

On behalf of the University of Central Arkansas, the UCA School of Communication, and UCA Debate and Forensics, we invite you to our campus for the Seventeenth Annual End of Hi-BEAR-Nation Debate Tournament on March 13-15, 2026, for a weekend of IPDA Debate. You will find the pertinent information included below. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me.



Go Bears!

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Tournament Ethics Statement: The behavior of all attending debate and forensics tournaments at the University of Central Arkansas will be in keeping with the [NCA Policy on Anti-Harassment Code of Conduct](#). We expect that behavior between all participants, coaches, judges, and observers be respectful and appropriate at all times. If any participant has concerns over propriety or good sportsmanship, they should discuss the matter with their coaching staff. Any coach or judge should address any concerns with the Tournament Director. As a condition of entry, all participants, coaches, judges, and guests agree that any decision issued by the Tournament Director is final.

Tournament Headquarters: The tournament will be headquartered in the College of Business Building. There should be sufficient parking near the building, but you will be ticketed if you park in any spot marked "Reserved."

The University of Central Arkansas is a non-smoking campus. The prohibition against smoking (including vaping and e-cigarettes) extends to all UCA property, including parking lots.

Hotel Information: There is no tournament hotel, but Conway has plenty of options, most of which are just off I-40 and near plenty of restaurants and shopping options. Contact us if you want recommendations.

Registration and Fees: Register at <https://forensictournament.net/HiBEARNation/26>. Teams should register by Tuesday, March 10 at 8:00 p.m. Changes will be accepted until Thursday, March 12 at noon. After that point, only drops will be allowed.

Fees are as follows:

- Covered Individual IPDA: \$30.00
- Covered Team IPDA: \$50.00
- Uncovered entries: Covered fee + \$20.00
- Judge drops (without replacement) after drop deadline: \$20.00 plus uncovered entry fees

One judge covers four individual entries and/or two teams. As is standard practice at IPDA tournaments in this region, judges are obligated until one round after a team's last debater has been eliminated. Eliminated competitors may be used as out round judges, but they will not be asked to judge in the same division in which they competed.

Please make checks out to the UCA Foundation and put “UCA Debate and Forensics” in the memo line.

Tournament Notes:

All rules guiding IPDA debate, including division eligibility and times, will apply to this tournament. These rules can be found at ipdadebate.info. Per our tradition, preliminary rounds will be themed (e.g., domestic policy, economy and finance, pop culture, etc.). Out rounds will not be themed.

We will be using electronic ballots for this tournament. When registering judges, be sure that they have a valid email address and that their ballot preference is set to “email” to ensure proper delivery of ballots. As a reminder, IPDA’s prohibition against using technology in round extends to judges and that devices should only be used by judges to access their ballot.

To keep the tournament on time, we ask that everything (courtesies, roadmaps, etc.) be “on the clock.” Judges should penalize competitors who violate this rule.

For Team IPDA, cross-examination is to be closed. There should be no swapping of speaker positions in rebuttal. (The speaker who gives the first constructive should be the one who gives the first rebuttal.)

Last year, we tried something different with side selection during out rounds. Rather than follow the traditional IPDA rule where out round competitors flip for sides, we had FTN assign sides. Our justifications were as follows:

- One competitor is given the advantage of side selection based on a coin flip. It seems unusual to give a debater such an option based on randomness.
- The coin-flip process creates a small delay in running the tournament, as time must be given to do the procedure.
- Assigning sides reduces the chances of judges filling out the ballot incorrectly by ensuring that their ballot reflect which competitor(s) debated which side of the resolution.

Despite our justification for this change, it was (at least anecdotally) met with mixed results. We still stand behind this change and believe that it works for the community. That being said, the week before the tournament, we will ask all registered teams to vote on the side-selection practice for out rounds, and the protocol to be used for the tournament will be announced before the start of team elimination rounds on Friday.

Awards and Tiebreaking Procedures:

To determine out round seeding and speaker points:

- In Team IPDA, we will look to total speaker points, then high/low adjusted speaker points.
- In IPDA, will look to high/low adjusted speaker points, then total speaker points.

If tiebreakers are needed beyond this, we will go to whatever the FTN default is.

Awards will be given to all out round participants, the top five speakers in each division, and the top three programs in Team IPDA, IPDA, and overall. Sweepstakes will be calculated as follows:

- Team IPDA: 6 points per prelim round win, 6 points for breaking (two teams max)
- IPDA: 3 points per prelim round win, 3 points for breaking (three individuals per division max)
- Top five speakers in each division: 6 pts for 1st, 5 pts. For 2nd, etc.

We will also present our “Big Bear” award to the program with the highest preliminary round winning percentage across all divisions of debate, regardless of team size (three entries minimum).

Tentative Schedule (times indicate the start of draw):

Friday:

12:30 – Registration
1:00 – Team Round 1
2:30 – Team Round 2
4:00 – Team Round 3
5:30 – Team Round 4

7:15 – Team Quarterfinals

Saturday:

8:00 – Team Semifinals
9:30 – Team Finals
11:00 – IPDA Round 1
12:40 – IPDA Round 2
2:10 – Lunch Break
2:40 – IPDA Round 3
4:20 – IPDA Round 4
6:00 – IPDA Round 5
7:40 – IPDA Round 6

Sunday:

8:00 – Final Ballot Check
8:30 – IPDA Elim Rd. 1
10:00 – Awards
Remaining Elim Rds. ASAP