partnering that have been developed out of years of experience. Please be sure to read the partnering section in the by-laws below.
2. An official partnership is expected to last the entire debate season. It is a commitment and it can only be dissolved by mutual consent and the approval of the Clash board.
3. Occasionally circumstances or financial constraints may result in a student going to a qualifying tournament without their "official" partner. In that situation it is fine to compete with another student as long as it is understood that both students in the "ad hoc" partnership have a priority commitment to their original partners. They are obligated to compete with their original partner whenever that partner is able to attend a tournament and if they receive a qualifying checkmark to NITOC with the new partner, that checkmark is secondary to any checkmarks received with their real partner. (be sure to discuss questions 2, 3, and 4 below to minimize this situation).
4. Partnering is a family decision. It is best if parent approaches parent rather than student approaching student (never should a parent approach a student about partnering with their child. This puts huge pressure on the student and is very intimidating!). We know that kids talk to kids about these issues but a partnering request should not be considered official unless it comes from the parent. Students have been known to make vague promises to several people at once. A formal contact by the parents makes it clear that this is a serious request.

Families need to discuss frankly their mutual expectations. It would be wise to discuss the following questions before a partnership is formed. There are no right or wrong answers to these questions but it is good to know if you differ in fundamental ways. Never assume that another family has the same attitudes about these issues that your family does. Take the time to answer these questions independently and then discuss them with your prospective partner and their family. (note: if you answer them together before thinking them through on your own you will tend to modify your answers to please the other person. That usually breaks down after two or three tournaments. :o)

### **COMMITMENT LEVEL**

- Where do you plan to travel to qualifying tournaments in California? (to Northern CA, Southern CA, or both?)
- Are you willing to travel to tournaments in other parts of the country? If so, how many?
- Are there any tournaments that you know of now that you won't be able to attend? (check the Stoa web site for potential dates and locations [www.stoausa.org](http://www.stoausa.org))
- Are there other commitments (Scouts, music, church, heavy school load, trips, college applications, etc), which will take priority over debate and perhaps impact the team's performance? (It isn't a problem that there are other things that matter more than debate :o) as long as this is clear to both families from the beginning).
- If your team receives 2 green checkmarks, will you travel to NITOC to participate?

### **PHILOSOPHY REGARDING DEBATE**

- How often do you think the students need to get together to work on debate?
- How involved do you think parents should be in helping the team (some parents are very hands on while other parents let the kids fend for themselves. Differing expectations can lead to frustration or disappointment)

## STUDENT GOALS

- What are your realistic goals for the coming year?
- How important is it to you to qualify for the National Invitational Tournament of Champions?
- How much time do you plan on working on debate each week?

## PREFERENCES

- Do you like to find a case and stick with it all season or do you prefer to change cases frequently?
- Do you like to experiment with new debate strategy and counterplans or do you prefer to hone your debate skills in a more traditional format?
- Do you see yourself as stronger in research skills or speaking skills? (ask your parents and at least two adults who watched you last year to help you with this one.) It is often helpful to partner with a student who has complementary skills.

A final guideline is to realistically assess your (or your student's) skills. If you are having a difficult time finding a partner, perhaps you should ask a third party to evaluate the situation. Some students are trying for partners who are way above them in skill level. Other students are known for a poor work ethic. Other issues might be involved as well. There might even be parent issues that need to be addressed. A frank assessment might be difficult to accept but it also may help you tremendously in your personal growth.

Be sure to always treat other students and their families fairly. Be honest about where you stand and don't play games. If a formal partnering request is made of your family, respond within a week or so. If you are waiting to hear from another debater, be honest and tell them so. Game playing can lead to hard feelings and frustration.

Above all, pray about it and treat others as you would like to be treated.

If you do form an "official partnership", please turn in the Partnering Form below so we can see how things are shaping up for this coming year. The Partnering Form is attached and needs to be signed by all the parties involved. Also be sure to reread the partnering section of the bylaws below.

Thanks!

## **PARTNERING PROCESS (FROM THE CLASH BY-LAWS)**

The choice of one's debate partner is an important decision, determined by many subtle factors, including the personality, schedule, skills, goals, and family situation of the individuals involved. Because partnering is a highly personal decision, Clash policy leaves both the control and responsibility of partnering almost completely to debaters and their parents.

The choice of a partner is also a serious matter. Each partner relies on the other partner to invest much time and effort in the partnership. Partnering for team policy debate should be viewed as a commitment lasting a full season. Partnering for parliamentary debate is more flexible but students and their parents should communicate carefully with their partners about their goals for higher levels of competition such as state or national tournaments that teams qualify for as a unit.

Clash does not guarantee that a debater will be given a partner. Debate families must find and choose partners for themselves.

Teams must inform the Clash leadership of their proposed partnership. They must sign the partnering agreement that declares and records the intentions of the debaters and their parents, and the approval of the club leadership.

If a team wishes to break up, they must notify the Clash leadership. It is expected that the decision to dissolve a partnership will be mutual, not unilateral.

Debaters are expected to choose their partners in a timely manner. It is especially important for senior debaters to choose partners early in the season. Note that non-qualifying tournaments (or "round robins") early in the season provide an opportunity for debaters to try each other out as partners. Partnering in non-qualifying tournaments is not governed by these partnering rules. For purposes of overseeing partnering decisions, the set of "Clash leaders" consists of Board members, the Clash director, and cell group leaders.

# CLASH PARTNERING AGREEMENT

rev. 04/2017

I understand that this [ ] Team Policy [ ] Parliamentary debate partnership is a commitment that lasts for the 20\_\_-20\_\_ debate season. It can only be dissolved by mutual consent and with the approval of the Clash Board. Our families have discussed the suggested partnering issues and agree on tournament attendance and commitment level.

Debater Name (Print)

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Debater Name (Print)

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Signature

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Signature

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Date

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Date

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Parent approval

Signature

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Parent approval

Signature

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Date

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Date

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