PKD Public Forum (PF) Debate Format Guide

Effective Fall 2025 | Drafted for PKD Use

I. Overview

PKD Public Forum (PF) is a collegiate adaptation of the National Speech and Debate Association's (NSDA) Public Forum debate format. PF retains the original structure and timing while incorporating collegiate expectations for argumentation, style, and conduct. One key structural difference: **Grand Crossfire is eliminated** to prioritize structured crystallization and professionalism.

Teams are made up of two individuals of the same school.

II. Speech Format & Timing

Public Forum follows this speech order and time structure:

Speech	Time
Team A Constructive	4 mins
Team B Constructive	4 mins
Crossfire (1st speakers)	3 mins
Team A Rebuttal	4 mins
Team B Rebuttal	4 mins
Crossfire (2nd speakers)	3 mins
Team A Summary	3 mins
Team B Summary	3 mins
Team A Final Focus	3 mins

Team B Final Focus	3 mins
Prep Time (per team)	3 mins

Total Round Time: Approximately 42 minutes

Note: “Team A” and “Team B” are used to designate sides post-coin flip (Pro/Con and speaking order).

III. Round Procedure

A. Coin Toss

A coin toss determines which team chooses **either**:

- Side (Pro or Con), or
- Speaking order (First or Second)

The opposing team selects the remaining option.

B. Crossfire

- Two **Crossfire periods only**:
    - After Constructives (1st speakers)
    - After Rebuttals (2nd speakers)
- **No Grand Crossfire** following Summary speeches.

Crossfire is a **mutual questioning period**, not a speech or debate extension. It should be civil, purposeful, and strategic. The only individuals allowed to speak during crossfire are the speakers who finished their first speech. For example, Speaker 1 on Team A and Speaker 1 on Team B will engage in the first crossfire, and Speaker 2 on Team A and Speaker 2 on Team B will engage in the second crossfire. No other speaking engagement is allowed from either side during this time, except to hand notes/evidence to one’s colleague. The first speaker in that speech block (Constructive or Rebuttal) will ask the first question.

IV. Rules of the Format

A. Speech Expectations

- Emphasize **clarity over speed**; spreading is discouraged.
- All arguments must be **structured**, with clear **claims, warrants, and impacts**.
- Arguments should **progress across the round** (constructive → rebuttal → summary → final focus).
- Impact calculus and round framing should occur in all speeches.

B. Evidence Rules

- Paraphrasing is permitted, but **evidence must be accurately represented**.
- Cards must be **provided promptly** upon request (physically or digitally).
- Evidence **must include author, date, and source** details.
- Fabrication or distortion of evidence is a **disqualifying offense**.
    - Claims of fabrication or distortion must be stated in the round OR reported to tournament staff within 30 minutes of the round ending.

C. Final Focus Restrictions

- **No new arguments** may be introduced in the Final Focus speeches.
- Only arguments **extended through Summary** may be crystallized in the Final Focus.
- Impact calculus and round framing should occur in both Summary and Final Focus.

D. Technology

- Laptops and tablets are allowed for prep, flowing, and evidence management.
- Stopwatches and the use of phones for timing purposes is allowed. Use of phones for purposes other than timing are **NOT** permitted.

- Internet access during rounds is **NOT** permitted unless it is being used to access previously carded evidence by the competing team (ex. Dropbox, Google Drive) and shared excel flow sheets between debate partners.
    - The use of the internet for the purpose of gathering new evidence in the round is strictly forbidden.
- Competitors must be prepared with their evidence **before the round**.

E. Eligibility

- Students must be currently enrolled at the college or university for which they are competing.
- Any student may enter an open division.
- Junior division is open to students in their first four semesters of collegiate debate (of any kind).
- Novice division is open to students with less than two semesters of any debate at any level (high school or college).
- Students debating without a partner (maverick) may be permitted at the discretion of the Tournament Director. Maverick debaters are not permitted to break, but they will be eligible for individual speaker awards.
- Hybrid teams (one student from one school partnered with another student from a different school) may be permitted at the discretion of the Tournament Director.

V. Competitor Guidelines

A. Expectations of Debaters

- Prioritize **depth of argumentation** over quantity.
- Utilize **strategic framing and impact calculus**.
- Maintain **professionalism in tone and conduct**, especially during Crossfire.
- Deliver speeches that are **organized, signposted, and persuasive**.
- Engage with the **nuances of the topic** and **respond directly to opposing arguments**.

VI. Coach Guidelines

Coaches should:

- Encourage **collaborative preparation**, grounded in credible sources and academic standards.
- Develop student skills in **impact calculus, clash, and framing**.
- Promote **ethical evidence use** and enforcement of PKD PF rules.
- Help students prepare for diverse judging philosophies—**both lay and technical**.

VII. Event Objectives

A. Team Expectations

- Within the Constructive, the proposition (PRO) team must affirm the resolution by presenting and defending a sufficient case for that resolution while the opposition (CON) team must oppose the resolution.
- Within the Rebuttal, both the PRO and CON should provide a response to their opponents' case.
- Within the Summary, the PRO and CON teams should provide responses to their opponents' rebuttal.
- Within the Final Focus, the PRO and CON teams should provide judges with voting issues that include impact calculus and explain why they have won the round.

B. Plans/Counterplans

- In Public Forum Debate, neither the PRO or CON side is permitted to offer a plan or counterplan; rather, they should offer reasoning to support their position in the round. Debaters may offer generalized, practical solutions, but it should not be a formalized proposal for implementation.
- Usually PF topics are geared towards a contention structure. Philosophical arguments are allowed, but constructed cases centered solely on a kritik are **NOT** permitted.

C. Philosophy on Speaker Time

- Oral prompting by the speaker's colleague while the debater has the floor is discouraged (though not prohibited) and may be penalized by some judges. The team that does not have the floor to speak may consult with their colleague as long as they are not disruptive to the other team. Oral prompting, by any other person in the room, is prohibited.
- Oral prompting is generally defined as verbal cues of any kind to one's colleague while they have the speaking floor.

VIII. Judging Guidelines

A. Eligibility

Judges should be:

- Experienced former competitors (holding a bachelor's degree and out of competitive eligibility), graduate students, faculty, or professionals.
    - PKD PF is also designed to be as accessible as possible. This means that, while the above experience is desired, any person can be utilized as a judge for this event.

B. Judging Philosophy

Judges should:

- Flow all speeches and render decisions **based solely on arguments in the round**.
- Prioritize:
    - Clear extension and crystallization of arguments.
    - Effective weighing of impacts.
    - Round framing and strategic focus.
- Penalize:
    - New arguments in Final Focus speeches.

- Ethical violations (e.g., fabricated evidence).
- Disrespectful behavior.

Note: PKD PF encourages **limited speed**; speeches should remain accessible and persuasive.

C. Ballots & Feedback

Ballots should include:

- A clear **Reason for Decision (RFD)**.
- Constructive feedback on **argument strategy, delivery, and professionalism**.
- **Speaker Points** using the following scale:

Points	Description
40	Masterful collegiate performance
39	Excellent—strategic, clear, and persuasive
38	Solid—minor delivery or strategic issues
37	Developing—needs improvement in depth or style
36↓	Underdeveloped or inappropriate tone/conduct

IX. Topic Selection

PKD PF will use:

- PKD Public Forum topics (semesterly)

Topic framing should allow for:

- Policy, philosophical, and real-world engagement.
- Strategic flexibility on both sides.

X. Ethics & Conduct

All participants must uphold:

- **Academic honesty**, including accurate evidence citation.
- **Respectful behavior** in all rounds.
- **PKD's values of citizenship, advocacy, service, and leadership**. This includes agreeing to the PKD Code of Conduct found below.

Violations of evidence ethics, harassment, or discrimination will result in disqualification and possible referral to the tournament director or governing body.

PKD Code of Conduct

In order to provide the most fair, equitable, and inclusive environment, respecting the Pi Kappa Delta motto of "The Art of Persuasion: Beautiful and Just," all participants in any Pi Kappa Delta sanctioned event will agree to the following code of conduct.

For the purposes of this document, the term "Participant" includes all competitors, performers, judges, coaches, volunteers, observers, and tournament staff.

As a participant in a Pi Kappa Delta event, I agree to the following:

- I will contribute to an inclusive and equitable environment by avoiding communication that disparages others based on race, ethnicity, national origin, or citizenship status.

-I will address others in a way that does not invalidate their sex, gender identity, or sexual orientation.

-I will not disparage or conduct myself in a way that excludes or marginalizes others based on ability status.

-I will refrain from any behavior that would constitute harassment, including unwanted contact, comments, or behavior that could create a hostile environment. If made aware of any behavior that might make others uncomfortable, I will amend that behavior to the best of my ability.

-I will respect the host site and facilitators of the event by giving fair treatment to spaces, facilities, volunteers, and tournament staff.

-When acting as an observer, I will refrain from any behaviors that distract, harass, belittle, discourage, or otherwise disrupt those who are performing.

-I will refrain from any activity that can deliberately affect the physical and mental health of other participants.

-I will uphold the rules and ethical standards of every event in which I am competing, judging, coaching, or observing.

-I will avoid any behavior or utterance that inhibits the expression of one's lived experience, recognizing that other participants may have stories that dramatically differ from my own.

PKD Public Forum Tournament Dates

Fall 2025

October 3, 2025 (Hosted Virtually by Newberry College)
October 24, 2025 (Hosted Virtually by Simpson College)
November 21, 2025 (Hosted Virtually by Newberry College)

Spring 2026

January 16, 2026 (Hosted Virtually by Newberry College)
February 6, 2026 (Hosted Virtually by Simpson College)
March 6, 2026 (Hosted Virtually by Newberry College)
March 19-22 (PKD Biennial Tournament and Convention at Missouri State University)

***** While these are the dates for PF tournaments hosted by the PKD PF Committee, ANY school wishing to add PKD PF to its tournament slate of events is encouraged to do so! *****