

NOTRE DAME HIGH SCHOOL INC.

2023-2024 Speech and Debate Team

Rules and Regulations



Practice

Depending on what event(s) a student is involved in, practice requirements vary. Practices run from 6:30pm-8:30pm.

Practice night to be determined based on student and coach availability. Changes will be communicated via email and an acknowledgement will be greatly appreciated. If our team grows sufficiently, it may be necessary to add an additional night to the practice schedule each week. Advance notice will be given. **Practice is extremely important both for the individual to refine his/her piece or debate style, and for the team to work together as necessary.** Various topics will be discussed, performance videos will be watched and peer critiquing will take place. Practice is a crucial component to this club. Any missed practice must be excused, prior to the practice date, by the coach. Parents are welcomed and encouraged to attend as they can refine their judging skills, help critique pieces and aid in discussion topics.

Tournament Calendar

Information below is tentative. It is each student's responsibility to check the team page and attend practices for updates. Be sure to cross-reference ACT/SAT dates, band/orchestra commitments and other conflicts, so you can plan around those. Public Forum Debaters and Duo Interpers must be sensitive to their partners' schedules and communicate conflicts as early as possible. We will generally carpool for all tournaments.

2023-2024 Speech and Debate Tournament Schedule (tournaments in red are national events that the team does not attend, but students can. Also note that tournament dates and locations may be subject to change.

10/28 Phillipsburg Invitational

11/4 ADFL TBA*

11/17-11/19 Villiger Tournament at St. Joseph's University

12/2-12/4: George Mason – individual participation

12/9: LaSalle College HS

12/16: ADFL TBA*

1/6: ADFL at Hunterdon Central HS*

1/20: Blue, Maroon, and White NIETOC Qualifier at Shikellamy HS

1/27: Ridge HS

2/2-2/3: Pennsbury HS (debate can go to 2/4)

2/11: ADFL TBA*

2/24: PHSSL District 8 State Qualifier at TBA*

3/2: ADFL National Qualifier at Northampton Community College Fowler Center*

3/15-16: PHSSL State Tournament at Bloomsburg University*

April TBA: Pennsylvania Pro-Life Federation Video Oratory Contest Deadline (see Mr. Rizzo for details)

April TBA: Tournament Of Champions at University of Kentucky – speech and debate invitational individual participation

4/27: Southern Lehigh HS

TBA: National Individual Events Tournament Of Champions at TBA– speech invitational individual participation

5/24-27: NCFL Grand Nationals in Chicago

TBA: National Finals Pro-Life Oratory Contest at the National Right to Life Convention in TBA.

*denotes league tournament

ADFL = Allentown Diocesan Forensics League, NCFL = National Catholic Forensic League, NSDA = National Speech & Debate Assn.,

PHSSL = PA High School Speech League, SCFL = Scranton Catholic Forensics League

Membership requirements/fees/fundraising

1. **Membership forms along with dues must be submitted by 10/5.**
2. Before a student may attend a competition or clinic, the following must be verified:
 - a. Signed **Membership/Agreement Form**
 - b. Must be in good academic and disciplinary standing according to school policy
 - c. Completed Release and Consent Form prior to competition if transportation is provided.
3. To earn team awards, students must be *active* members of the team up to the end of the year, which includes earning at least 25 NFL points in that school year.
4. All school rules must be followed during practice and meets; infraction of these will result in school disciplinary action, suspension and possible expulsion from the team (forfeiting *active* membership).
5. Students are expected to participate in all fundraising activities or participate in the buyout option which will be outlined for each fundraiser. Fundraising is crucial to our club as it funds much of the expenses.
 - a. no funds will be used for optional national tournaments that the team does not participate in
 - b. some tournaments will require additional \$\$ to attend.
 - c. Membership dues are \$50.

Preparedness, Registration and Punctuality

6. Every speech and debate event has standards for proper preparedness; students must show self-discipline and fulfill such obligations before they will be registered to compete. Examples include, but are not limited to:
 - ❖ Research and filing of evidence for debate events (including carding for debate; briefing for Congress)
 - ❖ Reading, indexing and filing of current events articles for Extemporaneous Speaking
 - ❖ Submission of scripted literature (or original speech) and a bibliographic cover page when required
 - ❖ Drafting Congress legislation (in proper format) and submitting it electronically.
7. Students are required to practice regularly and are expected to communicate with the coach regarding any issues. During practices, all students are expected to be engaged in activities that are related to speech and debate including but not limited to performing your piece, researching topics, looking for materials for interpretation events, and viewing performances of various forensics events.
8. Students sign up for meets/tournaments in a timely manner as determined by the coach to be considered for competition, which indicates a commitment to attending that meet in a prepared manner. Registration for all meets is at the coach's discretion, and is based on tournament entry restrictions, practice, readiness, conduct and attitude. A list of registered students will be posted about a week before each meet.
9. Students who inexcusably cancel ("drop") from registration after the sign-up deadline, will be assessed a "drop fee" based on the tournament's fee charges per instance to cover committed registration and judging expense. For tournaments involving travel/lodging, additional fees may be levied, accordingly. Two unexcused drops in a season will result in suspension from the team.
10. Drop fees will be excused due to extenuating circumstances (illness, death in the family, etc.); however, the parent/guardian must contact the coach **prior to** the meeting time for that meet, and a letter must be given to the coach within 10 days of the missed competition. Any **travel** expenses must still be reimbursed to the team.
11. Students who are not at the designated meeting place on the day of a meet, by the exact time announced for that meet, and who have not contacted the coach (considered a "no-call, no-show"), will be assessed full drop fees, regardless of excuse – since no contact would have been made. Students may be suspended from the team.
12. **Financial Policies.** All fees assessed must be paid in full within two weeks of the missed meet, or the student will be suspended from the team until full payment is received. A late fee of \$10 will be assessed for every month after the due date that the payment is not made. Fees not paid by May 1 will be referred to the Finance Office.

Tournaments - In an academic activity where it takes courage to perform in front of others, proper "*etiquette*" is crucial – from the moment you arrive at the city of the meet. In competition, ethical behavior reflects upon the entire squad. Gossip forsakes squad unity, and publicly complaining impedes our integrity in the greater forensic community. While the coaching

staff supports free speech, remember to act responsibly with this privilege, especially in online settings. Courtesy is the golden rule in "treating others as you would be treated." Students perceived as representing our team or school in a negative manner will be suspended and possibly expelled from the team and referred to school administration.

13. Students must follow school rules, and state/local laws regarding conduct in practice, competition, and on buses. Profane language, disrespectful attitudes (including insubordination) are not tolerated and will result in suspension.

14. **Students should bring money to purchase a la carte food items at meets or pack a lunch.**

15. Do not enter or exit a room when a contestant is speaking, wait outside until he/she is finished. If you move any furniture or modify the room in any way, return it to the way it was before you entered. **Give other presenters your undivided attention.** Nonverbal reactions and feedback are more powerful than what you say!

16. Activities that are encouraged during tournament downtime are homework, reading, cards, theatre and improvisational games, and discussion/talking. Students must remain on the premises of competition sites.

17. When the team arrives at a meet, students must remain together until they are dismissed by the coach to practice before rounds. The coach needs to distribute itineraries, room assignments, maps and information, which is logistically easier when everyone is in one place. Additionally, forming cliques or excluding anyone on the team from a group at any time will not be tolerated. The team must also sit together and use proper decorum at awards ceremonies, cheering equally for winning students from all schools, and giving the proper and standard attention to first place winners (usually, a standing ovation).

18. If you suspect a rules infraction or inappropriate behavior in a round, bring it to a coach's attention **immediately**. Only then can we alert the Tab room and rectify the situation. Whining about judges after meets is inappropriate and does no good. While there may be a *handful* of unqualified judges, they aren't *all* bad. Each judge brings a different background and different expectations to the round. Use constructive criticism as a means to grow as an individual and adapt to different styles.

19. Go to watch an elimination round when you have the opportunity to do so. It's a good way to learn how to improve your performance.

20. For those competing in interpretation events and declamation, make sure you bring your original uncut copy, ISBN number, or web link address of the piece you are using in case a judge files a protest. For those competing in original oratory, you may be required at times to submit a copy of your speech with bibliography and affidavit that your speech is original.

Dress Code - The first impression an audience gets of presenters is their **appearance**. A student's appearance should be professional and dignified, showing that he or she cares about the event. *Just as in athletics or in a professional job, what one wears affects his/her performance.* **You want to be liked by your judges!**

21. **Restraint:** avoid outlandish hairstyles or apparel that draw attention away from your performance. Hair should be kept out of your face, so your audience can see facial expressions. Jewelry, if worn at all, should be kept elegantly modest – nothing should jingle or jangle. Use such tasteful judgment regarding all accessories, and when in doubt, *omit!* **Be professional, conservative and classy.** Look **mature**, as if you're interviewing for an office job. No jeans, and *dress/casual* shoes (not athletic or boots) must be worn.

22. **School identity:** do not tell a judge what school you are from, and do not wear attire or emblems (e.g., letter jackets) that identify your school, as such information could bias their opinion.

23. In speech and debate events, professional suits/blazers or dresses (rich/knee-length or below; not too busy), with conservative blouses/shirts should be worn. In interpretive events, performers may wear more "stylish" clothing, but it should avoid being too gaudy. Tasteful shoes (women: low heels; men: conservative with laces are best, loafers are acceptable). Accessories, such as ties/scarves should be subdued and not distracting.

24. **Finalists** (or other elimination rounds) must remain in contest attire for the awards presentation.

Transportation Policies - We commonly travel to meets locally, around the state; and periodically, nationally.

25. **Check with coaches/captains the week before each meet for times, in case there is a change. Note that any announcements regarding tournaments may appear on the school website or will be part of the announcements at school.** The team will usually gather at the school's front entrance. Parents must be waiting by the announced return time (we will call ahead for delays).

26. Students will be sent home *at parent/guardian's expense* for **serious infraction** of these or school policies.

Overnight/Travel Tournaments - Besides obtaining necessary parent and teacher permission to attend these advanced tournaments, students must agree to put forth extra effort for such meets. **Students are also expected to have competed in a sufficient amount of tournaments prior to being allowed to attend an overnight tournament as per coach's discretion.** Parents are asked to attend these overnight tournaments unless written permission is given by a parent should they be unable to attend.

28. Communication: Students are responsible to read all communications received from the coach regarding all team matters and respond promptly where necessary.

29. Cost and Commitment: Depending on the meet, students/families will pay for some, most or all of the costs of traveling, such as food and transportation, and payment must be made in full to guarantee registration. Specific details are included on each meet's parental/guardian permission form. Students are insured by the school while traveling. When students **commit** to compete (or compete to qualify), they must be aware of the actual travel dates. Conflicts (other than severe illness or a death in the family) will **not** be tolerated: students who fail to participate must fully reimburse the team for all expenses associated with the tournament (travel/airline, lodging, registration and drop fees), whether the student was originally responsible for paying for those expenses or not.

30. Conduct: While all of the normal conduct and etiquette rules apply, it is especially important to stress when traveling out of town. When in airports and strange places, it is paramount that the coaches know where students are at all times. A coach may need to serve in a judging or administrative capacity at a tournament. In those cases, students must stay on hotel or tournament competition premises, or use official tournament shuttles/transportation to travel between venues. No student may venture away from a competition or lodging premises without supervision. Contrary to normal school rules, it is often a good idea to carry a cellular phone at such tournaments, so students can maintain contact with the coach. Any students who pose problems for the coaching staff *may be sent home at the parent's/guardian's expense.*

31. Lodging: Overnight stays are an investment in fostering well-rested, competition-ready squad members. Students must abide by curfews (in the assigned room and *quiet* at the designated times) and respect the hotel property and staff. If students of the opposite sex are in a room, the door must be blocked open; no visitors from other schools unless a coach is present; likewise, you must seek a coach's permission to visit other schools' rooms. Room assignments are made by the coaching staff, and for liability purposes, *are non-negotiable* once established.

32. Privilege: Students must first qualify to compete at official national tournaments, such as NSDA and NCFL. The team obviously devotes a great deal of resources and money for large tournaments. The coaching staff will be the final arbiter of what students are allowed to attend such meets, and will make decisions based on a student's level of dedication to the team, typical conduct and behavior, academic standing, and readiness and preparedness for competition.

Speech & Debate Membership Form

Not valid if information is missing (indicate n/a for not applicable. Please **print legibly**, especially email addresses.)

Name: _____ Graduation Year: _____
Street Address: _____ City, State, ZIP: _____
Home Phone: _____ Birth Date: _____
Email address: _____

Parent/Guardian Contact Information

	Contact 1	Contact 2
Parent/Guardian Name(s):		
Place of Work:		
Email(s):		
Cell Phone(s):		

PARENT/GUARDIAN PERMISSION

I allow my above-named student to participate in Speech and Debate activities on the dates as described on the calendar included in the Notre Dame Speech and Debate Policies realizing that for each meet, I am responsible for transporting or arranging for transportation for my student to and from the local meet location by the **weekly** updated and announced leave and return time. I have discussed the team's policies with my student, and realize that infraction of these policies may result in my student's suspension from meet competition and forfeiture of awards earned. I also understand that to support the continuation of this program, my student is expected to participate in fundraising initiatives and parents are expected to help with judging and driving as needed.

I have enclosed \$50 (make checks payable to Notre Dame Speech and Debate) to pay my student's dues.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

STUDENT AGREEMENT

I, the undersigned, hereby agree to adhere to the guidelines set forth in the Notre Dame Speech and Debate Policies and realize that if I violate any of the policies, I will be subject to disciplinary action accordingly, and may forfeit any awards I have earned. I will check meet leave and return times **weekly**, realizing that the schedule information in this packet is **tentative**. I further agree to spend my time in practice efficiently, and that I will leave the building after practice.

Student Signature: _____ Date: _____