

**FLORIDA FORENSIC LEAGUE, INC.**

**GOVERNING DOCUMENTS**

**EFFECTIVE DATE: JANUARY 1, 2015**

**Statement of Vision**

Our mission is to provide students in secondary schools with opportunities to develop their communication, argumentation, and leadership skills through their participation in curricular and co-curricular educational and competitive events. Central to the accomplishment of this mission is the provision of instructional and organizational support for coaches and other adults who teach these skills to students through speech and debate programs in schools.

## Organization Status

Florida Forensic League, Inc. is a corporation not for profit in the State of Florida. The articles of incorporation were approved by the State of Florida on November 20, 2003. The organization began operations on January 1, 2004 and these governing documents were approved at a meeting of the Board of Directors on January 18, 2004. Amendments to the bylaws and standing rules for the 2004-2005 school year were approved by the membership and were effective November 1, 2004. The IRS granted 501(c)(3) status to Florida Forensic League, Inc. in January of 2005. The state of Florida recognized FFL's tax-exempt status in March of 2005. Amendments to the bylaws and standing rules for the 2005-2006 school year were approved by the membership and were effective December 13, 2005. Amendments to the bylaws and standing rules for the 2006-2007 school year were approved by the membership and were effective December 20, 2006.

## Governing Documents

- The *Bylaws*, as established by the Board of Directors and amended when necessary, establish the structure and governance of Florida Forensic League, Inc.
- The *Standing Rules*, as established by the Board of Directors and amended when necessary, are the guidelines for the administration of Florida Forensic League, Inc. tournaments and events. The *Standing Rules* include regulations for competition in league-sanctioned events.

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# BYLAWS

## ARTICLE I: NAME

The name of the corporation shall be: Florida Forensic League, Inc., hereafter referred to as *the League*.

## ARTICLE II: PURPOSE

**Section I: Purpose.** The purpose for which the corporation is organized is to promote and conduct activities related to forensics, including, but not limited to, organizing debate tournaments.

**Section II: Vision.** Our mission is to provide students in secondary schools with opportunities to develop their communication, argumentation, and leadership skills through their participation in curricular and co-curricular educational and competitive events. Central to the accomplishment of this mission is the provision of instructional and organizational support for coaches and other adults who teach these skills to students through speech and debate programs in schools.

**Section III: Affiliations.** The League shall maintain liaison with the National Federation of State High School Associations, the National Speech & Debate Association and the National Catholic Forensic League. These affiliations shall be informal; the League operates as an independent entity and shall not be bound by decisions of these organizations unless otherwise noted.

## ARTICLE III: MEMBERSHIP

### **Section I: Eligibility & Requirements.**

- A. Membership in the League shall be held by schools. The word *member* shall hereafter be defined as a school that is part of the League.
- B. Membership shall be open to both public and private schools of the following classifications:
  1. Middle Schools: those institutions enrolling students in grades 6-8.
  2. Junior High Schools: those institutions enrolling students in grades 7-9.
  3. Ninth Grade Centers: those institutions enrolling students in grade 9 only.
  4. High Schools: those institutions enrolling students in grades 9-12 or 10-12.Each school shall declare which classification it meets; however, the Board of Directors retains the authority to change such classification if it determines the change to be appropriate.
- C. The current membership dues are \$70.
- D. Any high school may apply for a supplement to its high school membership for its ninth grade students. The supplement shall allow the member to enter up to four (4) ninth grade entries per event (except for Group Interpretation, where one additional Group may be entered) in addition to the member's regular entry spaces for students in grades 9 through 12. Supplemental entries will be based on member schools for each region for that tournament year. For purposes of fees judge requirements, tournament procedures, and membership votes, a member and its supplement shall be treated as a single member. Dues for the supplement will be 50% of the cost of the school's annual membership. The following exceptions apply:
  1. Any high school with a separate ninth grade center campus shall be deemed to be affiliated with that ninth grade center and, therefore, be entitled to purchase one

- membership for the high school and the supplement for the ninth grade center (the ninth grade center may not apply for its own membership unless the high school does not apply for membership).
2. A physical campus that contains both a junior/middle school and a high school shall be deemed to be affiliated and may apply for no more than one membership: one for the high school and a supplement for either additional ninth grade slots OR for the junior/middle school.
  3. Multiple campuses within the same private school entity shall be considered affiliated and, therefore, may apply for no more than one membership and supplement.
- E. Students at member schools must be in grades 6-12 and must not yet have graduated from high school in order to participate in events sponsored and/or sanctioned by the League.
  - F. Membership in the League shall be attained through submission of a written application established by the Board of Directors. The membership application requires written authorization from the school's highest ranking administrator, who designates one adult as the *Head Coach* and, if applicable, one (1) adult as an *Assistant Coach*. These individuals shall be responsible for supervision of all persons representing the member, and shall receive and respond to all league communications.
  - G. No person may be designated as the *Head Coach* or *Assistant Coach* at more than one (1) member school and its supplement.
  - H. The completed membership application will be finalized upon receipt of the annual dues. The amount of annual dues for all schools shall be determined by the Board of Directors and published on the membership application. Beginning with the 2005-2006 membership year, dues will be the same for all schools regardless of classification as a high school, middle school, etc. Beginning with the 2004-2005 membership year, schools that have not held a league membership in the three (3) years prior to the year of membership application shall be entitled to a 50% reduction in the regular dues rate for their classification. These schools will pay the full rate for all other tournament/entry fees. Members meeting this requirement who have overpaid their membership dues for 2004-2005 will be refunded the difference. Payment of dues provides membership only. Additional fees will be charged for participation in league tournaments and workshops.
  - I. Final approval of each application for membership shall be contingent upon the completion of all membership requirements and approval by the Board of Directors, which may deny membership with cause.
  - J. Home school students are welcome to participate in this organization. Interested students should contact their public school district for information on how to join a school forensics program.

## **Section II: Membership Year & Application Deadlines.**

- A. The official membership year shall be from November 1-October 31.
- B. All new and existing members must complete the membership application process on an annual basis. The regular membership application period shall begin not later than September 1. The deadline for returning member schools shall be December 15. The deadline for new programs shall be January 15.
- C. If the 15th day of December (for renewals) or the 15<sup>th</sup> of January (for new schools) falls on a weekend, the Board of Directors shall have the discretion to move the membership deadline to the first business day after the first calendar day of the month.
- D. Exceptions to these deadlines shall be granted at the discretion of the Board of Directors.

- E. After December 15, no further applications for renewal memberships shall be accepted; existing members who have not completed the membership renewal process shall be dropped from the membership rolls and shall not be entitled to any membership privileges for the remainder of the membership year. After January 15, no further applications for new members shall be accepted.

### **Section III: Regions.**

- A. The League shall be organized into two (2) or more Regions.
- B. The membership of the League shall determine, by majority vote, the number and composition of the Regions but shall adhere to the following requirements:
  - 1. Each Region shall be composed of one (1) or more counties in the State of Florida.
  - 2. Each county shall be assigned to one (1) and only (1) Region; boundaries of the Regions may not be drawn in such a way that one county is divided between two (2) or more regions.
  - 3. Each Region's boundaries shall be drawn in such a manner that each county in the region is bordered by at least one other county in the region.
- C. Each member shall be assigned to the Region in which its primary physical campus is located.
- D. Each Region shall have a unique name, which shall be determined by the members in that Region, subject to the approval of the Board of Directors. Each Region shall also be assigned a single-digit number, determined by the Board of Directors, for faster identification.

### **Section IV: Membership Privileges.**

- A. All members shall be entitled to access the membership areas of the website maintained by the League. The website shall include downloadable and printable copies of all governing documents and league meeting/league event invitations.
- B. All members shall be entitled to receive communications released by the League in any format determined by the Board of Directors.
- C. All members shall receive notice of and have the right to participate in meetings of the membership and league events, provided that any special requirements to participate in a given meeting/event have been met.
- D. All members shall be entitled to present their concerns to the Board of Directors.
- E. Each member shall be entitled to cast one (1) vote in all elections and questions that are put to the membership of the League.
- F. In all cases, membership privileges shall be exercised by the member's *Head Coach* or *Assistant Coach*; no other individual is entitled to speak/act on behalf of the member.

## **ARTICLE IV: BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**Section I: Board of Directors.** The League shall be governed by a Board of Directors. The officers of the League, all of whom are to be elected by the membership, shall comprise the Board of Directors.

**Section II: Board Advisors.** The Board of Directors may annually appoint one (1) Middle School Liaison, who shall be a *Head Coach* or *Assistant Coach* of a middle school or junior high school member. The Board of Directors shall also have the authority to appoint one (1) Administrative Liaison, who shall be a public school administrator. These positions are advisory in nature with no

formal authority or right to vote on matters before the Board of Directors. Advisors may be appointed or replaced by majority vote.

**Section III: Meetings of the Board of Directors.**

- A. The Board of Directors shall meet as often as necessary on the days in which the State Tournaments are scheduled in order to transact business related to the State Tournaments. No prior notice is necessary for these meetings and may be called by the President, or by the highest-ranking member of the Board of Directors if the President is not present at the event, or by any five (5) members of the Board of Directors. Meetings held at these events shall be held in executive session.
- B. The Board of Directors shall meet whenever the President or any five (5) members of the Board of Directors calls for a meeting. Notice of a meeting convened under this section must be given to all members of the Board of Directors through electronic mail at least three (3) days prior to the meeting.
- C. The Board of Directors may meet using any means of communication by which all directors participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting.
- D. Meetings of the Board of Directors shall not be open to the membership unless a majority of the members of the Board of Directors vote to open it. The Board of Directors may invite others to attend for the purpose of providing information to the Board.
- E. Minutes from meetings of the Board of Directors shall be published unless the Board of Directors votes to hold a meeting in executive session.

**Section IV: Powers of the Board of Directors.** The Board of Directors shall have the authority to interpret and enforce the provisions of these bylaws and other governing documents of the League. In the event a situation arises which is not covered by the governing documents of the League, the Board of Directors shall have the authority to determine a course of action. Actions passed by a majority of the members who vote on an action shall be implemented by the President or his/her designee(s). The Executive Board is permitted to make decisions in the best interest of the League in terms of tournament operations and then have the League vote the next year in order to make changes permanent.

**Section V: Communication Between Board Members.** Members of the Board of Directors may communicate with each other in person, by telephone, facsimile, email, or other electronic format. These communications shall not constitute a meeting unless a formal vote of the Board of Directors is taken.

**Section VI: Removal From & Vacancies on Board of Directors.** Members of the Board of Directors, all of whom are officers of the League, may be removed through the process described in Article V, Section VI. Vacancies on the Board of Directors will be filled through the process described in Article V, Section V.

**Section VII: Reimbursement of Expenses.**

- A. The Treasurer shall be authorized to reimburse the members of the Board of Directors for the following documented, reasonable expenses: travel, lodging, and meals at official league functions; office expenses related directly to the conduct of league business.
- B. Reimbursements must be approved by the Board of Directors, which may not authorize

reimbursement for any expenses that have been, will be, or should otherwise be paid by another organization.

## **ARTICLE V: OFFICERS**

**Section I: Officers.** The officers of this organization are: President, Vice President/Operations, Vice President/Webmaster, Secretary, Treasurer, and one (1) Regional Director from each Region.

**Section II: Duties.** The duties of the officers are as follows:

- A. *President*: Preside over all meetings of the Board of Directors and the membership of the League, serve as *Tournament Director* for and coordinate all operations of the State Tournaments, and maintain communication between all members of the Board of Directors.
- B. *Vice-President/Operations*: Chair Standing Committees of the League unless another person is designated, serve as the liaison between the League and outside groups, act in the capacity of *Ombudsperson* for the State Tournaments, mentor new Regional Directors, and is responsible for coach recognition.
- C. *Vice-President/Webmaster*: Maintain and regularly update the League website, coordinate all online discussions and elections, serve as liaison between FFL and the media, and consult with tournament hosts on technology needs for the State Tournaments, an.
- D. *Secretary*: Compile and maintain a *Membership Directory* to be updated and published on an annual basis, keep all official documents and records of the organization, and record the minutes of all meetings.
- E. *Treasurer*: Maintain the official financial accounts and records of the League, receive membership forms and dues from schools, file a Treasury Report with the League at least once per year, collect tournament entry fees for the State Tournaments, and disburse funds as necessary to operate the League. The Treasurer may not disburse funds to him/herself without written authorization from the President.
- F. *Regional Directors*: Recruit and retain schools as members of the League, act as a liaison between the Board of Directors and the member schools in the region, organize and direct the Regional Qualifying Tournament in accordance with the guidelines established in the various governing documents, certify qualifiers to the State Championship, and accept State Tournament assignments as directed by the Executive Committee. At the option of each region, the Regional Director may hold judge and/or student training workshops within the region. Regional Directors may also hold formal and informal meetings at the regional level for the purpose of suggesting future changes to league rules.
- G. *All Officers*: All officers are required to attend both of the State Tournaments and all meetings of the membership and the Board of Directors, unless a reasonable explanation for an absence exists. All officers shall make a reasonable effort to respond to concerns raised by the *Head Coach* or *Assistant Coach* for members in their Region (Regional Directors) or statewide (President, Vice Presidents, Secretary, Treasurer). Officers may forward and/or discuss membership concerns with other officers whenever necessary. Communications to officers should bear the name and school of the sender. Questions and concerns should always be raised by officials (eg: *Head Coach*, *Assistant Coach*, principal) representing the member school; communications initiated by parents and/or students shall be forwarded to the *Head Coach* and/or *Assistant Coach* of that individual's school for a response, unless the officer, Executive Committee, or Board of Directors deems that a response is legally prudent or necessary, and/or otherwise in

the best interest of the organization. Officers shall be under no obligation to respond to or act upon unsigned and/or anonymous communications.

### **Section III: Eligibility, Nominations, & Election.**

- A. Elections shall be held annually for all offices with expiring terms.
- B. Only the *Head Coach* or *Assistant Coach* for a member may seek election to an office. No person may seek election to or serve in more than one (1) office simultaneously. An officer who runs for and wins a second office must resign from the first office.
- C. Nominations shall be accepted beginning on the final day of the State Championship Tournament in person and shall continue to be accepted through the League website for a period of fourteen (14) calendar days. Notice that nominations are being accepted shall be given by electronic mail to the *Head Coach* for each member. Self-nominations shall be permitted. Nominees will be notified as nominations are made and will be provided the opportunity to accept or decline the nomination.
- D. No later than seven (7) calendar days after the date on which nominations close, the names of all nominees shall be posted on the website along with a statement of no more than 250 words from each candidate for office. Voting shall be conducted through electronic submission for a twenty-one (21) day period following the posting of the nominees for office. Each vote which is properly transmitted by a member will have its receipt confirmed.
- E. The President, Vice President/Operations, Vice President/Webmaster, Secretary, and Treasurer shall be elected by the entire membership, with each member receiving one (1) vote for each office. The Regional Director for each Region shall be elected by the members in that Region only, with each member in the Region receiving one (1) vote for that office.
- F. The elections process shall be overseen by at least three (3) officers whose terms are unexpired, or who are not running for re-election, or by officers whose terms are expiring but are not opposed for re-election. If at least three (3) members do not meet the above criteria, the Board of Directors shall appoint other coaches who are not running for office to oversee the elections process. Following the expiration of the voting period, the election overseers shall tally the ballots. The candidate receiving a plurality of the ballots cast in the election shall be the winner. Results shall be promptly published on the website maintained by the League.
- G. Whenever possible, transition plans should be made during the Novice State Tournament; however, the departing members of the Board of Directors are still responsible for the operation of that event and any others until their terms have expired.

### **Section IV: Term of Office.**

- A. Each term of office shall begin on June 1 of the year in which the term begins and shall end on May 31 of the year in which the term ends. An officer will serve beyond the end of his/her term if there is no person to replace him/her.
- B. The initial officers of the League shall serve terms as follows:
  - 1. The President shall serve from January 1, 2004-May 31, 2006.
  - 2. The Vice President/Webmaster shall serve from January 1, 2004-May 31, 2005.
  - 3. All other officers shall serve from January 1, 2004-May 31, 2004.
- C. For the term beginning June 1, 2004 new officers shall serve terms as follows:
  - 1. The Secretary and Regional Directors from odd-numbered Regions shall serve a one (1) year term ending on May 31, 2005.
  - 2. The Vice President/Operations, Treasurer, and Regional Directors from even-numbered Regions shall serve a two (2) year term ending on May 31, 2006.

- D. For all future terms, the President shall serve a term of three (3) years. All other officers shall serve a term of two (2) years.

#### **Section V: Vacancies.**

- A. In the event of the resignation of the President, the Vice-President/Operations shall succeed to the office of President. The Vice-Presidency will then be considered vacated.
- B. In the event of the resignation or removal of any other officer, the Board of Directors shall fill the vacancy for the remainder of the unexpired term by appointing a person who meets all of the regular eligibility requirements that apply to elected officers. A two-thirds majority of the remaining members of the Board of Directors must approve any replacement appointment. If a replacement cannot be selected within a period of sixty (60) days following the date of resignation, an emergency election will be held. All emergency elections will take place over the League website. A nomination window of not less than seven (7) and not more than fourteen (14) days, and a voting period of not less than seven (7) and not more than fourteen (14) days, shall be used in these elections. Unaffected members of the Board of Directors shall oversee the emergency election.

**Section VI: Removal.** A member of the Board of Directors may be removed from office prior to the end of his/her term of service for failure to perform the duties assigned to his/her office, and/or for unethical performance of those duties. The following process shall be used to remove an officer:

- A. *Officer Elected Statewide:* If two-thirds of the members of the Board of Directors declare that an officer has committed one of the actions listed above, a *Removal Ballot* shall be sent electronically or by US mail to all members. There shall be a fourteen (14) day window to vote for removal or retention of the officer. Ballots will be returned to the President, or to the Secretary if the President is the subject of the removal vote. For the removal to take effect, two-thirds of the schools that return a ballot must vote to remove the officer.
- B. *Regional Director:* If two-thirds of the members of the Board of Directors declare that a Regional Director has committed one of the actions listed above, a *Removal Ballot* shall be sent electronically or by US mail to all members in the region that the Regional Director was elected from. There shall be a fourteen (14) day window to vote for removal or retention of the Regional Director. Ballots will be returned to the League President. For the removal to take effect, two-thirds of the schools that return a ballot must vote to remove the Regional Director.

In the event that a member of the Board of Directors is removed from his/her office, that office shall be considered vacated and a replacement shall be selected in accordance with the provisions prescribed by Article IV, Section V.

### **ARTICLE VI: MEETINGS & VOTES**

#### **Section I: Regular Meetings.**

- A. The membership of the league shall meet once during each year and the Board of Directors shall meet a minimum of twice per year.
  - 1. Spring Conference: The date for this conference will be on the day which the Novice State Tournament begins. Coaches will have the opportunity to submit proposed changes to the governing documents for the following school year and/or present questions or concerns. The President shall appoint coaches to preside over this conference period.

2. Summer Meeting: The date for this meeting shall be set and hosted by the President or his/her designee. The purpose of this meeting shall be to draft the language of proposals to amend the various governing documents of the League and to draft Pro/Con statements for those proposals.
  3. Fall Meeting – Board of Directors: The Board of Directors shall meet in the fall to finalize the proposed changes and Pro/Con statements prior to posting on the FFL Website.
  4. Fall Vote: The league membership shall have the opportunity to review all proposed changes and Pro/Con statements via the FFL website. A method for posting comments and discussion will be provided online to the membership for a period of 14 days prior to voting.
- B. The annual meeting of the League shall be conducted in the summer and again on-line in the Fall.
  - C. The regular meetings of the League shall be open to the *Head Coach* and/or *Assistant Coach* for each member. No other representatives or individuals may attend these meetings unless invited by the Board of Directors.
  - D. The agenda for regular meetings shall be established by the Board of Directors. Items for the Spring Meeting agenda shall be solicited from the membership of the League through the League website for at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting. If too many items are received, the Board of Directors shall select a reasonable number of items for discussion. Items for the Fall Meeting agenda will be selected by the Board of Directors based upon the discussions at the Spring Meeting. Agendas for regular meetings shall be given to all member schools on the day of the meeting, and posted on the League website in advance of the meeting whenever time permits.
  - E. The Board of Directors shall encourage all members to attend these meetings in the interest of promoting open discussion and sharing information. Notice of these meetings shall be posted on the League website and sent to the email address of the *Head Coach* for each member at least thirty (30) days prior to the meeting.

**Section II: Special/Emergency Meetings.** Special meetings of the membership of the League may be called by a majority of the Board of Directors. Notice of these meetings must be provided through the League website and sent to the email address of the *Head Coach* for each member at least forty-eight (48) hours in advance of the meeting. The specific reason(s) for which the special meeting has been called must be published and no other business except for that which has been published may be transacted.

**Section III: Votes of the Membership.**

- A. The membership of the League shall participate in regular votes as follows:
  1. *Fall Vote:* This vote shall be used to decide all questions and rule change proposals. No later than September 1<sup>st</sup> all proposed changes/amendments along with drafted Pro/Con statements shall be posted on the FFL website for membership review and discussion. In addition to the ballot language itself, one (1) statement from a proponent and one (1) statement from an opponent of the proposal shall be drafted. Members of the Board of Directors may compose these statements or appoint another coach who is present at the meeting to do so. Statements shall not exceed 150 words. Within fourteen (14) calendar days of the end of the Fall Meeting, ballot language and proponent/opponent statements for each proposal shall be posted on the League website. A fourteen (14) day moderated discussion period using a website message board shall follow. The *Head Coach* and/or *Assistant Coach* for a member shall have the right to use

the forum to comment on ballot issues. After the discussion period has ended, a fourteen (14) day voting period shall begin. Each member shall be entitled to one (1) vote, which will be submitted to the Board of Directors through the League website. Results of the election shall be certified by the Board of Directors and promptly announced on the League website.

- B. The above votes shall be the only regularly scheduled votes of the membership. The Board of Directors may schedule other votes for removal of an officer, filling of a vacancy on the Board of Directors, and/or amendments to the governing documents (see Articles X and XI).
- C. In the event of a tie on any matter submitted to the membership that requires definitive action, including the election of officers and the selection of State Tournament venues, the matter shall be referred to the next meeting of the Board of Directors. The Board shall then resolve the matter at its next meeting by vote. This provision does not apply to votes on proposals to amend portions of the governing documents; tie votes in these situations would result in the defeat of the proposal.

## **ARTICLE VII: COMMITTEES**

### **Section I: Executive Committee.**

- A. The President, Vice President/Operations, Vice President/Webmaster, Secretary, and Treasurer shall serve as the Executive Committee of the League.
- B. The Executive Committee shall have the power to take those actions necessary to conduct the business of the League between regular membership meetings, special membership meetings, and/or meetings of the Board of Directors. Emergencies and unforeseen situations shall also be addressed by the Executive Committee.
- C. The Executive Committee may meet if the President or any three (3) members call for such a meeting. The Executive Committee may meet using any means of communication by which all directors participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. A quorum for any meeting of the Executive Committee shall be three (3) of its members.
- D. The Executive Committee may take no action that is contrary to any rule in the governing documents of the League. The Executive Committee may take no action unless three (3) or more members of the Executive Committee agree to such action. These rules shall not impose upon the individual officer's performance of their duties. Any actions approved by the Executive Committee shall be implemented by the President or his/her designee(s).
- E. Meetings of the Executive Committee shall not be open to the membership unless the committee votes to open it. The Executive Committee may invite others to attend for the purpose of providing information to the committee.
- F. Minutes from meetings of the Executive Committee shall be published unless the committee votes to hold a meeting in executive session.

### **Section II: Extemporaneous Speaking Topic Committee.**

The President and the Vice-President/Operations shall arrange to find a qualified outside source to produce extemporaneous speaking topics for the regional qualifying, varsity and novice state tournaments. The person selected will write questions for both domestic and foreign extemporaneous speaking. The topic areas will be announced in advance and the outside source will write enough questions for each tournament.

### **Section III: Protest Committee.**

- A. For all Regional Qualifying Tournaments, a Protest Committee of three (3) individuals and one (1) alternate should be appointed to handle written protests. The Regional Director shall make these appointments. All appointed individuals must be the designated *Head Coach* or *Assistant Coach* for a member. The alternate should participate in place of any committee member whose school makes, or is the subject of, a particular protest.
- B. At the State Tournaments, the Executive Committee shall serve as the Protest Committee. In the event that a member of the Executive Committee becomes involved in an appeal or protest as either the person filing the complaint or the coach of a school/entry that is the subject of a complaint, or if a member of the Executive Committee is unavailable, he/she shall be replaced on the Protest Committee by a Regional Director whose Region is not involved in the protest. In adjudicating a protest or appeal, the Protest & Appeals Committee may consult with the Regional Directors.
- C. To disqualify a contestant or take other action against a school/entry requires a 2/3 vote of the committee. Other actions can include, but are not limited to, a verbal warning, a loss in a debate round or a last place ranking in speech, a last place ranking without a drop in speech or a placing of 9 without a drop in speech.
- D. Decisions of the Protest Committee shall be communicated to the involved parties and a record of any action taken will be sent to the Secretary for archiving.
- E. The Protest Committee will only address protests that originate from a direct observation in a round.

**Section IV: Board Committees.** The Board of Directors may create and appoint committees of the Board of Directors at its discretion. Each committee shall have a minimum of three (3) members and shall have a specific charge. Committee appointments may be made by the President unless a majority of the members of the Board of Directors vote to select a specific committee slate. Board committees may spend funds only if prior approval is granted by the Board of Directors.

**Section V: Other Committees.** The Board of Directors and/or the membership of the League may vote to create standing and *ad-hoc* committees as needed. The President shall appoint committee members unless the Board of Directors and/or the membership of the League vote to select a specific committee slate.

**Section VI: Committee Meetings.** Unless otherwise noted for a specific committee listed above, the following rules shall govern committee meetings:

- A. Committees may meet as necessary using any means of communication by which all directors participating may simultaneously hear each other during the meeting. Minutes of committee meetings shall be published.
- B. Committees may vote to make recommendations but said recommendations must be approved by the Board of Directors for implementation to occur.
- C. A quorum of a committee shall be a majority of its members.

## **ARTICLE VIII: WORKSHOPS & TOURNAMENTS**

**Section I: Workshops.** A Regional Director may hold judge/student workshops in his/her Region at his/her discretion. The Board of Directors may also hold statewide workshops at its discretion. Workshops shall be open to the *Head Coach* and/or *Assistant Coach* for all members, as well as others invited by the Regional Directors and/or Board of Directors. Participation fees may be charged for a workshop to cover its operating costs.

**Section II: Sanctioned Tournaments.** The League shall sanction the following tournaments:

- A. One Regional Qualifying Tournament within each Region for the purpose of determining qualifiers to the State Championship Tournament.
- B. One State Championship Tournament to determine the State Champion in each league-sanctioned event. To compete at this tournament, a student must qualify through the Regional Qualifying Tournament in his/her school's region.
- C. One Novice State Tournament to determine the top first year contestants in each league-sanctioned-event. This tournament shall be open to all students from member schools that meet the novice entry requirement (see *Standing Rules*, Rule 8). To attend Novice State, a member school must have sent one (1) or more competitors to the Regional Qualifying Tournament. Returning State Champions who accept an automatic bye to the State Championship Tournament do not count toward this rule; a school must be physically in attendance at the Regional Qualifying Tournament in order to attend Novice State. Members that fail to attend the Regional Tournament are, therefore, ineligible to attend the Novice State Tournament. However, if a school cannot attend the Regional Qualifying Tournament due to an FCAT "Blackout" date or preclusion from their district office the school must submit a letter signed by the principal on school letterhead to the FFL President, prior to the Regional Qualifying Tournament.
- D. The rules and procedures at the Regional Qualifying Tournaments, the State Championship Tournament, and the Novice State Tournament must adhere to all guidelines contained within the governing documents of the League.

**Section III: Regional Tournaments.**

- A. The Regional Directors from the various Regions shall host their respective Regional Tournaments at their school or be responsible for finding a substitute location.
- B. Each Regional Tournament shall be under the direction of the Regional Director from that Region. Regional Directors must follow the governing documents of the League in operating their Regional Tournaments. The Regional Director may appoint other individuals to serve as tournament officials.
- C. Results from the Regional Tournament are subject to audit and certification by the Executive Committee of the League. In the case of tabulation errors discovered after the conclusion of a Regional Tournament, the Executive Committee shall have the authority to determine any remedies or actions that need to be taken.

**Section IV: State Tournaments.**

- A. The State Championship Tournament and the Novice State Tournament shall be under the direction of the Board of Directors of the League. The President shall serve as Tournament Director and assign responsibilities to each member of the Board of Directors. If the President is unavailable to serve as Tournament Director, he/she shall appoint one from among the members of the Executive Committee.
- B. Whenever possible, all personnel appointed to the tabulation room shall be a member of the Board of Directors. However, the Executive Committee may appoint others to serve. The tournament staff should not be paid, unless the Executive Committee decides that circumstances surrounding a certain tournament require that an outside consultant be hired to certify that the operation of the tabulation room is fair and unbiased.

**Section V: Location of State Tournaments.**

- A. The State Championship Tournament and the Novice State Tournament shall be scheduled by bid process one year in advance.

- B. These tournaments shall be hosted by a school that is a member of the League. Other institutions may enter a bid only if there are no members that wish to host the tournament.
- C. Each member that wishes to host a State Tournament must review the guidelines for host schools as published on the League website and certify that it can meet those guidelines. A letter from the principal indicating that the school's administration supports the bid must be received prior to the deadline to apply to host. Each host school must submit a statement with details about their plan to host the tournament for publication on the League website prior to any vote of the membership on tournament sites.
- D. Locations and, when necessary, dates shall be voted on by the Board of Directors. The potential host site that earns a plurality of the votes cast in the election shall host that tournament.

#### **Section VI: Hosting Guidelines & Site Visits.**

- A. The Board of Directors shall publish and maintain a *Guidelines for Hosts* document to assist tournament hosts in preparing for their tournament.
- B. The President and another member of the Board of Directors shall visit the site(s) of the State Tournaments as often as necessary to verify that all needs of the League can be met by the tournament host. The first visit must be done early enough to execute a change in location if needed. Reasonable expenses for the site visit shall be paid from the League Treasury.
- C. The host school shall be responsible for the safety and security of all facilities used at the tournament by students and adults, including the proper purchase and service of all food and beverage items as well as responsibility for any taxes due on food, beverage, or merchandise items for which the host school receives direct revenues or is reimbursed by the League.
- D. The host school for each State Tournament shall be entitled to a minimum of \$500 and a maximum of \$1,500 from the League in order to defray expenses. The first \$500 will be presented to the host school after it has delivered its invitation information to the League President. The remaining \$500 will be presented to the host school after the conclusion of the tournament and with satisfactory completion of the hosting requirements. In the event the Executive Committee of the League deems that a school did not meet the hosting requirements, it may elect to penalize the host school by withholding up to the full amount of the second payment.
- E. The host school for each Regional Tournament shall be entitled to a maximum of \$100. The remaining monies will be presented to the host school after the conclusion of the tournament and with satisfactory completion of the hosting requirements. In the event the Executive Committee of the League deems that a school did not meet the hosting requirements, it may elect to penalize the host school by withholding up to the full amount of the payment.

### **ARTICLE IX: FORENSICS ETHICS & CIVILITY CODE**

**Section I: Ethical Conduct.** Ethical behavior is expected of members, students, coaches, judges, faculty and adults who participate in all forensic activities sponsored by the League. This includes, but is not limited to, the use of library resources and evidence, rendering judgments, and accurate recording of results.

**Section II: Civility Code.** The Board of Directors shall maintain a *Civility Code*. All individuals attending events sponsored or sanctioned by the League shall follow the guidelines in that document.

**Section III: Ethics Review.** Allegations of behavior that is unethical or that violates the *Civility Code* must be submitted in writing to the President. Three members of the Board of Directors, including at least one member of the Executive Committee and one Regional Director, shall be appointed by the President to investigate such charges and make recommendations to the Board of Directors. In cases where the President makes or is the subject of a charge, the Vice-President/Operations shall receive the complaint, appoint the committee, and oversee the process. The recommendations of the committee shall be forwarded to the Board of Directors, which is hereby empowered to act on those recommendations at its next meeting.

## **ARTICLE X: AMENDMENTS TO BYLAWS**

### **Section I: Substantive Amendments.**

- A. Amendments to this document should be suggested through the process described in Article VI, Section I. Voting on changes to bylaws shall be conducted through the process described in Article VI, Section III. For an amendment to be adopted, two-thirds of the members that return ballots must support it.
- B. The Board of Directors may, with a three-fifths vote, put an amendment of the bylaws to the membership for its consideration. In these situations, voting will be conducted through the League website and the *Head Coach* for each member shall be notified through electronic mail. For an amendment to be adopted, two-thirds of the members that return ballots must support it.

**Section II: Technical/Grammatical Amendments.** The Board of Directors shall have the authority to correct typographical and grammatical errors in this document, and/or in the other governing documents and the various publications of the League as they are discovered.

## **ARTICLE XI: STANDING RULES**

**Section I: Purpose & Scope of Standing Rules.** The League shall maintain a series of *Standing Rules*, which shall contain the specific regulations for operation of and competition at league-sanctioned tournaments and other events. Standing rules shall be subservient to the bylaws; any conflict between the two documents shall be resolved by the Board of Directors in favor of the bylaws.

### **Section II: Amendments to Standing Rules.**

- A. Amendments to the *Standing Rules* should be suggested through the process described in Article VI, Section I. Voting on changes to that document shall be conducted through the process described in Article VI, Section III. For the amendment to be adopted, a majority of the members that return ballots must support it.
- B. The Board of Directors may, with a three-fifths vote of its members, put an amendment of the standing rules to the membership for its consideration. In these situations, voting will be conducted through the League website and the *Head Coach* for each member shall be notified through electronic mail. For the amendment to be adopted, a majority of the members that return ballots must support it.

# STANDING RULES

## **RULE 1: SANCTIONED EVENTS**

- A. The Regional Qualifying Tournaments and State Championship Tournament will provide competition in the following events:
- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| --Policy Debate                         | --Lincoln Douglas Debate           |
| --Public Forum Debate                   | --Student Congress                 |
| --International Extemporaneous Speaking | --Mixed Extemp (Novice State Only) |
| --United States Extemporaneous Speaking |                                    |
| --Original Oratory                      | --Dramatic Interpretation          |
| --Humorous Interpretation               | --Oral Interpretation              |
| --Duo Interpretation                    | --Group Interpretation             |
- B. The Novice State Tournament shall include all of the above events with the exception of Group Interpretation. The Novice State Tournament will include Declamation.
- C. Impromptu Speaking may be offered as a supplementary event at the State Tournaments at the discretion of the Board of Directors.
- D. The Board of Directors shall maintain updated ballots for all of the above events.
- E. In Extemporaneous Speaking, students can access information on jump drives, which will be screened by a tournament official/extemp prep room proctor. Competitors will be permitted to use the Internet at all FFL Sanctioned Tournaments when internet access is publicly available. Publicly available being defined as – WiFi Internet access is available to all students competing or all competitors will have access to desktop computers with internet availability. In the event that internet access cannot be made available to all competitors, contestants shall be prohibited from the use of any electronic retrieval system (recording or information retrieval system) now known or to be invented during any round in any event at any FFL-sanctioned tournament including the Extemporaneous Speaking preparation room(s), except that electric or electronic devices that are incapable of sending or receiving information between persons may be used for the sole purpose of keeping time. The League will make accommodations for students with disabilities in regards to the use of technology. Documentation of the disability must be provided ten days prior to the Regional Tournament and State Tournaments. The documentation must be available for review by the Executive Board.
- F. The use of laptop computers shall be permitted in all debate events at all FFL sanctioned events.
1. Computers equipped with removable wireless cards must have the cards removed before the beginning of any round of competition. It is the responsibility of the contestant to disengage equipment.
  2. Computers with built-in wireless capability may be used only if the wireless capability is disabled. It is the responsibility of the contestant to disable the equipment. If the competitor is unable to disable their wireless card, they may not connect to a browser. If found connecting to a browser, the competitor may be disqualified.
  3. Wired connections (Ethernet or phone) during rounds of competition are not permitted.
  4. During debate rounds computers or other electronic devices may not be used to receive information from any source (coaches or assistants included) inside or outside the room in which the competition occurs. During debate rounds Internet access, use of e-mail, instant messaging, or other means of receiving information from sources inside or outside the competition room are prohibited.

(This does not prohibit non-electronic communication between debate partners during prep time.)

5. Sanction: Contestants found to have violated provisions 1-4 above shall forfeit the round of competition and receive zero points. Contestants found to have violated provision D above shall be disqualified from the tournament and shall forfeit all rounds.
6. Availability of Evidence: Contestants electing to use computers shall have the responsibility to promptly provide a copy of any evidence read in a speech for inspection by the judge or opponent. Printers may be used. Evidence may be printed in the round or produced electronically, but must be provided in a format readable by the opposing team and the judge.
7. Contestants electing to use computers are responsible for providing their own computers, batteries, extension cords and all other necessary accessories. Tournament hosts shall not be responsible for providing computers, printers, software, paper, or extension cords for contestants.
8. Because public speaking decorum remains an important element of debate, all debaters are expected to stand at the front of the room facing the judge while speaking.
9. Contestants choosing to use laptop computers and related equipment accept the risk of equipment failure. No special consideration or accommodations, including no additional prep time or speech time, will be given by judges or contest directors should equipment failure occur.
10. By choosing to use laptop computers in the round, debaters are consenting to give tournament officials the right to search their files. Debaters who do not wish to consent should not use computers in the round.

## **RULE 2: DOUBLE ENTRY**

- A. Students may double enter at the Regional Qualifying Tournament, the State Championship Tournament (if they so qualify) and the Novice State Tournament in the following events:
  - International Extemporaneous Speaking
  - United States Extemporaneous Speaking (but not both IX and UX; IX must enter another IE event, UX must enter another IE event)
  - Original Oratory
  - Duo Interpretation
  - Oral Interpretation
  - Dramatic Interpretation
  - Humorous Interpretation
  - Declamation
- B. Students in the following events may **NOT** double enter: Team Debate, Public Forum Debate, Lincoln Douglas Debate, Student Congress, and Group Interpretation.
- C. No student may compete in more than two (2) events at any league-sanctioned tournament. This prohibition includes Returning State Champions who return to compete at State Championships the following year (see Rule 7).

## **RULE 3: SCHOOL-SANCTIONED ADULTS**

- A. Each school attending an event sanctioned and/or sponsored by the League must be a member of the League and the *Head Coach* and/or *Assistant Coach* whose name appears on the member's application must attend the event along with other students and adults.
- B. If the *Head Coach* and the *Assistant Coach* are unable to attend an event sanctioned and/or sponsored by the League with their students, the *Head Coach* must send a letter from the principal of the school on official letterhead designating an adult to be responsible for the group. This school-sanctioned adult must be at least 21 years old and out of high school. The Regional Director (for a Regional Qualifying Tournament) or the President (for the State Tournaments) must receive this letter five (5) calendar days before the start of the tournament.
- C. Members that fail to submit this documentation may be excluded from competition at the discretion of the Regional Director (for a Regional Qualifying Tournament) or the Executive Committee (for the State Tournaments). Emergency circumstances may warrant an exception from this rule; the Regional Director (for a Regional Tournament) or the Executive Committee (for the State Tournaments) shall have the authority to grant exceptions.

#### **RULE 4: JUDGING RESPONSIBILITIES**

- A. At the Regional Qualifying Tournaments and State Tournaments, at least one adult from each school must be available to judge all events for the entire tournament.
- B. Judges for all tournaments sanctioned by the League are required in the following ratios:
  - 1. One (1) judge per two (2) entries or fraction thereof in Policy Debate.
  - 2. One (1) judge per two (2) entries or fraction thereof in Lincoln Douglas Debate.
  - 3. One (1) judge per two (2) entries or fraction thereof in Public Forum Debate.
  - 4. One (1) judge per five (5) entries or fraction thereof in Speech/IE events/ Student Congress.

When coaches who do not hold elected positions within the League are asked to help at a State Tournament the League will allow for one "covered" judge spot for the coach if they cannot supply an additional judge, however, the coach cannot list themselves in any debate pool in order to cover that obligation.

- C. All judges need to be trained prior to judging at the Regional and State tournaments. This means they have judged the event they are scheduled to at another tournament, except in PF that is not a requirement. Coaches are responsible for rating their judges (A, B, C, D) on the tournament registration website and will answer questions about prior experience to help with judge placement.
- D. At the Novice State Tournament, judges may be high school juniors and seniors with at least 250 NSDA points or equivalent experience. Verification of student points must be brought to registration. A \$10 administrative charge will be assessed for each instance in which league officials must verify student points because the school did not provide documentation at registration.
- E. Failure to provide trained judges shall result in the requisite number of students from that school being eliminated from the tournament. Missed judge calls or refusal to accept a judging assignment may also result in the requisite number of competitors from that school being eliminated from the tournament.
- F. At their discretion, each Tournament Director of a tournament sanctioned by the League may impose a \$25 penalty for any no-show judge that results in the reassignment of a ballot in any round. Hidden judge drops at the State Championship Tournament will incur a fine of \$250 plus the \$25 fine per round they were assigned and missed. At the State Championship Tournament judge drops at registration will incur a fine of \$200.

- G. There shall also be a \$10 penalty for each judge name change made at a tournament registration.
- H. At a Regional Tournament, the Regional Director shall be responsible for enforcing judge requirements; at the State Tournaments, the Executive Committee is responsible for this task.
- I. The Board of Directors shall conduct a brief judge instruction session before the first round judge call at the State Tournaments. Regional Directors may elect to hold a similar session for their respective Regional Tournament.
- J. Any coach in or out of the judge pool that refuses or fails to pick up an elimination round ballot, his/her school shall be fined \$50.00 and the school of the person who judges the round shall be credited \$25.00.
- K. In paneled debate rounds, judges shall not confer with each other or give any oral feedback before all ballots have been turned in.
- L. In the event that a school changes or drops a judge after the strike sheet for debate has been published, the school making the change shall be required to pay a "Hired Judge" fee of \$150.

#### **RULE 5: ALTERNATES & DROPS**

- A. An alternate is the next-place contestant/team/group from the Regional Qualifying Tournament who did not advance to the State Championship Tournament. The alternate contestant/team/group may be invited to participate at the State Championship Tournament if one of the qualifiers withdraws. In each event at all Regional Qualifying Tournaments, a First Alternate and Second Alternate shall be designated. The names and school affiliations of the alternates must be included in the Regional Director's report to the President.
- B. It is the philosophy of the membership of this organization that the Regional Qualifying Tournament is not a venue for students to practice. Only students who are willing and able to attend the State Championship tournament should attend their Regional Qualifying tournament. A school's entry fee for the State Championship shall be computed on the basis of the number of students who qualify to the State Tournament, even when a coach communicates in advance that his/her students will not attend the State Championship. The *Head Coach* for a member shall immediately report drops to the President, who shall then invite the alternates to compete in the order designated in the region's report.
- C. If one of the members of a two-person event cannot compete at the State Tournament after winning at the Regional Tournament, that team shall drop and the alternate team shall be invited to compete.
- D. If more than one-third of the members of a Group Interpretation team cannot compete at the State Championship Tournament after qualifying at the Regional Tournament, that group shall drop and the alternate group shall be invited to compete.
- E. If a qualifying student moves to another school within or outside the boundaries of his/her previous FFL district, he/she cannot compete at the State Championship tournament. Situations that arise because of emergencies can be appealed to the Executive Committee of the League on a case-by-case basis.

#### **RULE 6: NUMBER ADVANCING TO THE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP**

- A. The number of entries to the State Championship Tournament shall be determined by the following formula:
  1. Determine the total number of schools at all Regional Qualifying Tournaments in the previous year.

2. Divide the number of schools at each Regional Qualifying Tournament by the number from #1 above.
  3. Multiply the number from #2 above by 36 and round the resulting decimal down to the nearest whole number.
- B. The whole number gained from #3 above is each Region's number of qualifiers.
- C. In the event that the total number of qualifiers under this plan is less than 36, the Executive Committee shall award one additional qualifying spot to the Region(s) with the highest decimal (closest to earning another qualifying spot) until the total number of qualifiers is 36.
- D. A Region may qualify the same number of entries in all events regardless of the number of entries in each event.

## **RULE 7: RETURNING STATE CHAMPIONS**

- A. A State Champion from the previous year who is still eligible (has not graduated from high school) may elect to compete in the State Championship Tournament in the same event without going through the Regional Qualifying Tournament process.
- B. In multiple-person events, all participants from a State Championships team/group must be returning from the previous year in order to receive a bye through the Regional Qualifying Tournament. No substitutions are permitted. The one-third substitution rule in Group Interpretation (see Rule 36, Section D) may not be used in the case of a State Championship Group Interpretation unit that does not have all of its participants returning.
- C. Rules for limits on double entry still apply to *Returning State Champions*.

## **RULE 8: ELIGIBILITY FOR THE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP AND NOVICE STATE COMPETITORS**

- A. State Championship
1. In order for a student to qualify to attend the FFL State Championship Tournament he/she must physically attend and compete in every round required for his/her event at the Regional Tournament or the competitor will be disqualified. If the competitor is part of a team or group event, failure to compete in all required rounds will disqualify the entire team or group.
  2. This rule supersedes ALL other rule conflicts in Rule 18.
- B. Novice State
- In order to compete at the Novice State Tournament, students must meet **all** of the following requirements:
1. The student must not have competed at any previous Novice State Tournament.
  2. The student must not have competed in more than three tournaments during any previous school year.
  3. The student must not have begun the current school year with 25 or more NSDA points and, therefore, must not have obtained NSDA membership prior to the current school year. If NSDA points are not recorded for the student, the *Head Coach* or *Assistant Coach* should contact the President to determine the student's eligibility.

## **RULE 9: TOURNAMENT PROTESTS**

- A. A protest is a formal, written complaint alleging that a violation of event and/or tournament rules took place during a round of competition.
- B. All protests must be submitted on an official *Protest Form*. The challenger must be identified on the document and he/she must sign it. The inappropriate behavior must be described and the rule in question must be cited and quoted verbatim.
- C. Challenges must be submitted promptly. For alleged violations that occur in the preliminary rounds, challenges must be submitted before the start of the fourth round at the State Tournaments and before the start of the last round at the Regional Tournaments. Exceptions to this time limit rule will be granted only when the violation occurs in or after the rounds previously specified. Egregious violations after the start of the fourth round will be considered at the discretion of the protest committee.
- D. Protests must be submitted to the designated official at the Regional Qualifying Tournaments. At the State Tournaments, protests must be submitted to the Ombudsperson. Protests will be reviewed by the tournament's Protest Committee.

#### **RULE 10: AWARDS FOR STUDENTS**

- A. The League will award trophies or plaques to the qualifiers in each event at the Regional Qualifying Tournaments.
- B. At the State Championship Tournament, a *State Champion Eagle* trophy shall be presented to the State Champion in each event. Trophies and/or plaques will be presented to the top twelve (12) entries in Speech/IE events and to the top eight (8) entries in Debate events. All participants in the State Championship Tournament will receive a lapel pin from the League.
- C. At the Novice State Tournament, trophies shall be presented to the top twelve (12) entries in Speech/IE events and to the top eight (8) entries in Debate events.
- D. At the State Tournaments in Policy Debate, Lincoln Douglas Debate, and Public Forum Debate, speaker awards shall be presented to the top five (5) debaters.
- E. Other awards may be presented at the discretion of the Executive Committee.

#### **RULE 11: COACH OF THE YEAR AWARD**

- A. Each Region will select a *Head Coach* or *Assistant Coach* as its *Regional Coach of the Year*. The League will also recognize one of the regional winners as the *State Coach of the Year*. Criterion for the selection of these individuals shall include, but not be limited to, dedication to students, enthusiasm for the activity, professionalism, length of service, leadership, innovation, and success in competitions.
- B. Each member shall submit one nomination with its Regional Qualifying Tournament registration form. Members not entering the Regional Qualifying Tournament are not eligible to make a nomination. Members that are affiliated (see Article III, Section I) get only one nomination. A member may not nominate one of its own coaches. Any *Head Coach* or *Assistant Coach* receiving two or more nominations will be placed on the region's ballot. Voting will occur at the Regional Qualifying Tournament, with the Regional Director appointing a committee of non-nominated coaches to count the ballots. Each member present at the tournament will get one (1) vote. The nominee who receives a plurality of the votes will be declared the *Regional Coach of the Year*. The winner will be announced at the awards ceremony and the Regional Director will forward the winner's name to the President. If a Region fails to submit a nominee, or if there is a tie in voting, the Board of Directors shall select a winner from the Region.

- C. Each regional winner will be asked to fill out a short questionnaire. The Board of Directors will review the questionnaires and select the *State Coach of the Year*. In the event that a member of the Board of Directors was selected as a regional winner, he/she shall not participate in the deliberations. The *State Coach of the Year* will be announced at the State Championship Tournament awards ceremony; that person shall be ineligible for regional and/or state recognition for the five (5) school years following his/her selection.
- D. Recognition: The Board of Directors shall purchase appropriate awards for the regional and state winners. Their names shall be publicized to the media, their schools, and on the League website.

#### **RULE 12: DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD**

- A. The Board of Directors shall award a coach or other adult who performs a service for the League one (1) *Florida Forensic League Special Service* lapel pin.
- B. Each member of the Board of Directors who completes a full year of service (June 01-May 31) in his/her office will be awarded one (1) service pin.
- C. On April 1 of each year, any person who has earned five (5) lapel pins shall be honored with a *Florida Forensic League Distinguished Service Award*, which shall be presented at the awards ceremony of the Novice State Tournament. Records will be kept cumulatively; any winner of a *Florida Forensic League Distinguished Service Award* shall have his/her pin count reset to zero. The Board of Directors shall collectively coordinate the administration of this program.

#### **RULE 13: FFL COACH HALL OF FAME**

#### **RULE 14: FEES**

- A. Regional Qualifying Tournaments: There is no school fee. The entry fee, which includes lunch, shall be \$20.00 per student. The first \$7 of the fee is owed to the League. The next \$10 of the fee is owed to the host school for the provision of a lunch and hosting expenses. The remaining \$3 is for discretionary use by the Regional Director in covering the expenses of the tournament. Policy Debate, Public Forum, and Duo Interpretation teams pay two student fees. Group Interpretation units pay the same number of fees as students in the group. A student who is double-entered pays only one fee.
- B. State Championship Tournament: Each student that is entered shall pay a fee of \$25 – \$10 for entry and \$15 for Friday dinner and Saturday lunch. Policy Debate, Public Forum, and Duo Interpretation teams pay two student fees. Group Interpretation units pay the same number of fees as students in the group. A student who is double-entered pays only one fee. At the State Championship tournament, each Policy Debate team will be charged an additional \$60 judging fee to create a pool of funds for hired judges (see Rule 26 for more information on hired judges).
- C. Novice State Tournament: Each student that is entered shall pay a fee of \$25 – \$10 for entry and \$15 for Friday dinner and Saturday lunch. Policy Debate, Public Forum, and Duo Interpretation teams pay two student fees. Group Interpretation units pay the same number of fees as students in the group. A student who is double-entered pays only one fee.
- D. Pre-ordered meals will also be available for coaches, judges, parents, etc at all tournaments sanctioned by the League. Additional lunches at Regional Qualifying Tournaments will be available at a cost of \$5 each. At State Tournaments, extra Friday dinners shall be available at a cost of \$8 and extra Saturday lunches shall be available at a

cost of \$7. Schools will be charged fees automatically for meals for judges based on the number of required judges shown on the tournament registration website. The amount for extra meals at the State Tournaments may be reversed if the host wishes to serve a more elaborate lunch and a more simple dinner, provided that the Board of Directors approves such a change.

- E. Regional Directors shall determine the manner in which fees are collected at their Regional Qualifying Tournament. For the State Tournaments, all fees owed by a school will be payable in one check made out to *Florida Forensic League, Inc.* The League shall reimburse the host school for all pre-ordered meals at the end of the tournament.
- F. At the discretion of the Board of Directors, a fully refundable “guarantee fee” system may be implemented for the State Championship Tournament to ensure that qualifiers from the Regional Qualifying Tournaments actually attend the State Championship.
- G. At the State Championship Tournament judge drops at registration will incur a fine of \$200. Hidden judge drops at the State Championship Tournament will incur a fine of \$250 plus the \$10 fine per round they were assigned and missed.
- H. The Tournament Director of any league-sanctioned tournament may charge drop fees at his/her discretion if those fees are published in the invitation.
- I. Schools are already required to provide script information at Regional Tournaments. Any school that fails to enter script information on Joy of Tournaments by the advertised deadline will be fined \$10 per instance.

#### **RULE 15: TABULATION SOFTWARE**

The State and Regional tournaments tabulation staff may decide to use a tabulation software program approved by the Executive Board.

#### **RULE 16: CONGRESSIONAL DEBATE**

Because of the unique nature of this event, its rules and guidelines shall be published under a separate document entitled *Florida Forensic League Student Congress Manual*. That document shall be considered a part of this standing rule. In the event that a rule or guideline in the *Student Congress Manual* conflicts with other governing documents, the other document shall supersede the *Student Congress Manual*. Student Congress will follow the National Speech & Debate Association format for legislation, length of speeches, and cross examination.

#### **RULE 17: BALLOTS & FORMS**

The Board of Directors shall publish and maintain all forms and ballots necessary to operate the League. Those forms and ballots shall be a part of this standing rule and may be altered by the membership through the normal voting process (see Article VI, Section III).

#### **RULE 18: STATE CHAMPIONSHIP SWEEPSTAKES**

- A. There will be three categories of events at the State Championship tournament:
  - 1. Debate Events (TD, LD, PF)
  - 2. Rhetoric Events (FX, UX, OO, SC)
  - 3. Interpretation Events (HI, DI, OI, DUO, GI)
- B. Sweepstakes points will be awarded to any school with one or more entries advancing to elimination rounds, as follows:
  - 1. Debate Events:
    - Non-advancing Quarter-Finalists (4):      3

- |                                   |   |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Non-advancing Semi-Finalists (2): | 6   |
| Finalist, Runner-Up (1):          | 8   |
| Finalist, State Champion (1):     | 10  |
| Total                             | 42 (average of 5.25 points per elimination entry) |
2. Rhetoric Events and Interpretation Events:

Non-advancing Semi-Finalists (6):	3
Finalists, 3 <sup>rd</sup> -6 <sup>th</sup> place (4):	6
Finalist, Runner-Up (1):	8
Finalist, State Champion (1):	10
Total:	60 (average of 5 points per elimination entry)
  3. The points awarded for multiple-person events (TD, PF, DUO, GI) will be the same as the points awarded for single-person events.
  4. In Student Congress, the six Super Congress participants who were not nominated for Best Legislator will be considered non-advancing Semi-Finalists for sweepstakes purposes.
  5. In the unlikely circumstance that in any event additional elimination rounds are held, or fewer elimination rounds are held than those prescribed above, sweepstakes points for those rounds will not be awarded.
  6. Sweepstakes points will not be awarded to a contestant if he/she does not actually participate in the round in which he/she was eliminated, except in cases where two debaters from the same school are scheduled to debate but the coach chooses to cancel the round, in which case points will be awarded.
- C. The League shall present five (5) sweepstakes awards, with each award using a different set of criterion as follows:
1. State Championship Program Award  
Eligibility: All schools at the State Championship tournament.  
Criterion: Top two (2) entries in each of the three (3) categories of events earn points.  
Awards: Top school is State Championship Program, with physical award for school and for coach. Small plaques for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place schools.
  2. Small Team Commendation  
Eligibility: Any school with a total of three (3) or fewer entries in all categories. If a school wins any award given in # 1 above, that school shall be ineligible for this award.  
Criterion: All entries from the eligible school earn points.  
Award: Top school receives commendation plaque. Small plaques for 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place schools.
  3. Excellence in Debate Commendation  
Eligibility: Any school with entries in 2 or more of the 3 events in the debate category.  
Criterion: Top 2 entries – with each entry in a different event – count.  
Award: Plaque to top school
  4. Excellence in Rhetoric Commendation  
Eligibility: Any school with entries in 2 or more of the 4 events in the rhetoric category.  
Criterion: Top 2 entries – with each entry in a different event – count.  
Award: Plaque to top school.

5. Excellence in Speech Commendation  
Eligibility: Any school with entries in 3 or more of the 5 speech events.  
Criterion: Top 3 entries – with each entry in a different event – count.  
Award: Plaque to top school

D. Except in cases where a physical award is actually presented, ties will not be broken. In the event of a tie between two or more schools for any of the above awards, the entry with the best finish from each school will be used to break the tie. If still tied, the second best finish will be used. This process will continue until the point where a tie is not breakable. At that point, the Executive Committee of the League may declare an impasse and declare co-recipients. In those cases, the League shall pay the cost of any additional awards.

#### **RULE 19: STUDENT NO-SHOW/NON-PERFORMANCE IN A ROUND**

Per Standing Rule #8, In order for a student to qualify to the FFL State Championship Tournament he/she must physically attend and compete in every round required for his/her event at the Regional Tournament or the competitor will be disqualified. If the competitor is part of a team or group event, failure to compete in all required rounds will disqualify the entire team or group. In the case when there are insufficient entries in any event to constitute the necessity for competition to qualify for the FFL State Championship, it will be left to the discretion of the Regional Director to petition the President for permission to eliminate rounds of competition in those events. In the case when rounds are eliminated, those competitors will automatically qualify for the FFL State Championship tournament. Regions may not eliminate any event which has more entries than qualifying slots.

#### **RULE 20: PROTECTION OF PROPERTY**

- A. No contestant or student observer shall enter or remain in a contest room without a judge present. The penalty for violation of this regulation shall be immediate disqualification from the tournament.
- B. Vandalism of property by any person at an FFL tournament shall result in immediate notification of school and/or local police authorities. The Board of Directors shall notify the principal of the school associated with the vandal(s) in writing and insist upon appropriate remuneration. In the case of vandalism by a contestant, the additional penalty of immediate disqualification from the tournament shall also apply.
- C. If vandalism of host school property occurs and no individual or school can be held culpable for the damage, all schools in attendance in the event/s where the vandalism occurred at the tournament shall be assessed a vandalism recovery fee equal to the total amount of damage divided by the number of schools in attendance. Nonpayment of the vandalism recovery fee shall constitute just cause for denial of membership renewal (see Article III, Section I, Clause H).

# DEBATE EVENTS—RULES & PROCEDURES

## RULE 21: EVENTS & SPECIAL NOTICES

- A. This section of the *Standing Rules* of the League shall cover regulations for Policy Debate, Lincoln Douglas Debate, and Public Forum Debate.
- B. Public Forum is a new event for both the League and the event's founder, the National Speech & Debate Association. The Board of Directors shall have the authority to modify rules for this event when circumstances arise that are not covered below.

## RULE 22: PAIRING OF ROUNDS IN DEBATE EVENTS

- A. *Regional Tournaments*: The Tournament Director has a great deal of discretion in planning the format for these events. The decisions of the Tournament Director regarding the format for the debate events must be published and made available to all schools prior to the posting of the first round. The number of preliminary rounds will be determined by the Tournament Director based on the number of participants. The League President will approve the number of rounds a regional tournament uses to determine their qualifiers. Whenever possible, there will be a minimum of four rounds. The Tournament Director may petition the Executive Committee to hold only three rounds if he/she believes that there are too few entries in an event to hold a full tournament. When there is the same number of or fewer entries than qualifying spots, the Tournament Director may petition the Executive Committee to reduce the number of rounds to two. There shall be a maximum of six preliminary rounds. The necessity for quarterfinal, semifinal and final elimination rounds will be determined by the Tournament Director based on the number of participants. At Regional Tournaments with four preliminary rounds, each team or participant must have two affirmative and two negative rounds (except in Public Forum Debate). Those with byes will have a 2-1 or 1-2 split on affirmative and negative rounds (except in Public Forum Debate). The Tournament Director may petition the Executive Committee for a waiver of the "two round affirmative, two round negative" rule if he/she believes that it will be logistically impossible to produce such pairings. Rounds one and two will be randomly paired; subsequent rounds may be powered at the discretion of the Tournament Director. Until the elimination rounds, entries from a given member will not debate other entries unless that member has more than one quarter of the entries in the event, but this option should be elected only when it is not otherwise possible to produce a viable pairing.
- B. *State Tournaments*: six preliminary rounds will be held in all debate events with the exception of Policy. The level at which elimination rounds will begin at the State Tournaments shall be determined by the Executive Committee on the basis of the number of entries in each event. Decisions about elimination rounds must be announced prior to the posting of the first preliminary round. The first two rounds will be preset with random pairing based on geographic protection, with each Region in the League serving as a geographic region. After round two, the format will be as follows:
  - 1. In Lincoln Douglas and Public Forum Debate, the first two rounds will be preset with random pairing based on geographic protection, with each Region in the League serving as a geographic region. After round two, the format will be as follows:
    - Round 3: High - Low Power off of the results from all previous rounds
    - Round 4: High-Low Power Within Brackets from the results of rounds 1-3

Round 5: High-Low Power Within Brackets from the results of rounds 1-4  
At the discretion of the Executive Committee, a system for the rating of judges and/or the collection of data about judging preferences may be implemented for the State Tournaments.

2. In Policy Debate, each team shall be assigned a code based on its school name and the first initial of each debater's last name in alphabetical order (e.g.: Johnson & Smith from Lake Placid HS would be LkPlac JS). There shall be no geographic constraints in the scheduling of teams or judges in any round. The first two rounds will be paired randomly. Pairings for these rounds will be available as students arrive at the host school. Policy Debate contestants will be excused from the tournament opening assembly so that Round 1 can begin as soon as possible. As soon as teams in a room complete round 1, they will move to their round 2 assignment. For all rounds, sufficient copies of the pairing will be duplicated such that each team may have 1 copy, and pairings will be released 15 minutes prior to the start of the round. The start time for each round will be listed on the pairings sheet. It is the responsibility of all teams and judges to keep up with the schedule (see rule 25 for penalties). After Round 2, the format will be as follows:

Round 3: High - Low Power off of the results from all previous rounds

Round 4: High-Low Power Within Brackets from the results of rounds 1-3

Round 5: High-Low Power Within Brackets from the results of rounds 1-4

Whenever possible, at least one of the officers assigned to Policy Debate tabulation should be a coach who usually fields Policy Debate teams. When using the computer program to schedule rounds, the tabulation staff shall select the program option to minimize room assignment moves.

### **RULE 23: POWER MATCHING & BYES IN DEBATE EVENTS**

- A. Power-matching is the assignment of rounds based on the win/loss record of the debaters/teams in the tournament. The League uses the following power-matching:
  1. *High-Low Powering Within Brackets*: Teams with the same win-loss record are "within a bracket;" rounds are paired with the top-ranked entry in its bracket meeting the lowest-ranked entry in its bracket. If there are an odd number of entries in a bracket or school restrictions preclude the exact powering of a bracket, the highest rank entry in the bracket will be paired against the highest ranked entry in the next lower bracket. This system is also called "Power Protect Within Brackets." This system will be used in Round Five at the State Tournaments.
- B. Byes are necessary when there are an odd number of teams or debaters entered in the tournament. A team or debater with a bye assigned for a round does not compete in that round. In the first two rounds of debate events, byes will be assigned as the result of random draw. Whenever possible, there will be only one bye per school in the randomly paired rounds. In power-matched rounds, the bye will always be assigned to the team or debater with the lowest competitive record. Byes cannot be refused and are counted as a win. When receiving a bye, a team/debater will have ranks and speaker points for the bye round determined by averaging the ranks and speaker points gained in all non-bye preliminary rounds.

### **RULE 24: BREAKING TIES IN DEBATE EVENTS**

In determining seeding and place (rank) in the tournament, ties may occur. They are to be broken in the following manner:

1. Win/Loss
2. High/Low Speaks
3. High/Low Ranks
4. Opponent Wins
5. Head-to-Head
6. Total Points
7. Total Ranks
8. Judge Variance

## **RULE 25: TOPIC SELECTION**

This organization shall use the National Speech & Debate Association topic for Policy Debate, Lincoln Douglas Debate, and Public Forum Debate.

## **RULE 26: GENERAL REGULATIONS FOR DEBATE EVENTS**

The following general rules will apply to all debate events at the Regional Qualifying Tournaments as well as both the State Championship and Novice State Tournaments:

- A. In each debate event, a school may enter up to four (4) teams/debaters.
- B. Only ballots, critique sheets and instructions to judges approved by the League shall be used at league-sanctioned tournaments.
- C. Overtime may count against a debater or team at the discretion of the judge.
- D. If a debater/team does not arrive for a debate by ten minutes after the round's scheduled beginning, the judge(s) shall award the decision to the opposing debater/team that is present.
- E. Debaters shall not be interrupted by opponents, the audience, or judges.
- F. In Lincoln Douglas and Public Forum Debate, judges may not supplement a written critique on the ballot with oral critiques.
- G. Judges shall award speaker points on a thirty-point scale.
- H. At the State Tournaments, elimination rounds will follow an unbroken bracket procedure based on seeding from preliminary rounds.
- I. Tournament Directors can establish a number of strikes in Public Forum, Policy, and LD Debate based on the number of available judges. This may mean that there are no strikes available but if possible it will be made available to coaches at registration.

## **RULE 27: POLICY DEBATE REGULATIONS**

- A. Policy Debate uses the National Speech & Debate Association topic. The League and its member schools may be represented in selection of this topic through balloting on suggested topics. In league-sanctioned tournaments, each team must be prepared to switch positions in the debate, *i.e.*, each team must be prepared to debate both the affirmative and negative sides of the topic.
- B. The time limit for each speech is as follows:

1 <sup>st</sup> Affirmative Constructive:	8 Minutes
Negative Cross Examination:	3 Minutes
1 <sup>st</sup> Negative Constructive:	8 Minutes
Affirmative Cross Examination:	3 Minutes

2 <sup>nd</sup> Affirmative Constructive:	8 Minutes
Negative Cross Examination:	3 Minutes
2 <sup>nd</sup> Negative Constructive:	8 Minutes
Affirmative Cross Examination:	3 Minutes
1 <sup>st</sup> Negative Rebuttal:	5 Minutes
1 <sup>st</sup> Affirmative Rebuttal:	5 Minutes
2 <sup>nd</sup> Negative Rebuttal:	5 Minutes
2 <sup>nd</sup> Affirmative Rebuttal:	5 Minutes

- C. Each team is entitled to a total of eight (8) minutes of preparation time to be used at its discretion during the debate.
- D. If charts, maps, books or other materials are used by either team, they shall be available for the opposing team to use in refutation.
- E. The judge may request to see evidence used by either team if the opposing team questions its authenticity during the round, or if it is unclear.
- F. Cross-examination may be open or closed at the discretion of the judge.
- G. Prompting may be permitted or prohibited at the discretion of the judge. If a judge allows limited prompting, he/she is the sole determiner of the extent to which debaters may prompt.
- H. At the State Tournaments, host schools shall:
  - 1. Allocate rooms for Policy Debate on the first floor and as close together as possible.
  - 2. Provide a minimum of five (5) students who will run ballots between the competition rooms and the tabulation room. Student runners shall not read ballots or disclose the results of any round. The host coach shall be held responsible for results leaked by student runners.
- I. At the State Tournaments, the following procedures shall be used:
  - 1. Policy Debate ballots shall be copied on 3-part carbonless paper. The top copy of the ballot serves as a speed ballot. ALL judges should complete the speed ballot and submit it to a student ballot runner. This process will give all judges additional time for an oral critique and/or writing comments on the remaining copies, which should then be submitted to the ballot check-in table.
  - 2. Each judge shall have the option of giving an oral critique and/or disclosing the decision in the round following its completion. Before a critique may begin or a decision may be disclosed, a speed ballot must be given to a student ballot runner. Critiques are limited to a total of ten (10) minutes and may not, under any circumstances, impede the start of the next round (eg: if two teams and the judge are present for round 2, the critique for round 1 should be done outside). Judges who choose not to give a critique or disclose a decision shall not be questioned or harassed by students, coaches, parents, other adults, etc. It is the judge's responsibility to report any such actions to the Ombudsperson, who shall refer violations to the Executive Committee for further action. Judges who do not give an oral critique shall be expected to write a more detailed ballot.
- J. At the State Championship tournament, the following rules shall apply with regards to judges:
  - 1. Each Policy Debate judge for the State Championship must have previously adjudicated a minimum of twelve (12) rounds on the current year's high school debate topic. Each coach shall be required to certify in writing that his/her Policy Debate judge(s) meet this requirement.
  - 2. Each Policy Debate judge shall be required to submit a judge philosophy through the FFL website. Judge philosophies will be posted on the website as they are

received. The deadline to submit a philosophy will be Noon on the Wednesday prior to the tournament. A final update to website philosophies will be posted by 5:00 pm on the Wednesday prior to the tournament. Any judge without a philosophy by this date will be required to fill one out at registration and take it with him/her to each round in which he/she judges. It is the responsibility of each team to access and print the philosophies for the tournament. "Any school at the State Championship whose judge(s) for TD and/or LD fail to complete a judge philosophy by the deadline specified in the tournament invitation will forfeit its right to participate in mutual preference judging and the strike process."

3. Any changes to a school's judges must be made by Noon on the Wednesday prior to the tournament so that philosophy submission can be checked and accurate judge lists can be printed for distribution to schools. Changes after the Noon Wednesday deadline should be immediately reported to the appropriate official; changes at registration are strongly discouraged as there will not be time to reprint judge lists.
4. After the Noon Wednesday deadline, a FINAL judge list shall be emailed to each coach with one or more Policy Debate teams. A copy will also be placed into the registration packet of each school with one or more Policy Debate teams. Persons who will be at the tournament and who are qualified to judge but not in the pool may be included on the judge list in the event they later decide to volunteer to judge rounds. Each school with Policy Debate entries shall be entitled to strike at least one (1) judge (more strikes may be granted by the Tournament Director) from hearing any of its teams during the course of the tournament. Whenever logistically possible, a mutual preference judging system shall also be used. Coaches should come to registration prepared to turn in strikes and judge ratings. Any strike sheets and/or mutual preference sheets not submitted by the close of registration may be submitted at the tournament (prior to the completion of Round 1) but will not go into effect until after Round 2.
5. The Executive Committee shall use the pool of funds generated by additional Policy Debate judging fees (see rule 13 for more information) to hire a small number of highly qualified judges. Selection of these judges will be at the discretion of the Executive Committee. Potential hired judges who coach high school teams (or have other close relationships with high school teams), or who are unable to make a commitment to stay for the entire tournament, will have lower priority than other potential judges. Hired judges shall be required to meet the same requirements as other Policy Debate judges and will be listed on the judge list for mutual preference rating and/or striking by schools. The Executive Committee shall pay a stipend to these judges from the funds generated by the additional entry fees charged to Policy Debate teams. This fund may also be used to cover the cost of hired judges' tournament meals; lodging assistance will also be provided if funds or complimentary hotel rooms are available. Any remaining funds shall be used for hired judges at the following year's State Championship Tournament.

## **RULE 28: LINCOLN DOUGLAS DEBATE REGULATIONS**

- A. The Lincoln Douglas form of debate was introduced to complement the traditional Policy Debate format. While Policy Debate is restricted to a single question of policy for the entire year, Lincoln Douglas Debate provides for the study and debate of several

- value questions during the year. Lincoln Douglas Debate encourages students to present their arguments more directly to audiences through persuasive strategies. As the Lincoln Douglas form is the debate of value propositions, debaters should present logical cases with philosophical support. They must clash with their opponents' cases, not merely present their own. Good communication skills are essential.
- B. The League will follow NSDA Event Rules in regards to Lincoln Douglas Debate. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.

## **RULE 29: PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE REGULATIONS**

- A. The League shall use the Public Forum Debate topic selected on a monthly basis by the National Speech & Debate Association.
- B. The tabulation room will pair Public Forum Debate teams against each other while assigning sides in debate. A coin toss will determine which speech they would like to give (first or last).
- C. The League will follow NSDA Event Rules in regards to Public Forum Debate. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.
- D. Any adult may judge a round of Public Forum Debate but preference could be given to adults and classroom teachers whose knowledge of debate theory is limited. Judges with extensive Policy/Lincoln Douglas experience and former debaters/college debaters are not necessarily preferred judges for this event.
- E. The league's Public Forum Ballot will closely follow the model used by the National Speech & Debate Association. Judges are expected to conform their comments to the structure of the ballot.

# **SPEECH & INTERP EVENTS—RULES & PROCEDURES**

## **RULE 30: EVENTS & SPECIAL NOTICES**

This section of the *Standing Rules* of the League shall cover regulations for the following events:

- International Extemporaneous Speaking
- United States Extemporaneous Speaking
- Mixed Extemporaneous Speaking
- Original Oratory
- Declamation
- Duo Interpretation
- Oral Interpretation
- Dramatic Interpretation
- Humorous Interpretation
- Group Interpretation

## **RULE 31: GENERAL REGULATIONS IN SPEECH/IE EVENTS**

The following general rules will apply to all Speech/IE events at league-sanctioned tournaments. Any general rules that conflict with the event rules of the NSDA or CFL rules are not applicable to those events unless specifically indicated in those event rules:

- A. Schools may enter up to four (4) students/Duo units per event. The only exception to this rule is for Group Interpretation at the Regional Tournament; each school may have only one (1) Group Interpretation team.
- B. Only ballots, critique sheets and instructions to judges approved by the League shall be used at league-sanctioned tournaments.
- C. The rules of the National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA) shall govern all Speech/IE Events with the following exceptions:
  - 1. Group Interpretation of Literature (Florida Forensic League rules shall apply)
  - 2. Oral Interpretation of Literature and Declamation (NCFL rules shall apply)
  - 3. When rules in this document come into conflict with NSDA rules, the League rules shall be controlling (e.g.: grace period in rule K below).
- D. In Group Interpretation, the selection presented must be from a published source. The Protest Committee shall be the sole determinant of whether a piece has been published. The following guidelines shall apply to its determination:
  - 1. A piece shall be published if it has a verifiable ISBN or LC number.
  - 2. A piece shall be published if it is a selection that lacks an ISBN and/or LC number but a copy of the authentic publication page is presented.
  - 3. In the case of screenplays, a draft of the script and/or a receipt of purchase may be used to establish publication.
  - 4. The Internet shall not, by itself, be considered a form of publication.
  - 5. A transcript shall not, by itself, be considered a form of publication.

In cases not covered by these rules, the Protest Committee shall exercise discretion. It shall be the affirmative responsibility of each coach and contestant to provide documentation to establish that a selection has been published in accordance with the guidelines noted above. Coaches and contestants who utilize selections that are likely to result in a protest should be prepared to present proof of publication.

- E. Orators may not use the same topic in more than one year. Interpretation contestants may not use the same primary source for more than one year.
- F. A contestant may not use any selection he/she used in previous year(s) of competition.
- G. Singing in Group Interpretation will be limited to thirty (30) seconds maximum through the entire length of the performance, including the introduction. In other events introductions will be limited to a maximum of sixty (60) seconds excluding any teaser, and this time limit shall not apply to the Extemporaneous Speaking events.
- H. Ad-libbing in interpretation is not allowed, even during the introduction and transitions. Introductions and transitions should be typed and included as part of the cutting.
- I. All props are prohibited. A prop shall be defined as a physical object on a contestant's person or carried with the contestant that enhances character or performance.
- J. Final cuttings of scripts in interpretation events are required at all league-sanctioned events, including the Regional and State Tournaments. A copy of the manuscript used by each contestant in Original Oratory and Declamation should also be brought to the tournament. Failure to produce this type of document when called for by the Tournament Director or Protest Committee may result in disqualification from the tournament.
- K. Time limits are specified for each event. A thirty (30) second grace period is permitted in all Individual Events. Overtime of more than thirty (30) seconds shall result in the competitor not receiving first place in the round. It is the judge's responsibility to impose this penalty, but only **IF** the judge keeps time and offers to give time signals to all contestants in the round. At the judge's discretion in elimination rounds only, no overtime penalty shall be applied if audience reaction creates the overtime.
- L. Speaking order in each round will be determined by the tabulation software and/or tournament staff, and **NOT** by the shuffling of ballots in the round itself. Whenever possible, speaker order should be random but balanced so that contestants speak from a variety of positions. This rule may be waived for contestants who are double entered.
- M. Preliminary rounds will be sectioned with a preference for six (6) and a maximum of seven (7) contestants per section.
- N. In events with uneven sections (e.g. Section 1: 5 entries; Section 2: 5 entries; Section 3: 6 entries), the tab room will record only the lowest common rank. For example, the contestant receiving sixth place in Section 3 above would be credited with fifth place.
- O. At Regional Qualifying Tournaments, there will be a minimum of three preliminary rounds followed by a final round, or a minimum of four preliminary rounds and no elimination rounds with a maximum number determined by the Tournament Director. If an event is non-competitive (all students entered will qualify), the Tournament Director may petition the Executive Committee to reduce the required number of rounds to two or three preliminary rounds and no elimination rounds. The lowest (worst) ballot (rank and corresponding points) for each contestant may be discarded at the discretion of the Tournament Director. The round and tabulation format must be announced in writing and made available to each school prior to the posting of the first round. At the State Tournaments, there will be a minimum of five preliminary rounds plus a final round. At the State Tournaments, the Executive Committee shall determine, for each event, the number of contestants who participate in elimination rounds. This decision must be made and published prior to the first round of competition.
- P. Students must bring the same selection to the State Championship that was qualified at the Regional Tournament. The penalty for violating this rule is disqualification.
- Q. At the State Tournaments, no students from the same school shall meet in preliminary rounds whenever possible. Seeding will be preserved in all break rounds using the "snake pattern" to establish sections.

- R. At the State Tournaments, each contestant's lowest (worst) ballot (rank and corresponding points) from the preliminary rounds will be dropped from the results.
  - S. After the preliminary competition, the designated number of students shall advance to elimination rounds. In all cases, cumulative ranks, with the worst rank and corresponding points discarded, will determine the rank order of contestants. In the event of a tie between two or more contestants for the final space(s) in elimination rounds, the following tiebreakers shall be applied in order until the tie is broken:
    1. Reciprocals, with each rank converted to decimals as follows:
 

--1 <sup>st</sup> = 1.00	--5 <sup>th</sup> = 0.20
--2 <sup>nd</sup> = 0.50	--6 <sup>th</sup> = 0.17
--3 <sup>rd</sup> = 0.33	--7 <sup>th</sup> = 0.14
--4 <sup>th</sup> = 0.25	
    2. Cumulative points, with the points corresponding to the worst rank discarded.
    3. Cumulative ranks, with the worst rank added back in
    4. Cumulative points, with the points corresponding to the worst rank added back in
    5. Cumulative ranks, with the highest and lowest preliminary ranks discarded
    6. Cumulative points, with the highest and lowest preliminary points discarded
    7. Highest rank in rounds where remaining tied contestants met in the same section.
- If ties remain after applying Step 7, the tie shall be declared unbreakable and all contestants still tied shall advance to the next round.
- T. For all elimination rounds, tabulation shall occur as follows: the sum of the ranks and points from each preliminary round minus the lowest (worst) ballot (rank and corresponding points) each from the preliminary rounds plus each judge's ballot from the elimination rounds.
  - U. If ties occur at the end of one elimination round to determine advancement to the next elimination round, the tie-break scheme shown above will be used, except that after # 2 above (reciprocals), judges' preference shall be used to break the tie provided that a judge panel was used and that an odd number of judges were on the panel.

**RULE 32: EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING (INTERNATIONAL & UNITED STATES) & MIXED EXTEMPORANEOUS SPEAKING (NOVICE STATES ONLY)**

- A. There will be two separate events (International and United States) at the Regional and Varsity State tournament, with topics chosen from significant foreign and U.S. areas for the period of November 1 through the dates of the tournaments. The topics for both International and United States Extemporaneous Speaking, phrased in the form of questions, will be compiled by the Extemporaneous Speaking Question Committee for the State Tournaments. Each Regional Director may determine the method for creating and/or submitting topics for the Regional Tournaments. Mixed Extemporaneous Speaking will be offered at the Novice State Tournament.
- B. The League will follow NSDA Event Rules in regards to Extemporaneous Speaking. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.
- C. In the final round of both Extemporaneous Speaking events at the State Tournaments, the speakers will be cross-examined. The first speaker will be questioned by the last speaker, who shall return to the prep room immediately following the conclusion of the questioning period. The first speaker will remain and question the second speaker. The

second speaker will question the third speaker, etc. The cross examination period is three minutes of continuous question and answer. The speaker who will ask questions may take notes during the speech. Because of the cross-examination period, the prep room shall extend the interval between draws from seven minutes to ten minutes. Judges of the final round shall consider cross-examination in the awarding of rankings and ratings.

D. Extemporaneous Speaking Prep Room Rules

1. Food and drinks are not permitted in the prep room.
2. Radios, walkmans, portable CD players, and personal electronic retrieval devices are not allowed in the prep room.
3. No electronic information retrieval devices are permitted in the prep room, and contestants are prohibited from using library computers.
4. Past extemporaneous speeches, handbooks, briefs, outlines and summaries are not allowed in files.
5. All materials in files must be in original printed form, or copies of originals.
6. Highlighting of articles or magazines must be done in one color.
7. If a speaker is not present for his/her scheduled draw time the moderator will subtract the time discrepancy from the prep time.
8. If a speaker draws a topic that he/she has already used in the tournament, he/she should notify the proctor and return the topic, and redraw.
9. The speaker is responsible for carrying the ballot to the judge. Make sure that the question is on the ballot before you leave the prep room to speak.
10. Speakers are not permitted to leave the prep room before the speaking time. Practice speeches must be done in the prep room.
11. Speakers are not allowed to take outlines out of the prep room.
12. The prep room proctor will dismiss speakers from the prep room.
13. Speakers are to go immediately to their assigned speaking room.
14. After speaking, return to the prep room at the designated time for the start of the next draw.
15. After the final round of competition, contestants are to clean the prep room.
16. All files are to be taken from the prep room before or after the awards assembly.

- F. At the Regional Qualifying Tournament, the Regional Director for each region shall appoint a Prep Room Proctor and Assistant Proctors. At the State Tournaments, the League President shall appoint a Prep Room Proctor and Assistant Proctors. In all cases, Proctors may inspect file boxes, files, and other materials at their discretion. Prohibited items will be confiscated and violations will be reported to the Tabulation Room. Contestants may be disqualified by the Protest Committee for violating the above rules.

### **RULE 33: ORIGINAL ORATORY**

- A. Original Oratory is a form of public address characterized by extensive and creative preparation. The speech or end-product can be said to be original if the speaker makes all of the choices associated with the process of rhetorical creativity, such as: establishing guidelines for the creation of a speech via analysis of audience and occasion as well as definition of specific purpose, identifying potential ideas and developmental materials, developmental data and appropriate patterns of arrangements, devising a suitable introduction and conclusion, and choosing the proper language to clothe the whole. Those who wish to distinguish between Extemporaneous Speaking and Oratory contests will find the key distinction is the degree or extent of preparation. The extemporaneous speaker has thirty (30) minutes to prepare, while the original orator can spend many hours preparing for the tournament. Manner of presentation can be used as a minor

- basis for distinguishing between these events. The extemporaneous speaker cannot present a memorized or manuscript speech, while the orator, under the rules of the League, must present a memorized original oration. Original Oratory is not a contest in dramatics or hysterics.
- B. The League will follow NSDA Event Rules in regards to Original Oratory. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.
  - C. All contestants must bring a typed copy of their oratory to the tournament and furnish it to any tournament official who requests it. Failure to produce this document may result in disqualification.
  - D. An oration may be used in one year of competition only.

#### **RULE 34: DECLAMATION**

- A. Declamation is a form of public address characterized by the delivery of a previously delivered, non-self-authored speech. The speech can be said to be appropriate if the speaker makes the use of the process of rhetoric in his/her selected material. These criteria include, but are not limited to: establishing guidelines for the creation of a speech via analysis of audience and occasion as well as definition of specific purpose, identifying potential ideas and developmental materials, developmental data and appropriate patterns of arrangements and devising a suitable introduction. As Declamation is not the delivery of an original speech, the language and style used may be of a different type than that in common "professional" use. The speaker is expected to deliver a selection appropriate to his or her level of skill.
- B. Declamations are to be no more than ten (10) minutes. There is no minimum time.
- C. Declamation is available only at the Novice State Tournament and is open only to those students in grades 10 and below. The student is to present a memorized speech previous written and delivered by someone else.
- D. An introduction is required that names the author, time and the original location of the delivery of the speech. The introduction may also establish tone, mood, overall theme, etc.
- E. Students are permitted to use past oratories that are more than five (5) years old. The oratories may not be self-written.

#### **RULE 35: DUO INTERPRETATION OF LITERATURE**

- A. Duo Interpretation challenges two competitors to render a dynamic moment utilizing appropriate vocal expression, restrained gesture and interaction. These features enable a well-prepared Duo unit to produce a believable scene without the use of costuming and properties.
- B. The League will follow NSDA Event Rules in regards to Duo Interpretation of Literature. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.
- C. Each unit must consist of two members. The unit will vocally and physically respond to each other's verbal and non-verbal cues while maintaining an off-stage focus. Thus, a scene requiring disciplined interplay between partners is created in the minds of the audience. This two-person presentation must be from published literature, with interpolation and rewriting for the purpose of continuity only. The selection may be from any form or combination of forms of literature, such as short story, prose or

drama. The material may be humorous or dramatic, or may combine both tones. The characters must play a balanced role in the scene.

### **RULE 36: ORAL INTERPRETATION**

- A. Oral Interpretation requires contestants to present both a sample of prose literature and poetry, alternating each round. Competitors in this event are given the opportunity to present a piece of literature or an author whom they particularly like. In presenting the literature they are able to form images in the imaginations of the audiences simply from their manner of delivery.
- B. The League will follow CFL Event Rules in regards to Oral Interpretation. Rules can be obtained via the CFL website and the League will use the most recent version of the CFL League Rules.
- C. Each contestant's selection must be from literature, either a single piece, a cutting, or as a series of short pieces united by either theme or author. Literature includes all forms of prose and poetry, fiction and non-fiction, except plays and oratorical compositions originally written to be either performed or delivered.
- D. Oral Interpretation selections must be read from a manuscript. Contestants must maintain a reasonable balance of eye contact between the script and audience.
- E. No costuming of any kind is allowed, nor may the contestant pantomime any actions present in the selections. Pantomime and platform movement are not allowed. Gestures, if used, should be suitable to a reading rather than a stage performance. The reader should allow the scenes presented to be formed in the minds of the audience instead of trying to portray them physically. The reader should present a unified scene or story to the imaginations of the audience.
- F. A coin flip during the Opening Assembly of each league-sanctioned tournament shall determine whether Prose or Poetry will be used in Round One. Selections will alternate between Prose and Poetry in each round.

### **RULE 37: DRAMATIC & HUMOROUS INTERPRETATION**

- A. Both Dramatic and Humorous Interpretation focus on the competitor's ability to present a scene to the audience using only voice variations, limited pantomime and varied body postures. The goal of the interpretation is to present a believable scene to the audience with individual talent as a discerning factor among contestants.
- B. The League will follow NSDA Event Rules in regards to Dramatic and Humorous Interpretation. Rules can be obtained via the NSDA website and the League will use the most recent version of the District Tournament Operations Manual.
- C. Contestants are to communicate the emotional, aesthetic, imaginative and intellectual meaning of the literature to the audience. Material selected must be from published literature, with interpolation and rewriting for the purpose of continuity only.
- D. The use of a manuscript is prohibited.
- E. Material presented must be either humorous or dramatic in nature, depending on the event entered. Humorous performances must be entered in Humorous Interpretation; dramatic (serious) performances must be entered in Dramatic Interpretation. Any contestant whom the Protest Committee finds is performing a script entered in the wrong category is subject to disqualification. The material may be from any form of literature or a combination of forms.
- F. Students may not use the same primary source for more than one school year or more than once at the same tournament.

## **RULE 38: GROUP INTERPRETATION**

- A. Group Interpretation is a unique event that allows a group of three (3) to ten (10) students to present literature without the aid of special scenery, costuming, or lighting.
- B. A school may use the same primary source only once every four (4) years in the Regional and State Tournaments. A school's Group Interpretation selection may not be used for any other interpretation event in that year. Tournament Directors shall require specific literary sources be written on that school's entry form and on the Regional results form.
- C. Each school may enter one Group Interpretation at the Regional Tournament. Each region may enter its regional quota of Group Interpretations. No double entry in Group Interpretation is permitted; violators will be disqualified from their other event. Names of all competitors in the group must be placed on the Regional and State entry forms.
- D. If a team that has qualified for the State Championship Tournament loses more than one-third of its members before the State Championship Tournament, the alternate will be sent in place of that team. If less than one-third is lost, the team may compete as planned with no replacements. Characters may be reassigned or dropped.
- E. The reading should not exceed twenty (20) minutes, including at most one (1) minute of introduction and transitional material other than the author's words. Any overtime beyond the thirty (30) second grace period is excessive. Judges may not award first place to any group speaking beyond the thirty (30) second grace period.
- F. The selection must be from a single, published play, fictional or non-fictional work, or poem. The author's words as published in the literature may not be altered for this presentation with the exception that cutting is permitted. Material from more than one source is not allowed. The material may be serious, humorous, or both. Important consideration should be given to the quality of the selection.
- G. The selection should contain characters of reasonable depth and development. Characterization should be maintained, except during introduction and transitions, and must be distinct from narration.
- H. Each contestant may present more than one character. Narration may be read by one or any contestant. Any singing must be limited to a maximum of thirty (30) seconds total within the presentation.
- I. Speakers may not take lines belonging to one character in the script and apply them to a different character in the performance.
- J. The readers are to render a dynamic moment, utilizing appropriate vocal expression, restrained gesture, and interaction. The readers will vocally and physically respond to each other's verbal and non-verbal cues while maintaining an off-stage focus.
- K. The speakers must each hold a manuscript and read from it. A reasonable balance of eye contact with the script and audience (or focal points) should be maintained. Speakers who fail to maintain the illusion of reading from the manuscript may not be ranked first.
- L. Physically, the characters should react to each other's verbal and non-verbal expressions, but they may not touch.
- M. Students may move in unison (somewhat like a marching band) to create new formations within the group. Students may step in and out of formation in order to interpret specific scenes. Students may not roam freely about the performance area.
- N. No theme dressing, or any costuming clearly portraying the attributes of the character(s) represented will be allowed. Attire of Group Interpretation participants must not be distinguishable from that of participants in other events.
- O. No pre-recorded sound effects will be permitted. Contestants may produce their own sound effects.

- P. Fluency, articulation, enunciation, and vocal quality should be effectively utilized to reflect the characters that are being portrayed. The readers should demonstrate emotional and intellectual involvement with the selection: vocally, by varying pitch, rate, phrasing, tone, and volume; and physically by using appropriate gestures, facial expression and body movement. The character dialogue should reflect a genuine sense of interaction, not a mechanical exchange of lines.
- Q. Gestures and bodily movement can be used for emphasis but should be limited and suggested rather than exaggerated. All must remain standing. Except during the introduction, eye contact is aimed only in the audience's direction; focal points are to be employed during dialogue; eye contact with specific audience members during introduction and narration is permitted.
- R. The introduction must be composed by the speakers; it should name the work and author, provide necessary background information and establish the mood. If lines from the selection are used in the introduction, the speakers must adhere to the rules of the event.
- S. Groups will receive an automatic rank of 6 if:
  - 1. Any student loses possession of his/her manuscript; or
  - 2. Any student does not remain standing; or
  - 3. Students make intentional physical contact with one another; or
  - 4. Students make direct eye contact with one another outside of introduction and transitional material.

Ties with a rank of 6 are permitted only among students violating these rules.