

## Invitation Letter

Dear Coaches,

We are delighted to invite you to attend the Forty-Ninth annual Harvard National Forensics Tournament, which will be held in person on Presidents' Day Weekend, Saturday, Sunday, & Monday, February 18-20, 2023.

We have several announcements concerning this year's tournament.

First, we are happy to announce that we will host in-person competitions in 2023 for most events! We will not offer any hybrid divisions, but we will offer online divisions in: Middle School Congress, Beginner Public Forum, Open Public Forum, and Debate en Español. We will continue to use Tabroom.com as the official registration and tournament management site for all events and divisions.

Second, for almost every event, we will maintain the same fees as the last year we held in-person competition (2020).

Third, we will again provide breakfast and lunch on Saturday and Sunday for all participants. Hospitality costs are included in the entry fees.

Fourth, all judges will be required to use electronic ballots in all divisions.

Lastly, we will not offer in-person registration on Friday before the tournament. All registration and final confirmation must be completed online. Participants will be required to confirm final entry details in lieu of traditional registration between noon ET on Thursday February 16, 2023 and noon ET on Friday February 17, 2023. All fees must be received in Cambridge by noon ET on Thursday February 16, 2023.

We are also excited to announce two additional opportunities for competition. In order for international students (and any other students) to get practice debating the February PF topic, we will be hosting two online practice tournaments in mid-January and early-February. Further details will be posted on tabroom.com

We look forward to seeing you in Cambridge once again!

Sincerely yours,

Sherry Hall & Tripp Rebrovick

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## **Event Specific Rules, Procedures, and Eligibility**

Due to scheduling conflicts, no student may enter more than one of the following five tournaments.

## **The “Crimson Bearcat” Policy Debate Tournament**

**Location:** Brighton High School & Boston Green Academy

The policy tournament will be administered by Joe Schatz and the Binghamton Debate team. The tournament will be in person. There will be three divisions, varsity, junior varsity, and novice, of two-person, switch-sides, cross-examination debate, on the national topic. We will also offer the Spanish Language division online. We plan to run the divisions concurrently, though we may stagger the start of divisions to improve administrative efficiency. We encourage coaches to enter students in the division that best approximates their skill and experience level, and we leave that judgment up to you. Time limits will be 8-3-5, with eight minutes preparation time per team. In order to maximize opportunities to participate, we must require that all teams have two members: no "mavericks." Ordinarily, students must attend the same school to compete on a team. However, we will accept entries from clubs or other debate organizations provided that the schools represented do not otherwise have a debate team.

**Vital Stats:**

Prelims-- Varsity: 7, Junior Varsity: 7, Novice: 5, Spanish Language: 5.

Elims--Double Octafinals in all divisions if possible.

Entry Limit: 50 teams in novice; 50 teams in JV; 110 teams in Varsity.

## **The Public Forum Debate Tournament**

**Location:** Cambridge Rindge and Latin School

**Four divisions will be in-person:** Varsity PF, Junior Varsity PF, and Novice PF, & Middle School PF

**Two divisions will be online:** Beginner International PF & Open International PF.

### **In-Person Divisions**

All divisions will use National Speech & Debate Association time format and rules. We encourage coaches to enter students in the division that best approximates their skill and experience level, and we leave that judgment up to you. The novice division is intended for high school students in their first year of competition. The middle school division is intended for students in the sixth through eighth grade.

In the Junior Varsity division, there will be an international schools breakout division in the elimination rounds. To be eligible to participate in the breakout, students must attend a school located outside of the United States and indicate so when entering the tournament.

We will start with the following **entry limits**, but will adjust them as necessary and as we can secure the necessary rooms:

Varsity: 300 teams.

Middle School: 200 teams

Junior Varsity: 250 teams

Novice: 250 teams

### **Online Divisions**

We will offer two online international divisions for students who are unable to travel to Cambridge, including those from the United States. There will be no entry limits.

The Open International Division is open to all participants. The Beginner International Division is open to students in their first or second year of competition; it is intended for middle school and novice high school competitors.

### **Vital Stats:**

- Varsity and Junior Varsity: 6 Preliminary Rounds, Clear to Triple Octafinals.
- Novice, Middle School: 5 preliminary rounds, clear to Doubles or Triple Octa-finals based on entries. JV International Schools – Breakout to Quarterfinals.
- Beginner and Open International Online: 5 preliminary rounds, clear to Doubles or Triple Octa-finals based on entries.

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## **The Lincoln-Douglas Debate Tournament**

**Location:** King/Putnam Middle School

There will be two divisions, varsity and junior-varsity. Both will use the January-February National Speech and Debate Association topic and time limits. We encourage coaches to enter students in the division that best approximates their skill and experience level, and we leave that judgment up to you. We will utilize a mutual preference judging system for the Varsity division. All judges must post a paradigm on Tabroom.com and must have a high school diploma in order to be qualified to judge in either division.

**Vital Stats:** Prelims: 6. Elims: Triple-octas in JV (top 64); if numbers justify, we will attempt to run a partial-quads so that we can clear all 4-2s. No Entry Limit.

## **The Congressional Debate Tournament**

**Location:** TBD

**The High School Division will be in-person.**

**The Middle School Division will be hosted online via classrooms.cloud**

National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA) rules and procedures determine advancement and placing based upon cumulative ranking by judges. The following NSDA rules pilots will be in effect: (1) debate on each item will be limited to one hour; (2) internet access to retrieve evidence will be allowed; (3) when debate concludes on each legislation, each author/sponsor will give a 90-second final appeal speech – with no questioning – and will be scored as a final addition to their speech, but not count for precedence/recency; (4) tournament-generated preset recency numbers for each contestant in the room for each round; (5) direct questioning for all rounds. Full rules and details are available at: <https://www.congressionaldebate.org/harvard-tournament/general-information> .

We have made a few adjustments to how the legislative docket and chamber assignments will be handled, in particular, due to the online nature of the tournament, and unpredictability with the competitive field.

Each high school's coach may submit one item of student-written legislation on Tabroom.com by Friday, January 13, 2023 (11:59 EDT), only using templates provided on Tabroom.com. Middle school coaches may submit up to three items, but no more than one per student or topic category. Coaches should review to ensure quality, suitable for substantive debate. When uploaded, legislation must be categorized in one of the following areas:

- Commerce (business, banking, finance)
- Defense
- Education and Health Care
- Elections and Government Reform
- Energy, Environment, and Scientific Development
- Foreign Relations and Aid
- Immigration and Border Protection
- Justice (including policing, firearms, and drugs)

Legislation will first be assessed (school/student identity withheld) by an independent review panel of alumni and inactive coaches to select a field of bills and resolutions best suited for debate, and distributed as evenly as possible across the topic areas above.

From January 16-20, 2023, registered contestants will be able to vote for their favorite items from among those selected by the review panel (contestants registered after that date will not have the opportunity to vote). Coaches are responsible for ensuring student accounts are active and attached to their contestants; coaches may not vote. From among the student vote, the highest-rated items will be earmarked for finals, followed by each set of rounds prior. Each round will have three items of legislation assigned, for a total of 18 items, altogether. The lowest-rated items will not make the docket.

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The complete docket will be released January 24, 2023.

Chamber assignments will be released at 7am, Saturday, February 18, 2023, adjusting for drops to ensure as balanced a competition as possible, and students are strongly discouraged from communicating with other contestants to negotiate agenda orders ahead of the tournament. With a smaller legislation packet of only three items per session (9 for prelims, collectively), there should not be a need for determining that ahead of time.

Judges will be required to submit ranks and ballots electronically.

**Vital Stats:** Each chamber will have up to 18 contestants each. Prelims: 3 sessions. High School (Varsity) -- Quarterfinals: about 1/3 of the field; a reasonable number of about one-third will break to semifinals; and 1/3 to 1/2 will break to finals based on overall field size. Top-performing quarterfinalists in each chamber earn a bid to the TOC, up to 120 students, with an equal number represented from each quarterfinal chamber. Middle School -- Semifinals: about 1/3 of the field; 1/3 to 1/2 will break to finals based on overall field size.

Entry limit: 20 entries

## **The Speech Tournament**

**Location:** Harvard Campus

The tournament will feature competition in six events:

- extemporaneous speaking (no foreign/domestic split),
- informative speaking.
- dramatic interpretation.
- original oratory,
- humorous interpretation,
- program oral interpretation,
- Duo interpretation

Double-entry is permitted, and triple-entry is not unheard of. National Speech & Debate Association rules will govern all competitions. The individual events tournament director will be prepared to enforce National Speech & Debate Association rules if objections are brought to her attention in a timely manner. Judges will be required to submit ranks and ballots electronically. Elimination rounds will be sectioned by preliminary round seeds to balance out the competition.

**Vital Stats:** Prelims: 4. Elims: Octafinals, or Double-Octafinals for events with more than 300 entries.



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# **General Tournament Rules**

## **Unaffiliated/Independent Entries**

Without objection from school officials, unaffiliated entries are welcome in all tournaments. Unaffiliated entries, however, are only allowed from schools which are not attending the tournament. Students from schools which are attending are ineligible for unaffiliated status. Unaffiliated entries must create an account and must provide contact information. The preferred name for creating an account is to use the school name followed by the word "unaffiliated." You may also use the student's last name followed by the word "independent." Ordinarily, students must attend the same school to compete as a team. However, we will accept entries from clubs or other debate organizations provided that the schools represented do not otherwise have a debate team or object.

## **Judge Requirements**

All judges provided by schools must be qualified, which at a minimum means a high school diploma.

All judges are bound by the codes of conduct governing activities at Harvard College and those promulgated by the NSDA. Judges will be required to attest that they have read and understand these codes of conduct before being able to judge. Instructions will be provided closer to the start of the tournament.

Judges may not simultaneously judge at any other tournaments. If we discover that you are doing so, we will remove you from the judge pool and notify the other tournament.

Any complaints about judge qualifications must be addressed to the tournament director prior to or immediately after the competition involved. All tournament directors have been authorized to impose penalties against schools whose judges do not appear for the rounds to which they have been assigned.

## **Elimination Round Participation**

We expect participants in the various tournaments to compete in the elimination rounds. Debaters who choose not to debate rounds for any reason (other than that they are scheduled against another competitor from the same school) will be treated as having forfeited the round. The tournaments will no longer certify “co-champions” in final rounds.

## **Conduct Policy**

The tournament strives to foster an environment promoting inclusivity and respect. The tournament will abide by Harvard College's policies and procedures for sexual, gender-based, and racial harassment and discrimination. The Interim Policy on Sexual Harassment and the Interim Policy on Other Sexual Misconduct are available here: <https://titleix.harvard.edu/policies-procedures>. Per its regulations, Harvard College has a designated representative of its Title IX office to receive any complaints directly or indirectly by means of the tournament director. The tournament will also abide by policies governing codes of conduct within the Harvard community, including those prohibiting racial discrimination and harassment. They are available here: <https://handbook.fas.harvard.edu/book/conduct-within-community>.

## **Tournament Ombuds Committee**

The tournament will designate an ombuds committee of three individuals to receive complaints and concerns regarding diversity, equity, and inclusion issues. Please note that this is not the appropriate place to report sexual or racial discrimination and harassment as detailed in the prior section; those reports should be made to the Tournament Director directly who will report to the appropriate Harvard offices. Additionally, concerns about tournament procedure and tabulation should be reported to your event's tab room.

## **Online Technology Policies: Recording, Observers, Platforms**

**Recording:** For the privacy and protection of students and other participants, any recording of speeches is prohibited, with the exception that students are permitted to record their own speeches.

**Observers:** Observers are permitted but must remain on mute, with videos off at all times, and rename themselves as “Observer -- Name.” All observers must be affiliated with an institution with active entries at the tournament and must be registered as an observer to the roster of that institution. Any individuals who wish to observe will need: (A) to have a tabroom.com account, (B) be added as competitors or judges to the team roster, (C) have their account linked, and (D) entered into the “Observer Division” as a competitor or as a judge. Unregistered observers will not be able to access the classrooms.cloud zoom rooms. The tournament reserves the right to remove any observers from any room at any time.

**Alternative Platforms:** For the safety of all participants, no one (judge, coach, student) may switch their rounds to an alternative video platform outside of the tournament hosted zoom rooms in classrooms.cloud. If anyone suggests moving to an alternative platform, please alert tournament personnel immediately. Judges who move to a separate platform will be fined as if they did not judge their rounds and removed from the tournament.

**Judge Video:** The tournament believes that competitors deserve to be able to see their judges as much as possible. Accordingly, to the maximum extent possible, the cameras of competitors and judges should be on (and on them) while a student is speaking and during RFDs. Brief pauses are understandable. To the extent needed, cameras can be off to enhance streaming quality.

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## **Registration, Judging, and Fees**



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## **Entry Procedures**

You must enter via this website, [Harvard.tabroom.com](http://Harvard.tabroom.com). The web site will begin accepting your entries on December 1, 2022. You are responsible for entering your school and student information, and also for getting the spelling and event information correct. If you are entering as an independent or unaffiliated entry, you must create an account and provide appropriate contact information. After you have entered the information, you should verify your entry and print out or download a copy of your invoice.

The deadline for entries is February 10, 2023. The fees for your entry will be set by midnight February 13, 2022. You will be responsible for paying the full entry fee for any entries dropped after that date for any reason.

It is extremely important that you provide a working email address where we can contact you with updated information about the tournaments.

## **Paying Fees and Completing Registration**

All registration will be conducted electronically. This means that you must confirm your entries and judges and pay your fees. Tabroom will have a button that you can access through your school account to confirm your information is correct. It will be activated between noon ET on February 17, 2022 through noon ET on February 18, 2022. Even if you have no changes to your entry, you must click the button in order for your entries to be scheduled into the tournament.

**STUDENTS FROM SCHOOLS THAT DO NOT COMPLETE REGISTRATION WILL NOT BE ALLOWED TO COMPETE.** Each school must register.

You must pay your fees by a check mailed to us or by credit card. You may obtain an invoice by downloading it from the web site. Checks should be made payable to "Harvard Debate." Envelopes should be addressed to: Sherry Hall, Harvard Debate, 222 Austin St, Newton, MA 024565. (This is a different address from our traditional office address. Please make sure that you use this address for any mail correspondence this year.)

If you want to pay by credit card, please contact Sherry Hall ([hallsherry2@gmail.com](mailto:hallsherry2@gmail.com)), who will send you an electronic invoice that accepts credit card payments. A convenience fee of 3% will be added for credit card payments.

Any schools experiencing financial difficulties this year are encouraged to reach out to Sherry Hall as well.

Entry fees are:

- Policy Debate Teams – \$180.00
- Public Forum Debate Teams (Junior Varsity and Varsity) -- \$170.00
- Public Forum Debate Teams (Novice and Middle School) – \$150.00
- Public Forum Online Teams (Beginner and Open International) - \$110.00
- Lincoln-Douglas Entries – \$140.00
- Individual Speech Events – \$75.00; Duo Interp - \$100.00
- Congressional Debate In-Person Entries – \$100.00
- Congressional Debate Online Entries (Middle School) – \$70.00
- School/Account Management & Tabroom Management fee – \$100.00

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## Judging

Schools must either provide judges to cover their entries or pay a fee so that the tournament can hire judges. The required number of judges for each tournament are:

- Policy Debate: 1 judge for every 2 teams
- Public Forum Debate: 1 judge for every 3 teams
- Lincoln Douglas Debate: 1 judge for every 3 contestants
- Speech Events: 1 judge for every 6 contestants
- Congressional Debate: 1 judge for every 6 contestants.

All judges must be available for all preliminary rounds, the first elimination round, and for one round beyond elimination of the last contestant from the school that the judge represents in the tournament. In Congress and Speech, judges must be available for the entire tournament, including through the final round. All judges must be qualified, which at a minimum means a high school diploma. All schools providing judges for the three debate tournaments with divisions should be flexible as to which division judges are assigned. Schools entering students in junior varsity divisions should expect that some of their judges will be needed to cover junior varsity rounds.

If you do not have enough judges to cover your obligation, you will be assessed a fee to cover the cost of hiring the necessary judges. The tournament will hire judges for you if you wish. Please log onto [tabroom.com](http://tabroom.com) and request the number of hired rounds you need to cover your obligations. While one person can cover two policy debate teams, if you have two teams without a judge, you will be assessed \$225.00 per team not covered or \$450.00. The hired judge fees are:

- Policy Debate Teams – \$225.00 per team not covered
- Public Forum Debate Teams – \$175.00 per team not covered
- Lincoln Douglas Debate Entries – \$125.00 per entry not covered
- Speech Entries – \$40.00 per entry not covered
- Congressional Debate – \$150.00 per entry not covered