

2026-27 Debate

Season Tournament Limitations for District Eligibility

1. A school or individual may compete in up to ten tournaments for both speech and debate (ex. 3 debate only, 5 speech/debate combined, and 2 speech only). A tournament is defined as four or more schools.
2. No debater may miss more than eight days of school to attend tournaments.
3. Any school or individual exceeding the allowed number of tournaments (exception: NSDA) will be ineligible for district and state tournaments.
4. All students are required to follow IHSAA Rule 5-12-1: An organized scrimmage, drill or practice by teams or individual students with or against other member school teams or players is considered a contest, and counts toward the total number of contests a team is allowed.

Principal Verification

1. Tournament Limits: A signed Principal Verification Form must be submitted to both district and state tournament managers to verify the number of tournaments attended.
2. Appropriate Debating: A signed Principal Approval Statement must be submitted to both district and state tournament managers to acknowledge that:
 - a. Argumentation advanced by debaters from the school will meet the standards of conduct of that school, and
 - b. Constructive speeches, rebuttals and cross examinations will be appropriate in language and action for public performance by high school students.

District Tournament Format

1. State debate qualifiers will be determined at a district tournament in the manner approved by their Board of Control.
2. No school may enter more than sixteen (16) entries in the district tournament. (A World Schools team, a Public Forum team, an LD debater and/or a Congressional debater each constitute one entry). No school may enter more than eight (8) LD entries, eight (8) world schools entries, eight (8) public forum entries or eight (8) congressional entries.
3. The District Board of Control may approve an additional entry or wild card for the district debate tournament to avoid bye rounds (created by an odd number of entries). Note: Byes do not apply to Congressional debate.
4. Each district may hold a single or two separate qualifying tournaments for 6A/5A schools and 4A/3A/2A/1A schools. If only one school in 6A/5A classification or 4A/3A/2A/1A classification resides in a district, it may combine with a neighboring district for the qualifying tournaments. Otherwise, the school may enter two entries in each style of debate for a total of eight qualifying entries. Any of the above changes must receive approval of all involved districts' Boards of Control and the IHSAA. If two separate qualifying tournaments are held, representation quotas and alternates for State Debate in each event are treated as separate for each qualifying tournament.

State Debate Representation

1. Representation from district to state shall be based on the actual number of entries that complete all rounds of the district tournament.
2. Representation (LD, World Schools, PF, Congress) quotas for state debate:

<u>Dist. Entries</u>	<u># to State</u>	<u>Dist. Entries</u>	<u># to State</u>
2 - 6	2	19 - 24	8
7 - 12	4	25 - 30	10
13 - 18	6	31 - 36	12

If there is only one entry in any event, the district manager shall contact the IHSAA for an appeal determining advancement to the State Debate tournament.

3. Honest Effort: If an entry does not complete all rounds at the district tournament, that entry may be included in the count used to determine the number of state qualifiers provided the tournament manager determines that the non-finish was due to emergency circumstances beyond the student's control.

Alternates

1. Alternates shall be determined at the district tournament, in the manner approved by the District Board of Control. Each district qualifying tournament may designate two official alternates for each event. In the event a qualifying entry cannot attend State, the official district qualifying tournament's alternate entry will be entered. Note: Alternates do not receive repair rights at the state tournament.
2. Drops shall be reported to the IHSAA and changed on the "Tabroom" website by noon on the Wednesday preceding State. Drops reported after that time will result in a fine being levied against the school (see speech arts general regulations).
3. Alternates replacing late drops will be entered up to the start of the first round at State. First choice will be the alternates from the district qualifying tournament reporting the drop. If that alternate is not available, another will be randomly selected from a pool of available alternates from other district qualifying tournaments, first from the #1 alternates' pool and then from the #2 alternates' pool.
4. Schools choosing to bring official district alternates to the state tournament must register them upon arrival at the tournament site.

IDC/NSDA Rule Precedence

1. The ISATA debate caucus will vote each year during the conference to adopt the current NSDA portion of the debate procedures and rules. This will serve to maintain consistency between the state and national rules.
2. All references to the NSDA district tournament should be understood as embodied in the state debate tournament. Procedures and references unique to the district NSDA tournament--including but not limited to the tabulation committee, tabulation method, the national office and a national office referee--should be considered null and void at the state debate tournament.
3. The NSDA is in no way affiliated with the state debate tournament. Duties and responsibilities tied to the national office defer to the state grievance committee who acts as the final arbiter at the IHSAA state debate tournament. All decisions rendered by this committee may not be appealed.

Judging Guidelines

1. State debate judges shall complete a digital paradigm posted for coach and student access on the Tabroom website.
2. One World Schools debate constitutes a judging round. Two LD debates or two Public Forum debates constitute a judging round.
3. A judge should not judge an entry more than once.
4. Any re-assignment of officials (at the ballot desk or elsewhere) for all rounds of all forms of debate must be verified by re-assignment personnel to affirmatively maintain the same regional balance as determined in the tab room prior to ballots being delivered to the ballot desk for distribution.
5. Each school will be provided with a copy of their ballot at the conclusion of the tournament.
6. The ballot is the official decision of the judge. Judges are not obligated to “defend a ballot” or answer a coach’s questions regarding a ballot decision.
7. Oral critiques are not given at state debate.
8. Judges do not disqualify contestants. Rule violations shall be reported to the tournament manager.
9. When sending judge names to the IHSA for state debate, coaches must declare all schools with which a judge is affiliated and coded against.
10. As part of their District Report, District Managers will submit the names of at least two trained Parliamentarians and two alternates (four total) to be seated in chambers at the State tournament. If a parliamentarian is unavailable at the State tournament, an available alternate will be seated. A trained Parliamentarian shall be defined as an appropriate (to judge) aged person whom the head coach personally verifies is conversant and familiar with Roberts Rules of Order as used by the NSDA at the national NSDA tournament. Those who are deemed qualified would sit for a training prior to the beginning of State Debate to review the rules. At that time, it would be determined who would be the parliamentarians for each round going forward. The judge’s affiliation would not be considered when assigning to chambers.
11. Each judge may select which debate events they prefer to judge at the State Debate tournament. They may choose as few as two or as many as four events on their digital paradigm.
12. Judges are required to write constructive feedback for each entry they judge each round. Judges must write a “reason for decision” on each ballot that explains what they based their vote on.

General Tournament Rules

1. Recording: Permission to record audio, for educational purposes only, during the debate round must be obtained by all parties being recorded. Judges must be present when permission is given. Permission record both video and audio must be obtained in writing from all coaches and debaters involved. Only active competitors and/or tournament officials are permitted to record. Observers and judges are not permitted to record. Recordings will not be considered when evaluating grievances or judging decisions.
2. Flowing is permitted. Any contestant still competing at the tournament may not observe any round. Prior to octafinals, the first break round, all observers must be affiliated with one of the competing teams. Observers may flow, but may not coach or communicate with judges or debaters in any manner

during the debate.

3. Disqualification for code manipulation: Switching code numbers, divisions or partners is grounds for disqualification from the tournament.
4. Forfeiture of Round for Tardiness: An entry will forfeit a round for failure to appear within ten minutes of the scheduled time, unless the delay is caused by the tournament itself. A forfeiture will result in a loss or a rank of 9 (in congress), and 0 speaker points.
5. Timed Road Maps: To ensure that rounds stay on time, speakers will be allotted a ten second ‘road map’ before their speech time begins. No arguments may be advanced during this time period.

General Argumentation Rules

1. Topicality: The first affirmative must define the terms of the proposition either literally or operationally. The first negative may either accept or reject the definition of terms. Any topicality arguments must be initiated in the first negative constructive speech.
2. Plans: In World Schools debate, the proposition may choose to present a plan or model during the first proposition constructive speech. The affirmative in Lincoln-Douglas may choose to present a plan--although it is not required--but it must be presented during the first affirmative constructive. Note: Plans are not permitted in public forum debate.
3. Counterplans: In World Schools debate and Lincoln-Douglas debate, the negative may choose to present a counterplan – although it is not required – but it must be presented during the first negative constructive speech. A counterplan will be defined as a policy option proposed as an alternative to the Affirmative’s plan. The counterplan must not affirm the resolution advanced by the Affirmative side.
NOTE: Counterplans are not permitted in public forum debate.
4. New Arguments: New issues shall not be advanced in rebuttal speeches; however, additional evidence and extensions on previous arguments are appropriate.
5. Speaker Points: In Public Forum and Lincoln Douglas Debate each speaker will be awarded speaker points on a 30-point scale with no partial points permitted. Speaker points should reflect the holistic presentation of the speaker.

Idaho Congressional Debate Adaptations

Due to state tournament time limitations and differing means of registration from the NSDA district tournament format the following changes are made from NSDA Congress Guidelines:

1. A session is defined as including:
 - a. 3 ½ hour sessions.
 - b. 12-17 students as the optimum number for a 3 and one half (3½) hour session; otherwise, a session should be lengthened by 10 minutes per each additional student beyond 17. Chambers may not be larger than 20 students.
2. As students are not divided into the house and senate, chapter 9.3 Assigning Students to Chambers §1 is null and void. 9.3 Assigning Students to Chambers §2 is the first section applied for purposes of the IHSA rules.
3. The main motion to “Suspend the Rules” in any regard shall not be considered or allowed in Congressional Debate at the State Debate tournament.

4. Each District with at least 1 qualifier in Congressional debate must submit 3 pieces of legislation for the Preliminary Rounds and 2 pieces of legislation for the Final Round. The State Manager shall blind draw the order for both the preliminary legislation packet and the finals legislation packet. Legislation will not be sponsored at the State Tournament. Bills and resolutions selected for the Official legislation packet shall be posted on the appropriate tournament website by 4 pm on the Thursday the week prior to the State Debate tournament. It shall be the responsibility of each Chamber to set their own agenda and docket order.
5. Setting the Chamber Agenda: Each Chamber should begin by setting the agenda (legislation order). Each school present in the chamber shall select one representative to draw a number. The representative who selects the lowest number (1) shall choose the first piece of legislation for the agenda. The representative with the next lowest number (generally 2) shall choose the second piece of legislation and so on, until the order is set for all legislation. After one rotation the order would then be snaked to allow the last school to choose the next piece of legislation until all pieces have been placed on the agenda.
6. Announcing Chambers: Each chamber shall be announced twenty-four hours before the beginning of the first round of competition. Students may interact with each other during that time but no official actions (motions, agendas, etc.) may take place before the beginning of the first session.
7. Scorers' ranks are inputted, with non-ranked students considered as ranks of 9. The parliamentarian's ranks, up to eighth are inputted as well, with subsequent ranks considered as ranks of 9. Each individual chamber is tabulated independent of the others. Legislators with the lowest cumulative rank total advance to the next level of competition, employing the following tiebreakers: 1) Judges' preference, 2) Reciprocal fractions, 3) Adjusted cumulative rank total after dropping highest and lowest ranks, 4) Reciprocals of adjusted cumulative rank total, and 5) Rank by the parliamentarian.
8. For Congressional Debate, in all rounds, prelims and eliminations, Presiding Officers shall be elected for a single hour allotment and be scored on the appropriate point scale for that hour of service for the equivalent of a single speech.
9. In Congressional Debate, speakers will indicate a desire to speak by raising their placard for recognition by the presiding officer.
10. Preset, randomized recency will be used in every round of Congressional Debate.
11. Direct questioning will be used in every round of Congressional Debate.
 - a. Direct questioning: The presiding officer will open the floor for questions following each speech. The presiding officer will recognize questioners for a cross-examination period of no more than 30 seconds. Questioners will be chosen according to a separate questioning recency.

World Schools, Public Forum and Lincoln Douglas Adaptations

1. The tournament management will assign five random preliminary rounds. No round will begin later than 9:00 p.m. on the first day.
2. Contestants will debate two affirmative/proposition and two negative/opposition preliminary rounds in Lincoln-

Douglas and World Schools debate. These styles of debate will flip for sides in round five. When possible, contestants should meet neither competitors from their own school nor prior opponents.

3. At the conclusion of the five preliminary rounds, the tournament management will create an octafinal bracket. Octafinals, quarterfinals, semifinals and finals are single elimination rounds. NOTE: If sixteen or fewer entries qualify for the state tournament in a single debate event, that event will break straight to quarterfinals and qualifying entries will earn sweepstakes points from quarterfinals on.
 - a. All competitors in the bracket will flip for sides except for prior opponents in Lincoln-Douglas who will be locked on opposite sides.
 - b. When teammates are bracketed against each other, the head coach will have the option of determining a walk-over winner or having the entries debate against each other. Seed position will not be adjusted to "break brackets" or avoid a school being paired against itself.
 - c. Congress will provide a semifinal round to the top thirty-two (32) competitors in the tournament. This may be adjusted up to thirty-six (36) students, depending upon presiding officer selection in (only) the semifinal round. The top eight (8) competitors from each house will advance to the final super congress round.
4. Tie Break Procedure: The determining factors shall be:
 - 1) Speaker ranking. If the tie still exists, the criteria shall be (in this order): 2) head to head, 3) speaker points, 4) drop high and low speaker points, 5) opponents' win-loss record, 6) additional tiebreaker calculations available in the tournament software to avoid ties. In the event that a tie still exists, a coin will be flipped to break the tie. The debate commissioner and tournament manager will oversee this and do so in front of the coaches (or coach representatives) whom the tiebreak applies to.
5. Strike Privilege: Prior to the beginning of Round 1 of the State Debate tournament, the head coach of each school will be provided access to a list of all tournament judges and their event pools. The head coach of each school will then be given the opportunity to strike a single judge. Those judges will not judge that school in any debate event for the entirety of the tournament.

Determining Team Champions

1. Team winners will be determined based on a combined total of points earned in all four disciplines.

<u>Place</u>	<u>Points</u>	<u>Place</u>	<u>Points</u>
First	16	Semifinalists	12
Second	14	Quarterfinalists	8
		Octafinalists	4

2. In Congressional Speaking, each of the sixteen competitors in the final super session will earn the equivalent points awarded in the other styles of debate. First place will receive 16 points, second place will receive 14 points, semifinalists (third – fourth places) will receive 12 points. Quarterfinalists (fifth – eighth places) will receive 8 points. Octafinalists (ninth – sixteenth places) will receive 4 points.
3. In preliminary rounds of Lincoln Douglas, Public Forum, and World Schools Debate, 1 point will be awarded per debate round won, for a maximum of 5 points winning 5

rounds, and a minimum of 0 points for no rounds won. No points will be awarded to BYE's.

4. After both preliminary sessions of Congressional Debate, points will be awarded by placement as determined by chamber seeding as follows: 5 points for 1st, 4 points for 2nd, 3 points for 3rd or 4th, 2 points for 5th or 6th, 1 point for 7th or 8th.
5. Ties in team placement will be broken by:
 - a. Number of entries advancing into break rounds, then
 - b. Number of state qualifying entries.