

Tournaments 101

script

Your speech is coming together. You are actually liking how it is turning out. Everything would be just fine – except that you have to waste a perfectly good Saturday and drive to Butler for a tournament. What could be worse? And why does it have to take a whole day – or 3 days?

If that is how you are feeling about competing in a tournament I’m glad that you are here. Because I’d like to tell you a little bit about what goes on at tournaments, why they take so long, and why you might actually find you not only enjoy them but look forward to them.

So let’s start at the beginning - registration

I Registration

Registration for all NCFCA Qualifiers and Regionals, plus most practice events is done through the NCFCA website. Let’s go over how this is exactly done:

Step-by-step instructions for registration:

1. Go to www.NCFCA.org.

2. Use the email address that you use for NCFCA correspondence and

your password to log into your “My NCFCA” Dashboard.

3. From the “My Registrations” section (found in the lower left corner of your screen), click on Three Rivers Qualifier Registration.

4. Choose the events in which you desire to compete.

5. Add to the cart by clicking on "Add Registration to Cart" just below the events listing. Please be aware that the time stamp of your registration is noted when you add events to your cart, not when you check out.

6. Select the “Check out” button in the top, right-hand portion of the screen.

7. Fill out all pertinent tournament information on the Check Out page. This will include name of parent attending (or the chaperone attending, in the rare circumstance that a parent will be unable to attend), as well as any others from your family who will be attending the tournament with you. This information will help tournament administrators to accurately prepare name tags, etc. You will also be required to check that you have read all relevant tournament information. Once you have filled out this information, you will finalize the check-out process.

8. Payment: Payment occurs differently depending on when you register.

a) Pending Registration Period: If you are registering during the first few hours that registration is open (the Pending Registration Period), be aware you will not be able to pay until you are emailed an invoice. Invoices will normally be emailed a few business hours after registration has opened. Once you have received the invoice, please return to your cart and finish processing your payment. You will receive a receipt once payment has been successfully processed.

b) Regular Registration Period: Once the Pending Registration

Period is past, you will need to pay at the time of registration. Please do not leave your order open, as it will be cleared the following morning.

1. Events can fill up fast – be at your computer ahead of opening time to

make sure you are ready.

Check that the info on your dash is updated and complete.

NCFCA has to maintain certain balances between each event – or

type of speech, so sometimes events fill up a few minutes after

registration opens. (impromptu is a big one)

B. Fees – are based on the number of events you compete in. They

are needed for building usage costs, to provide food for the community judges, to cover administrative purchases (ballots, envelopes, paper, printing, etc.) and many other expenses.

For the 2014 season, the fees are as follow:

Debate $35/individual

Speech $20/1 event, $30/2, $40/3, $50/4, $60/5

C. Registration stays open for just 1 week after the start date.

The night before the tournament begins, you head to the facility for Orientation and Script Submission. This is where some tournament workers will look over the hard copy of your speech and make sure it is in structurally compliant. We will have a separate class about this next meeting. The tournament will begin early the next morning with a short devotion and announcements – then the rounds begin.

II What to Wear

The NCFCA website describes the dress code as follows:

The spirit of the Dress Code is modesty and professionalism with the intent to glorify Christ. The goal is to minimize the focus on the body or outward appearance and maximize the focus on the development of ideas and communication skills. Competitors must be professional, clean and well groomed.

1. Gentleman: Gentleman shall wear suits or sport coats with dress slacks, together with a tie.
2. Ladies: Modesty is the key and may include suits, dresses, and skirts with hemlines to the bottom of the knee. Tight-fitting/low-cut clothing is inappropriate. Midriff must remain covered when gesturing in speeches.
3. Nametags: All competitors are to wear nametags at all times (unless they need to remove it temporarily as they are performing an interp and it gets in the way).

III Competition

1. Speech

1. Patterns A and B

Some students will be competing in 5 different events – which is

too many to do in 1 round (usually about 1.5 hours). So the schedule is broken into Pattern A and B. Which speeches are in

each round depends on the registrations. The goal is to not have

any student doing more than 3 speeches in a given round.

2. Over the course of the tournament, a student will give their speech 3 different times – each time to three different judges.

At a speech only practice event – all in a day

At a speech and debate tournament – over the course of 3 days

B. Debate

1. All debaters (both Team Policy and Lincoln-Douglas) will debate

6 times – 3 on the affirmative and 3 on the negative side

TP rounds last almost 1 hour 15min, Lincoln-Douglas 45min

Only 1 judge judges each debate in the regular rounds

C. Postings

10-15 minutes before each round, postings will go up telling which

rooms the different events are in and what order the students will

speak in.

Usually the tournament will run something like Pattern A speech Rd 1, Debate #1, Pattern B Rd 1, Debate #2, Pattern A Rd 2, Debate #3,

Pattern B Rd 2, Debate #4, Pattern A Rd 3, Debate Rd #5, Patter B

Rd 3, Debate Rd 6.

You can imagine the whole process is pretty complex and when students leave in the middle of the day, it really messes up a lot of things for the people running the tournament. It is for this reason that going to a tournament means going to the whole tournament from start to finish.

D. Outrounds

After the 3 rounds each of Pattern A, Pattern B and debate – the tournament will head into what is called “outrounds”. Based on the

judges decisions, the top students (roughly ½) move on to these rounds.

Depending on the size of the tournament these can be quarter finals

or semifinals.

1. Judge panels increase (if possible)

Speech – 5 judges

Debate – 3 judges

2. Competition increases ☺

So what happens during down time?

IV Down Time

A. When a competitor is not speaking, there is plenty to do

1. Time a round

2. Watch a round

(talk about the buzz that surrounds “really good

speeches”, or really funny pieces)

3. Play a game

4. Make new friends – catch up with old friends

5. Eat!

Families can bring coolers and as much food as they’d like

Most tournaments request everyone bring something to share

Most tournaments often offer meal service allowing you to

purchase lunches and dinners.

Note that all these things apply to younger siblings as well. Kids around age 8 and up can time – and usually enjoy doing it.

V What are parents doing?

A. Working at the tournament

B. Judging

C. Chaperoning

A parent or designated chaperone must be on the premises of the

tournament at all times. This is in case of an injury or an issue with a

speech.

Tournament directors prefer that the competitors never leave the

premises during the day so they are always available when needed.

VI Awards Ceremony

At the end of the tournament everyone will gather and the director

will go over the events one by one announcing the top speakers in

each category and hand out certificates and trophies (sometimes chocolate). This is really fun and a nice wrap up to the day. The

awards can be bittersweet – and this is part of the value of speech

and debate. You learn how to accept the victories but also how to handle disappointment.

VII Ballots

The ballots that the judges filled out are collected in the tab room (tabulation room) and are handed out at the close of the tournament. The students then can read through all the judges’ comments and understand better how their speech was received. There can be great feedback, but also some chaff that needs to be sifted through ☺ Students can take that feedback and adjust their speeches for the next tournament.

VII Types of Tournaments

A. Practice Tournaments – Debate Round Robins

B. Qualifiers (may use scripts but will be penalized)

C. Opens “

D. Regionals “

E. Nationals

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