

Dear Colleagues,

The Governing Board of the Southern Forensics Championships invites you to its 16th tournament, **January 30 – February 1, 2026**, at **Arkansas State University** in Jonesboro, Arkansas. The Southern Forensics Championship serves as the intercollegiate championships for the states of Arkansas, Louisiana, and Mississippi, **but it is open to all who wish to participate**. We will be featuring the standard AFA-NIET events plus editorial impromptu and radio, and our usual offerings of Team IPDA, and IPDA.



Entries should be submitted via FTN no later than Monday, January 26th at 5:00 p.m. Changes will be accepted without penalty until Wednesday at noon.

Please read this invitation carefully to comply with all rules. Please pay particular attention to the tournament ethics statement, as well as guidelines regarding fees for late entry changes. Questions about the tournament can be sent to Paul Strait (l.strait@usm.edu), while questions about campus facilities and local amenities should be directed to Abby Mock (amock@astate.edu). We look forward to seeing you for a weekend of fun and collegial competition.

Sincerely,

The SFC Governing Board

Masey Hammons, University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Brett Harvey, Mississippi State University
Amorette Hinderaker, Texas Christian University
Brandon Knight, William Carey University
Abby Mock, Arkansas State University
Hannah Morris, University of Arkansas at Fayetteville
Pat Richey, Middle Tennessee State University
L. Paul Strait, University of Southern Mississippi, Tournament Director
Anthony McMullen, University of Central Arkansas, Tournament Director Emeritus

And

Student Representatives

Anna-Rachel Krebs, William Carey University
Lindsay Brown, Louisiana State University Shreveport

Special Policies

AI policy: We dissuade the use of AI in debate prep. Certainly students must independently verify any sources/evidence identified by generative AI. If you are using AI to think for you, why? With respect to speech events (especially extemporaneous speaking), we follow the AFA-NST position that the use of generative AI in prep is a violation of the rule that requires individuals to construct their speeches without consultation with others. Please communicate to your students that **the use of AI during prep for Extemporaneous Speaking is forbidden**. Finally, **judges should not be using AI to write any part of the ballot**. We ask directors to communicate these expectations to their students and judges.

Inclusion Statement: We strive to ensure that speech and debate be an activity that respects competitors of all backgrounds including gender expressions and identities and seek to create a safe space for all competitors to feel comfortable competing at their highest potential. Coaches are encouraged to include their competitors' personal pronouns with their entries; this can be done by accessing your team roster in FTN and editing their last name to include said pronouns. As an example: John Doe (he/him), or Jane Doe (they/them). ***Please note, this is not mandatory by any means; this is simply an opportunity for those who feel comfortable being addressed differently to feel accepted in this activity, regardless of how they identify.***

Tournament Ethics Statement: The last several years, we have included a statement requiring those participating in our tournament to abide by the [National Communication Association's Anti-Harassment Code of Conduct](#). This move was not novel, as many tournaments have statements requiring participants to abide by this policy. That being said, we are concerned that instances of harassing behavior go unchecked by the community. This could be for many reasons:

- It could be that those subject to harassing behavior do not come forward until long after the harassing behavior has occurred.
- It could be that those subject to harassing behavior do not come forward for fear of reprisal.
- It could be that those subject to harassing behavior did come forward, but those responsible for addressing the matter failed to do so properly.
- It could be that the matter was addressed but not sufficiently enough to change the perpetrator's behavior.

Whatever the reason, the SFC Governing Board reaffirms that no participant should be subject to harassing behavior.

All participants (coaches, judges, competitors, and observers) should review the [NCA Anti-Harassment Code of Conduct](#) before participating in our tournament. The SFC Governing Board expects that behavior between all participants be respectful and appropriate at all times. Procedures will be in place so that participants can report behavior that violates this code. In addition, any participant that has concerns over propriety or good sportpersonship should discuss the matter with their coaching staff. Any coach or judge should address any concerns with the Tournament Director. Serious violations of the policies may result in immediate disqualification from the tournament. As a condition of entry, all participants, coaches, judges, and guests agree that any decision issued by the Tournament Director is binding, and final.

Recording: NO ONE is allowed to record a round without the explicit consent of every person in the room. Any recording that involves a minor must have the written consent of a legal guardian. This will be strictly enforced.

Arkansas State University / Jonesboro specific information

Parking (subject to change)

All buses should park in the S-11A and S-11B lots on Cherokee street. Any normal cars must park in visitor parking until 5:00 on Friday. Buses can drop students off at the Humanities building and proceed to park after. The link below shows the A-State parking map, every spot marked with a blue 'V' are safe areas to park.

https://www.astate.edu/a/facilities/maps/Parking-Map_12-9-19.pdf

Hotel Recommendations: The following hotels in the Jonesboro area are recommended. There are several other hotels in the area; please feel free to contact Abby Mock (amock@astate.edu) if you need additional hotel listings.

Embassy Suites: on campus

<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/jbrjoes-embassy-suites-jonesboro-red-wolf-convention-center/>

Courtyard by Marriott: 10 minutes from campus

4811 E Johnson Ave, Jonesboro, AR 72401•(870) 206-9500

<https://www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/jbrcy-courtyard-jonesboro/overview>

Comfort Suites: 12 minutes from campus

3404 Access Rd, Jonesboro, AR 72401•(870) 336-2280

<https://www.choicehotels.com/arkansas/jonesboro/comfort-suites-hotels/>

Residence Inn: 12 minutes from campus

2611 Sumo Lp, Jonesboro, AR 72401•(870) 206-8141

<https://www.marriott.com/en-us/hotels/jbrri-residence-inn-jonesboro/overview/>

Hampton Inn: 12 minutes from campus

2900 Phillips Dr, Jonesboro, AR 72401•(870) 974-9500

<https://www.hilton.com/en/hotels/jbrarhx-hampton-jonesboro/>

Meal Options: Food options

On campus options:

All on-campus options are card only.

Acansa dining hall: A-State's cafeteria with multiple options and dietary-restricted meals
Friday hours: 4:00-8:00 P.M.
Saturday hours: 11:00 A.M.- 12:30 P.M. and 5:00 P.M.- 6:00 P.M.
Price: about \$11 per diner

Howl's campus grill: burgers, wraps, and sides
Friday hours: 7:00 A.M.- 7:00 P.M.

Campus Store (student union): Grab and go items, snacks, drinks
Friday hours: 8:00 A.M.- 7:00 P.M.

The Yard: a selection of multiple restaurants located right off campus
1918 Aggie Rd, Jonesboro, AR 72401
Hours: 12:00 P.M.- 11:00 P.M.
BA burrito (burritos and burgers)
Larrys Pizza
Saigon (Pho, Bahn Mi, etc)

Off campus options:

Sandwiches:

Jimmy Johns (offers delivery)
1319 Red Wolf Blvd ste i, Jonesboro, AR 72401
Jersey Mikes (in store pick up)
3717 E Johnson Ave Suite E, Jonesboro, AR 72405
Newks (grab and go, in store pick up, large orders)
1408 E Highland Dr, Jonesboro, AR 72401

Pizza:

Papa Johns (delivery and carry out)
1300 S Caraway Rd, Jonesboro, AR 72401
(870) 931-9119
Dominos (delivery)
1826 E Johnson Ave, Jonesboro, AR 72401
(870) 935-6000
Pizza hut (delivery, buffet, carryout)
900 S Caraway Rd, Jonesboro, AR 72401
(870) 972-0580
Pizza Inn (delivery, buffet, carryout)
(870) 932-1010
1208 S Caraway Rd, Jonesboro, AR 72401
Lost pizza (delivery, pick up, sit down)
3410 E Johnson Ave A, Jonesboro, AR 72405

Chicken:

Chick-fil-a
Slim chickens
Guthries
Popeyes

Jonesboro has many other places to eat, this is just a short list with places relatively close to campus!!

Smoking/Vaping/Drinking Policy: Arkansas State University is a tobacco and alcohol free campus. There are no vaping or smoking areas available on campus.

Tournament Operation Details

SFC Governing Board and Coach of the Year Awards: We will have elections for the SFC student representative from each state, all to serve a one-year term. Students desiring to run for Governing Board should submit their name and a brief candidacy statement along with the tournament entry. Nominations (including self-nominations) will be accepted up to and during the tournament. If there is a contested election, statements will be distributed at the tournament, and eligible voters (any undergraduate student competing in the SFC from the representative state) will cast their votes at the tournament. **As per the SFCT Constitutions and Bylaws, only one vote per member school is considered. Votes should be tallied by the three outgoing SFC Student Representatives and should both (1) remain clear at each stage of voting; and (2) remain student-led, to the fullest extent possible.**

Students will also select the SFC Coach of the Year. Each SFC state will be responsible for electing their state Coach of the Year. Each Coach will then be eligible for the SFC Coach of the Year.

Tab Room: The tab room will be closed to all competitors, but open to coaches.

Electronic Ballots: During the 2024 SFCT Tournament, the membership nearly unanimously voted in favor of using electronic ballots for this year's tournament. As a result, we will be offering e-ballots for ALL Speech & Debate Events. ADA Accommodations will be made available on an individual needs basis and should be communicated to the SFC Tournament Director in advance of the tournament. Outside accommodations, **all judges need to have some way to access the internet in order to fill out ballots.** Phones will work, but something with an actual keyboard will be more efficient.

Please be sure to set each of your judge's ballot preferences to "electronic," which can be done in FTN through your team roster settings. A personal email address (not a school email) is encouraged, to ensure proper delivery of ballots. Please note, that tab room cannot make these changes for your program. For TIPDA/IPDA Debate judges: IPDA guidelines expressly prohibits usage of the use of technology in round to flow rounds/research/presentation and should ONLY be used by judges in-rounds to access their electronic ballot.

Student Judges: We will use non-clearing debaters to judge elimination rounds. Please ensure that your students are entered on your judge roster (though not entered as judges in the tournament) so that we can easily assign them to elimination rounds as needed.

Individual Event Information

1. We will offer the eleven AFA-NIET events, plus editorial impromptu and radio. All individual events (except for persuasive speaking) shall following the rules established and followed by the American Forensics Association. Entries will be allowed to use the internet for Extemp Preparation.
2. Persuasive speaking shall follow the rules of the Interstate Oratorical Contest. These speeches shall have no time limit, but speeches must not exceed 1800 words, with no more than 20% of the total number of words being directly quoted from a source other than the competitor. All quoted material must be documented. Participants and their respective programs are responsible for ensuring that the manuscripts adhere to that tournament's national guidelines.
3. In **Editorial Impromptu**, students will be given a 1 page op-ed article, and will have 9 minutes to read the article, prepare a response, and deliver it. Students must speak for at least 5 minutes. The speech should involve the development of an argument in response to the thesis developed or the opinion shared in the article. In agreeing or disagreeing with the position or thesis of the article, students should introduce new information and reasoning.
4. For **Radio Broadcasting**, contestants will be given a QR code linking to an electronic packet of source materials and will have 30 minutes to select, organize, and present a simulated radio broadcast. The source material packets will include international, national, state, and local news. All informational material used in the broadcast must be provided by the tournament with the exception of any hypothetical station call letters, time, and current weather conditions or forecast (but students can choose what information they want to present and be creative with advertisements, presentational style, etc.). Students will present their broadcasts seated at a table with the judge facing away from the contestants during the speech. Students may time themselves as no time signals will be given by the judge. Students may organize their material and notes however they choose (and may use scissors, highlighters, tape, laptop, or whatever other tools may help them stay organized). Maximum time limit for the speech is 5 minutes. Posting of source materials will be staggered.
5. Students may enter a **maximum of three individual events per pattern** (coaches should ensure that students multiply entered can manage such a schedule). Competitors may enter two duos (with different partners), but this will count as two events in Pattern B. Students entered in multiple events will be responsible for making it to their rounds on time and should endeavor to sign in. The tournament directors reserve the right to limit the number of entries from a school, and to balance rounds to accommodate judging obligations from schools with large entries.
6. **Flighting: Pattern A** - Impromptu, Informative, Prose, Dramatic, After Dinner Speaking, Radio

Pattern B - Poetry, Communication Analysis, Duo, Extemporaneous, Persuasion, POI, EI

Team IPDA Debate

1. There will be a single division of team IPDA for all competitors under the Varsity TIPDA Division, following IPDA's rules for eligibility.
2. All team IPDA rounds shall follow the times limits and rules established by the International Public Debate Association. ***This includes the prohibition against the use of electronic devices as timers, in-round flowing devices, or any other electronic device used in rounds.***
3. Students will have thirty minutes of preparation time (this includes time walking to the rounds).
4. We will offer four (4) preliminary rounds and the appropriate number of elimination rounds. If we have more than thirty-one (31) entries, we will add a fourth elimination round to take place Saturday evening after individual IPDA rounds have concluded.
5. For purposes of elimination round seeding and speaker points, total speaker points will be considered first, then adjusted speaker points.
6. **Please note – we will be emphasizing to all judges that everything other than ensuring everyone is “ready” shall be considered “on the clock” (this includes thank you's, roadmaps, arguments, etc.) and judges will be empowered to penalize competitors at their discretion (via speaker points and/or the assigning of the win) for violations of the time limits that are specified in the IPDA bylaws.**

****Note, TIPDA and IEs occur at the same time, and so students cannot enter both.****

IPDA Debate

1. We will offer novice, junior varsity, varsity, and professional divisions. *While any competitor may enter the professional division, only registered undergraduate students will be considered for sweepstakes calculations.*
2. All individual IPDA rounds shall follow the times limit and rules established by the International Public Debate Association. ***This includes the prohibition against the use of electronic devices as timers, in-round flowing devices, or any other electronic device used in rounds.***
3. We will offer (6) preliminary rounds and an appropriate number of elimination rounds. Should the need for additional outrounds arise, proper communication will be sent out prior to the tournament, along with any necessary adjustments to the schedule.
4. For purposes of elimination round seeding and speaker points, adjusted speaker points (total points minus high-low) will be considered first, then total speaker points.
5. **Please note – we will be emphasizing to all judges that everything other than ensuring everyone is “ready” shall be considered “on the clock” (this includes thank you's, roadmaps, arguments, etc.) and judges will be empowered to penalize competitors at their discretion (via speaker points and/or the assigning of the win) for violations of the time limits that are specified in the IPDA bylaws.**

Sweepstakes Eligibility: The top four entries in each individual event, the top two team IPDA teams, and the top three ***undergraduate*** entries per division of IPDA debate will count toward sweepstakes. **Please send your undergraduate entries (and Top Novices, for IE entries) to the Tournament Director by email, in advance of the tournament.**

Awards and Sweepstakes: Awards will be presented to all individual event finalists, to all debate elimination round participants, to the top speakers in each debate division, the top five quadrathlon, and the top three individual and team sweepstakes winners. No minimum number of entries is required for schools to count toward debate or individual events sweepstakes awards, but schools must be entered in both debate and speech to be eligible for the overall sweepstakes competition. **Please note, for Sweepstakes awards, IE and Debate points will be normalized, to ensure both categories of competition have equal weight for sweepstakes awards (e.g., winning 10% of the total points in debate is exactly equivalent to winning 10% of the total points in speech for the purpose of calculating comprehensive sweepstakes). The intention of this policy is to ensure that the comprehensive sweepstakes formulae weigh Debate and Speech equally, as well as to ensure that the award recognizes balanced comprehensive performances. By construction, this formula guarantees that exactly half of the overall pool of comprehensive points comes from each area.**

Individual events will be scored as follows:

Preliminary rounds:

3 points for 1st place
2 points for 2nd place
1 point for 3rd place

Final rounds:

6 points for 1st place
5 points for 2nd place
4 points for 3rd place
3 points for 4th place
2 points for 5th place
1 point for 6th place and below
0.5 points for non-advancing semifinalists

Debate will be scored as follows:

Team IPDA

6 points for each prelim round win
6 points for breaking

Individual IPDA

3 points for each prelim round win
3 points for breaking

Speakers (for all events)

6 points for 1st speaker
5 points for 2nd speaker
4 points for 3rd speaker
3 points for 4th speaker
2 points for 5th speaker

Individual Event Sweepstakes (Quadrathon): To be eligible, students must compete in at least four events and in at least two of the three genres of speech: limited preparation (extemp, impromptu, editorial impromptu, radio), public address (after dinner speaking, persuasive, informative, communication analysis), and interpretation (dramatic, program, prose, poetry, duo). Multiple duos shall count as only one event for the purposes of this minimum. Only four events will be counted toward a student's total, with at least one event from two of the three categories being included in those four events. Only one duo will be counted among the four. Points shall be calculated using the sweepstakes formula outlined herein.

Individual Overall Sweepstakes: To be eligible, students must compete in at least one individual event and one form of debate. All of a student's events will count toward this total. Points shall be calculated using the sweepstakes formula outlined herein.

Team Overall Sweepstakes: To be eligible for team overall sweepstakes and for the state championship, a school must have at least one individual event entry and one debate entry. (There will also be team sweepstakes in individual events and debate.)

Debate power award: This award recognizes the team with the highest preliminary round win percentage in debate. Schools must have at least three debate entries to be eligible.

State Championships (SFC schools only): The top entry in each event from each SFC state will be recognized as that state's champion, and the top school in each category (debate, individual events, and overall) will be recognized as the state champion. In debate events, the top entry will be competitor(s) who go the farthest in the competition. If a state's final competitors are eliminated in the same round, the higher seed will be recognized as the champion.

Registration will take place on the first floor of the Humanities and Social Sciences building. There will be **designated prep spaces** on Saturday and Sunday. Friday, we will have limited prep space; however, we will post which rooms can be used for prep when available.

IE Schedule

Friday

Saturday

11-1:30 – Registration	7:00 am – Semi Extemp Prep (if Necessary)
12:00 pm – Extemp Prep	7:30 am – Semifinals (If Necessary)
12:30 pm – Rd 1, Pattern B	8:45 am – Extemp Prep
1:45 pm – Radio Prep	9:00 am – Finals, Flight B
2:15 pm – Rd1, Pattern A	10:00 – Radio Prep
3:30 pm – Extemp Prep	10:30 – Finals, Flight A
4:00 pm – Rd 2, Pattern B	*2:30 p.m. – Lunch Break/ Coaches and Student Meetings*
5:15 pm – Radio Prep	
5:45 pm – Rd. 2, Pattern A	* Lunch provided

IPDA/TIPDA Schedule (Times indicate start of draw or topic announce)

<u>Friday</u>	<u>Saturday</u>	<u>Sunday</u>
11:00 am - Registration	7:00 am – TIPDA Elim. Rd. 2	8:30 am – Elim. Rd. 1
12:00 pm - Team IPDA Rd. 1	8:30 am – TIPDA Elim. Rd. 3	10:30 am – Awards
1:45 pm – Team IPDA Rd. 2	10:00 am – TIPDA Elim. Rd 4	11:15 am – Elim. Rd. 2
3:30 pm – Team IPDA Rd. 3	10am to 11am – Registration	12:45 pm – Elim. Rd. 3
5:15 pm – Team IPDA Rd. 4	11:30 am – IPDA Rd. 1	2:15 pm – Elim. Rd. 4
7:00 pm - Dinner Break	1:00 pm – IPDA Rd. 2	3:45 pm – Elim Rd. 5
8:00 pm – TIPDA Elim. Rd. 1	*2:30 pm – Lunch Break/ Coaches and Student Meetings*	
	3:30 pm – IPDA Rd. 3	
	5:00 pm – IPDA Rd. 4	
	6:30 pm – IPDA Rd. 5	
	7:00 pm – IPDA Rd. 6	
	*Lunch provided	

Judges: Normally, there is an option for uncovered entries and a statement that we would rather have your judges rather than your money. Due to the challenges of running a comprehensive tournament, we strongly encourage all entries to be covered. In the event they are not, we will be enforcing uncovered entry fees. To be clear: **WE WANT YOUR JUDGES MORE THAN WE WANT YOUR FEES.** One judge may cover six (6) individual event entries, two (2) Team IPDA teams, or four (4) IPDA debaters. A single judge may not be used to cover both TIPDA and IEs. In other words, a single judge could cover either six (6) individual event entries or two (2) Team IPDA entries, as well as four (4) IPDA entries. If the situation is sufficiently urgent, we may move eligible judges from TIPDA to IEs, but we will communicate this clearly with directors if it proves necessary. Programs are committed to one round past their highest advancing eliminated competitor. Every effort will be made to allow programs with extended drives to be released sooner, but this cannot be guaranteed.

Because of the tight schedule, it is essential that judges return ballots in a timely manner. To aid in this effort, all ballots for both IE and Debate events will be electronic. We ask all judges to accept their ballot via their email within 5 minutes of receiving the email notification that their ballot is ready, and to submit it as soon as possible. Note that judges may go back and add comments to ballots after submitting.

Entries: Entries should be submitted via FTN no later than Monday, January 26th at 5:00 p.m. ***Please take this time to identify your novice competitors, if they are not already marked as such in your FTN entry.*** Changes will be accepted without charge until Wednesday, January 28th at noon. Each change after that will be charged \$15.00.

Entry fees: IE entries are \$10, IPDA entries are \$25, and Team IPDA entries are \$40. Uncovered IE entries are an additional \$20 each, uncovered TIPDA entries are an additional \$35 each, and uncovered IPDA entries are an additional \$25 each.

Payment: Please make all check payable to ASU Systems Foundation inc. If you need to pay with credit card, that will also be possible; for details, email Abby Mock (amock@astate.edu).