



Hello Friends:

On behalf of the MSU Debate Council, we are excited to invite you to attend the first annual Stark Vegas Debate Invitational on the beautiful campus of Mississippi State University, October 10-12, 2025.

Whether you're an IDPA high roller or brand new to the activity, odds are good you'll have an exciting, enlightening weekend squaring off with other fantastic competitors for the classiest awards around, including the ultimate jackpot: our coveted Cowbells of Victory!

To sweeten the pot, here's everything we're offering:

- Six prelim rounds of all four IPDA division (Novice, Junior Varsity, Varsity, and Professional) on Saturday with appropriate elimination rounds on Sunday
- Four prelim rounds of Team IPDA on Friday with elimination rounds to follow
- Lunch provided on Saturday
- Coach/Judge Lounge with fully stocked (non-alcoholic drink and snack) bar!
- Awards for all competitors advancing to elim rounds
- Top 5 speaker awards in every division
- Top 3 sweepstakes awards in TIPDA and Overall Debate, plus our Top Community College Award
- Did we mention these awards are nice? We're talking about some serious hardware here, including the **Legendary Silver Cowbell of Victory**. Take it home, show your administration. They'll be impressed, trust us.

You remember IPDA Nationals at MSU in 2024? That was pretty cool, right? It's basically that but with more cowbell. So come on back and experience the greatest little college town around again, or for the first time.

We can't wait to see you here!

Sincerely yours,

Brett Harvey
Director of Debate

Jake Reed
Associate Director of Debate

TOURNAMENT RULES AND PROCEDURES

The Basics

The tournament will follow standard International Public Debate Association (IPDA) rules. Prep will be 30 minutes from the time debaters are handed topics. Speaking times are the usual:

IPDA: 5 (2) 6 (2) 3 5 3

TIPDA: 4 (2) 5 (2) 5 (2) 4 (2) 3 4 4 3

We will offer Novice, Junior Varsity, Varsity, and Professional divisions of individual debate and a single open division of Team Debate. The usual IPDA eligibility rules for each division apply. For more information on IPDA competition or eligibility rules, please check out the IPDA website here:

<http://www.ipdadebate.info/constitution--bylaws.html>

We will have six preliminary rounds of individual IPDA debate and four preliminary rounds of Team IPDA. The number of elimination rounds in each division will be determined by the number of entries. We reserve the right to conduct partial elims to avoid unduly harsh cuts, but we do not guarantee them.

Staying on Time

Like any respectable casino, we run a tight ship. That means staying on time, which means the rules on draw and debate times will be strictly enforced. Prep time begins the moment a given pair of debaters are handed the topic sheet, with the first speech starting thirty minutes thereafter.

The maximum grace period is five minutes, after which the absent side forfeits the round. In these cases, the judge should inform the present competitor that a forfeit is being awarded, and may directly contact the tournament director and notify them of the forfeit. If for any reason the judge is not comfortable contacting tab, the present competitor should contact their coach, who should contact the tournament director.

There is no speaking off the clock in IPDA debate. This means no off-time roadmaps. Thank you's and pleasantries are given during the timed speech. While debaters may use any device they like during prep, no electronic devices are allowed in the debate round itself. This means no using phones as timers. Stopwatches and kitchen timers are allowed, and we strongly suggest each debater have one.

Judges

One judge covers four IPDA entries or two TIPDA teams. Once eliminated from competition, IPDA competitors may be assigned to judge elimination rounds in divisions other than their own. All judges, including competitors, are required to be available for judging assignments one round beyond the elimination of their program. We will make reasonable efforts upon request to release groups of judges on Sunday to get folks home sooner, but cannot make guarantees.

We expect to use electronic ballots and will provide additional information on particulars as the tournament date approaches. However, all judges will need an internet connected device, preferably a laptop or tablet, to submit ballots. If a judge is unable to use an electronic device due to disability or other factors, please inform the tournament director and an accommodation will be provided.

Evidence and Ethics

Disagreements about evidence should, in almost every case, be resolved by debating, not external review mechanisms. Debaters should be prepared to persuade the judge, for example, that if a source sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Judges should not ask to view or read evidence in IPDA rounds.

In truly exceptional cases, if a judge (not a competitor) has serious doubts about the veracity of an evidentiary claim that would affect the outcome of the round, the judge may contact the tournament director promptly after completing their current judging assignment.

The director shall have discretion as to whether the dispute is amenable to further review, and as to what steps if any should be taken. We want to emphasize that such external reviews should be **exceptionally rare** in IPDA. That said, competitors are advised to hold on to case outlines after rounds just in case they are asked to provide a source for review.

Collegiality and Respect

All participants—competitors, coaches, judges, and guests—should be respectful at all times. Any disrespectful or harassing behavior should be brought to tournament staff. All participants are subject to all MSU policies at all times, including those barring harassment, discrimination, and other forms of misconduct.

We reserve the right to implement any remedy up to removal from the tournament, but we don't expect that to happen. We know you'll keep it clean and respectful and have fun.

Dispute Resolution

Ultimately, all disputes on all issues are subject to the final decision of the tournament director.

AWARDS AND SWEEPS

Awards will be super nifty. Trust us. Specifically awards will go to:

- All competitors advancing to elimination rounds in all divisions, with champions receiving a Cowbell of Victory
- Top 5 speakers in each division, with first place speakers receiving a Cowbell of Victory
- Top 3 program sweeps awards in TIPDA
- Top 3 overall sweeps awards (IPDA and TIPDA combined)

- Top Community College

Additionally, we offer our very own distinctive power award—the ***Legendary Silver Cowbell of Victory***. This iconic symbol is awarded to the team with the highest prelim winning percentage across all debaters they enter in all divisions (IPDA and TIPDA), based on a minimum of five total entries.

Sweepstakes points calculations are as follows:

- Three points per prelim win in IPDA, plus three additional points for breaking, calculated for a program's top three entries per division
- Six points per prelim win in TIPDA, plus six additional points for breaking, plus six points per elim round win, calculated for a program's top two entries
- Speaker awards are worth five sweeps points for first place, four for second, three for third, two for fourth, and one for fifth.

For determining IPDA breaks, we will look first to win-loss record, then high-low adjusted speaker points, then total speaker points. For TIPDA breaks, we will look to win-loss record, then total speaker points. For IPDA speaker awards, we will look first to high-low adjusted speaker points, then to total speaker points. For TIPDA speaker awards, we will look to total points first, then high-low adjusted points.

REGISTRATION AND FEES

Registration will be via ForensicsTournament.net. Payment methods and other details may be found there. All entries must be received by Tuesday, October 7th at 6 pm CDT. Fees are as follows:

- Covered IPDA Entries: \$25
- Uncovered IPDA Entries: \$40
- Covered TIPDA Entries: \$50 per team
- Uncovered TIPDA Entries: \$75 per team

We need your judges far more than your money, so we reserve the right to restrict or refuse entries based on failure to cover judging obligations.

To encourage the growth of IPDA debate, we would be pleased to ***waive fees for any college or university program that is new to IPDA debate competition in the 2025-26 academic year***, or is returning to IPDA competition for the first time after at least a three year absence. Please contact Brett Harvey at brett.harvey@msstate.edu to make a waiver request.

HOTELS AND FOOD OPTIONS

We are not designating official tournament hotels, but there are plenty of good options very close to campus, including:

- Russell Inn & Suites (662-324-9595) – Just across Hwy 12 from campus.
- Days Inn & Suites (662-270-5995) – Reasonable prices, 5 minutes from campus on Hwy 12.
- Starkville Inn & Suites (662-615-0700) – Reasonable prices, just a few miles away from campus.
- Holiday Inn Express (662-324-0076) – 5 minutes from campus on Hwy 12.
- Hilton Garden Inn (662-615-9664) – 5 minutes north of campus.
- Quality Inn – Starkville (662-268-6601) – Very affordable motel 5 minutes from campus.
- Courtyard Starkville MSU (662-338-3116) - Just across the Hwy 12 from campus, but a little pricey.

If cost is an issue, here's a pro tip: You can get a perfectly nice hotel room for about 60% of Starkville prices 13 miles up the highway in West Point, if you're willing to do a short commute.

We will be providing lunch on Saturday. Most of our core on-campus restaurants (e.g., Chick-fil-A, Subway, Panda Express, Steak N' Shake, Newk's, and Starbucks) will be open Friday and Saturday. Just off campus on Highway 12, you have a good variety of fast food, casual dining, pizza, sandwich shops, etc. And if you want to experience the local college-town places, the Cotton District (also just off campus) has you covered with many good options.

SCHEDULE

Friday, October 10th

11am-12 pm	TIPDA Registration
12:15pm	TIPDA Round 1 Draw
1:45 pm	TIPDA Round 2 Draw
3:15 pm	TIPDA Round 3 Draw
4:45 pm	TIPDA Round 4 Draw
6:15-6:30 pm	Coaches' Review
6:30 pm	TIPDA Elim Round 1

Sunday, October 12th

7:30-8:00 am	Coaches' Review
8:00 am	IPDA Elim 1
9:30 am	Awards Ceremony
10:15 am	IPDA Elim 2
11:45 am	IPDA Elim 3
1:15 pm	IPDA Elim 4

Saturday, October 11th

8:00 am	TIPDA Elim Round 2
9:45 am	TIPDA Elim Round 3
10-11 am	IPDA-Only Registration
11:15 am	IPDA Round 1 Flight A (Novice/Pro) Draw
11:45 am	IPDA Round 1 Flight B (Varsity/JV) Draw
12:30-1:15	Lunch (Provided)
1:30 pm	IPDA Round 2 Flight A Draw
2:00 pm	IPDA Round 2 Flight B Draw
3:00 pm	IPDA Round 3 Flight A Draw
3:30 pm	IPDA Round 3 Flight B Draw
4:30 pm	IPDA Round 4 Flight A Draw
5:00 pm	IPDA Round 4 Flight B Draw
6:00 pm	IPDA Round 5 Flight A Draw
6:30 pm	IPDA Round 5 Flight B Draw
7:30 pm	IPDA Round 6 Flight A Draw
8:00 pm	IPDA Round 6 Flight B Draw