### Tournament Committee

#### Composition

At its Fall meeting the National Debate Coaches Association Board shall elect, by majority vote, a tournament director to conduct the spring championship tournament (The National Debate Coaches Association Championships). The appointed individual may serve multiple terms but must be reappointed at each Fall meeting. The tournament director shall create a public forum debate tab room committee that should include, but not necessarily be limited to, a three person committee to run the tournament as directed by this document. The tournament director should strive to create a tab room committee with a high school college partnership seeking to avoid personnel with students competing in the tournament. Individuals may serve on more than one of the tournament committees.

#### Jurisdiction

At the beginning of round one onward all decisions related to running the public forum debate tournament will be made by the public forum debate tab room committee, guided by this document, and implemented by the tournament director until the tournament is completed. This rule is meant to clarify that it is impossible for the NDCA Board to anticipate every contingency that will arise during the tournament and efficient tournament management will occasionally require that difficult decisions be made quickly without a specific rule outlined in this document. NDCA Board members should not be members of the tab room committee. The Tournament Director may be an NDCA Board member, however, once the tournament is underway the tournament director is charged with implementing decisions of the tab room committee but is not a member of that committee.

### Tournament qualification

The Public Forum division of the NDCA Championships will accept up to 100 teams.

Public forum debate competition is considered a team activity. Both students on a participating team must attend the same school, represent that school and be eligible to participate in extracurricular activities for that school. Even if the school district allows some students to compete with other schools within the district the NDCA National Championships will not allow those entries. If the tournament director determines that a given entry does not represent a school that entry(ies) may only file an appeal to the board if they registered for the tournament prior to March 15th. Coaches acknowledge that by entering the tournament that their teams are in compliance with the tournament rules. It is the obligation of the coach to file an appeal prior to March 15th if there is a situation that stretches the limits of one of the rules, such as the definition of the word “school”.

Each member school of the NDCA is entitled to enter one team.

All additional teams must qualify using the following process: Any team that has reached elimination rounds in varsity competition will be eligible to enter the tournament. Schools may enter up to four teams and put additional teams on the waiting list. After March 15 teams will be released from the waiting list until the tournament is full. When releasing teams off the waiting list the tournament director should release one team from each school with teams on the waiting list before releasing a second team from the same school. The tournament director should continue using this method of releasing teams from the waiting list until the tournament reaches 100 teams. Any entry denied admission to the National Debate Coaches Association National Championships by the tournament director may appeal to the NDCA Board for admission to the tournament if they tried to enter the tournament prior to March 15th. Any entries admitted to the tournament after March 15th will be solely at the discretion of the tournament director. Any student registered for the tournament after March 15th will not be allowed to appeal the decision of the tournament director.

### Rounds of competition

The tournament will use the April National Speech and Debate Association resolution for public forum debate.

The tournament will offer 6 rounds of preliminary competition. All participants winning at least 4 preliminary rounds of competition will advance to elimination rounds.

Time limits will be:

Speaker 1 (Team A, 1st speaker) 4 minutes

Speaker 2 (Team B, 1st speaker) 4 minutes

**Crossfire** (between speakers 1 and 2) 3 minutes

Speaker 3 (Team A, 2nd speaker) 4 minutes

Speaker 4 (Team B, 2nd speaker) 4 minutes

**Crossfire** (between speakers 3 and 4) 3 minutes

Speaker 1 Summary 2 minutes

Speaker 2 Summary 2 minutes

**Grand Crossfire** (all speakers) 3 minutes

Speaker 3 Final Focus 2 minutes

Speaker 4 Final Focus 2 minutes

Each team may use up to two minutes of prep time.

Each speaker will be assigned individual speaker points on a scale of 1-30. All teams winning four or more of their preliminary rounds will qualify for elimination rounds.

All rounds, including elimination rounds, will be flip for sides and positions. If teams in elimination rounds have met previously in prelims, they will still flip for sides and positions.

Public Forum debate competition is considered a team activity. Once tournament competition begins should one or both members of a team be unable to participate in a scheduled round of competition the team must forfeit those debates.

The NDCA considers debate events to be, by definition, open to the public. Interested parties, parents, friends, other competitors, school officials, etc. are all allowed to observe, including note taking, preliminary and elimination rounds of competition in all events.

Any student who forfeits a round of competition will be ineligible for a speaker award. For seeding purposes students who forfeit debates will have their points averaged.

### Pairing of debates

To the extent possible the tabroom should equalize competition in preset debates and power match high/low within brackets starting with round 3.

### Teams qualifying for elimination rounds

(All teams winning four preliminary rounds advance to elimination rounds. These procedures remain as guidance for seeding purposes in both preliminary and elimination round competition.)

The tournament will use the following tie breaking procedure to determine teams clearing:

Wins

High/low points

Total points

Opposition Wins

Double high/low points

Judge Variance

Random number

### Speaker awards

The tournament will use the following tie breaking procedure to determine speaker awards:

High/low points

Total points

Double high/low

Opposition wins

Judge controlled variance

Opposition points

Random number generation

Any student who forfeits a round of competition will be ineligible for a speaker award.

### Judge assignment

In addition to conflicts outlined on the next page, the following constraints operate to disqualify judges from assignment (in decreasing order of importance):

a. The judge cannot judge a team from his or her school.

b. The judge shall not judge a team on his or her conflict of interest list.

c. A judge shall not judge a team on whose strike list he or she appears.

### Judge conflicts

Tournament judges should be provided with a conflict sheet and asked to complete the following procedure:

You should mark as a conflict any student:  
(1) whose high school you attended in recent years;  
(2) to whom you are related;  
(3) who attends a school with whom you have had a coaching or judging relationship, paid or unpaid, during the past two school years (does not apply if your only relationship to a school was as a hired judged at that school’s tournament);  
(4) who attends a school that has offered to hire you to coach or judge in the future;  
(5) for whom you have ever had primary instructional responsibility as, e.g., a school coach or a personal coach  
(6) with whom you have or have in the past had personal friendships or romantic relationships, or with whom you socialize in non-debate settings;  
(7) who personally has provided your transportation or housing at this tournament, or who attends a school that has provided your transportation or housing at this tournament;  
(8) who has been hired by, or who has an outstanding explicit or implicit offer from, a debate business (e.g., workshop or brief company) to which you have financial ties.  
(9) if your current, or in the past two years, coach of record is currently coaching the student.

(10)  If you coach or debate for a college/university, any student that is debating for your program next year or whom your school is still actively recruiting.

(11) with whose coach(es) you have or have in the past had romantic relationships.

(12) to whom you bear any other relationship that might reasonably be thought to compromise your impartiality as a judge.  To determine whether a relationship meets this test, you might ask yourself, “If I were a competing student and knew nothing about my judge except that he or she bore the relationship in question to my competitor or my competitors coach, would I have any doubts about his or her impartiality?”  If the answer is “yes,” you should mark students to whom you bear that relationship as conflicts.

### Use of Technology

The use of computers during debates is permitted for both flowing and research purposes including retrieval of evidence stored on hard drives and accessing resources via the internet during debates.

Students should not attempt to use electronic devices to initiate contact with outside parties during a debate. The penalty for violation of this rule is loss of the debate in question and zero speaker points assigned to the offending debater. This rule recommends, but does not require, that all text messaging devices and cell phones be turned off during debates. It is meant to restrict the debaters from initiating that contact. Example: A student’s cell phone ringing during a debate would not violate the rule. A student calling or text messaging their coach during a debate would violate this rule.

### Clipping

A judge should find clipping has occurred when a debater represents they have read five words or more that they did not read in any speech. If the judge finds that clipping has occurred the penalty is a loss for the team and zero speaker points for the debater who "clipped." If a team makes a false accusation of clipping the penalty is a loss and zero speaker points for both debaters on the team who made the false accusation.

Technical malfunction isn't an excuse for clipping. Debaters have an obligation to accurately represent the material they have read. If a judge finds that students represented that they read material that they did not read then it's clipping and penalties should be imposed even if the judge doesn't think there was ill intent.

The enforcement is left solely to the discretion of the judge(s) and cannot be appealed to the tabroom or the NDCA Board.

Tournament participants will be required to submit a parental permission form (Appendix D) allowing students to be audio taped to ensure that clipping is not occurring. Participants who are recorded may require that the recording be deleted after the judge has rendered a decision and clipping was not raised as an issue.

### Elimination Round procedures

The elimination round bracket should be released no later than four hours after the completion of the last preliminary debate.

Brackets should not be broken during elimination rounds.

Forfeit time is fifteen minutes after the announced start time of each round. Only a member of the tab room committee or their designee may declare a debate a forfeit due to the late arrival of a team.

### Recommended tournament schedule

Day 1

5 pm Onsite electronic registration opens

8 pm Mutual preference sheets due

Day 2

7:30 am Round 1 pairings released

8 am Round 1

10 am Round 2 pairings released

11 am Round 2

1 pm Lunch

2:30 pm Round 3

5:30 pm Round 4

Day 3

8 am Round 5 pairings released

9 am Round 5

11 am Lunch

Noon Round 6

3 pm Awards

4 pm Elimination round 1

7 pm Elimination round 2

Day 4

7 am Strike cards available (if used)

7:15 am Strike cards due

7:30 am Pairings for the first elimination round of Day 4

8:00 am Elimination round 3

11:00 am Elimination round 4 (if necessary)

2 pm Elimination round 5 (if necessary)

5 pm Elimination round 6 (if necessary)

In both preliminary and elimination round competition forfeit time is fifteen minutes after the announced start time of each round. Only a member of the tab room committee or their designee may declare a debate a forfeit due to the late arrival of a team. The tournament committee should strive to create an announced start time that is at least thirty minutes after the release of the pairings for each round. On Day 1 and 2 the forfeit rule should be strictly enforced.

### Chaperone

Students competing in tournaments must be accompanied by an adult who is an employee of the school or school district the student represents. To fulfill the requirements of this section schools must fill out and send in Appendix C.

### Amendments

This document may be amended in any of the following ways:

1) By a simple majority vote of the board.  
2) A member of the NDCA that is not a board member may submit a written request for amendment to the NDCA President at any time. If said written request includes the signature of 10 or more members of the NDCA the NDCA President should, within one week, submit the amendment to the board to be voted on. The amendment is approved if a simple majority of the board votes in favor. If the amendment fails to receive a simple majority of board votes the person submitting the amendment may attempt to include more signatures. If the amendment is resubmitted with signatures of more than half of the NDCA membership within one year of the boards rejection of the amendment then the amendment is approved without a board vote. For the purposes of this procedure "half of the NDCA membership" will be determined by dividing the number of NDCA members on the day the amendment is rejected by the board and divided by two.

3) These procedures may be amended by a simple majority vote of the board consistent with voting procedures as specified in the bylaws.