

Northern California Forensics Association Spring Championship Tournament 2026

February 20-22 at - University of the Pacific

Friends and Colleagues,

On behalf of the Northern California Forensics Association and our executive board, I am pleased to invite you to our 2026 Spring Championship Tournament.

University of the Pacific (UOP) has graciously offered to host this year's tournament. Lunch will be provided all three days, covered by per-day fees. Please advise of any food allergies by the registration deadline so we can accommodate. The splash page on Forensicstournament.net will be used for future announcements regarding food, lodging, parking, and campus information that will help make your weekend run smoothly.

The governing body of NCFA sanctions NCFA Champs. The tournament shall be governed by the Constitution and By-Laws of NCFA unless otherwise specified in this invite. We also encourage everyone to read the NCFA constitution, which outlines the events and tournament rules.

The Spring Championship Tournament will be a full-service tournament, including:

- 12 Individual Events categories
- NFA Lincoln-Douglas Debate (NFA-LD)
- Parliamentary Debate and (NPDA)
- International Public Debate (IPDA)

We will have a novice and open division in all individual events, and a novice, junior, and open division will be offered for all forms of debate. This year, we will use Forensic Tournament (forensicstournament.net) for all entries. All coaches, competitors, and judges should create a profile on forensicstournament.net before the start of the tournament. We will email detailed instructions on how to do this if you are unfamiliar.

Registration will be available no less than two weeks before the tournament's start date. **All entries are due by 6:00 PM on Wednesday, February 18th, 2026.** Drops and name changes may be made up until 10:00 PM, February 19th, 2025. Any additional changes should be emailed to the tournament director. You must use the web entry system on forensicstournament.net to enter competitors AND judges. **ALL PERSONS WHO ARE OR MAY JUDGE NFA-LD, NPDA, AND/OR IPDA MUST SUBMIT A JUDGING PARADIGM!** [2026 NCFA Spring Champs Schedule](#)

Please email Shannan Troxel-Andreas at troxelsh@butte.edu if you have any questions.

Dr. Shannan Troxel-Andreas
Tournament Director

ENTRY DETAILS

Eligibility

Student Eligibility

- Students must be **currently enrolled** in a class at the college they are representing.
- No student may compete in the Spring Championship tournament for more than a total of **five years** or for more than **three years** in any 2-year program.
- Any student may enter the Open division, **regardless of experience**.
- If a student does not meet the eligibility requirements but has a **compelling justification**, a coach or representative from their institution may petition the executive council and tournament staff for consideration to participate.

Division Eligibility

Open Division

- Students with *four semesters* of collegiate experience in an event type **must** enter the Open division.

Junior Division

- Students with *less than four semesters* of collegiate experience in an event type **may** enter the Junior division.
- Junior eligibility is lost if a student places **first, second, or third** in the Junior and/or Open division at **three different tournaments**.
- If a student has reached the final rounds of the Junior and/or Open division of debate at **three tournaments**, they must move to the Open division.

Novice Division

The Novice Division is open only to students meeting the NCFA Eligibility Requirements (note: NCFA Novice Eligibility is stricter than national organization rules and will be followed).

- **High School Experience:**
 - Students who have competed in high school debate or individual events for **two semesters** must compete in the Junior division.
- **College Individual Events Experience:**
 - A novice competitor must advance to the Junior (or Open) division if they place **first, second, or third** in an event or similar event type (e.g., interpretation, limited preparation, group events, or platform speeches) **twice**.
 - Participation in the Novice Division at Spring Fling will **not** affect a student's eligibility.
- **Debate Specific:** Students are **not eligible** to compete in Novice Debate Events if they meet any of the following criteria:

- **Advanced Placement:**
 - Advanced beyond the **first elimination round** at **two tournaments** in any single debate format.
- **Final Round Participation:**
 - Competed in the **final round** at **three tournaments** in any debate format (e.g., parliamentary, policy, or Lincoln-Douglas).
- **High School Experience:**
 - Competed in a **high school debate event** for at least **one year** in the **varsity/open division**.
- **College Debate Experience:**
 - Students who have advanced beyond the first elimination round at **two tournaments** or competed in the final round at **three tournaments** (in any debate format, including team or Lincoln-Douglas) must enter a higher division

Entry Restrictions

1. Individual Events (I.E.)

- Students may enter a maximum of **three events** in each I.E. pattern. If a student is entered in more, it is at the tournament's discretion to drop them from additional events to take their total back down to three.

2. Debate Events

- Students may enter **NFA-LD, NPDA, and IPDA** without restrictions on other debate events. Students entered in NPDA may not compete in I.E. events on that same day, and students entered in IPDA may not compete in I.E. events on that same day.

3. Important:

- **Students are responsible for arriving and signing in** to their I.E. rounds.
- **Failure to sign in or arrive on time** may result in forfeiting the opportunity to perform in that round. For example, if you are double-entered, you should sign in and indicate that you are double or triple-entered so the judges know that you are present and how to prioritize competitors.

4. IPDA and NFA-LD Coverage Rules

- **We reserve the right to limit your entries based on the judges you provide. As a rule, we cannot allow teams to have MORE than TWO uncovered entries; however if the judge or pool diversity is limited, we will be forced to ask schools to drop uncovered entries.**
- Please refer to the **Covered/Uncovered** section on **pages 11 and 12** for more detailed information.

Note:

If you encounter any difficulties registering on **forensicstournament.net**, contact the tournament director and **CC the executive board members** for the fastest response.

Competition Events and Rules

Individual Events

We will offer the following categories:

- Interpretation: Prose, Poetry, Program Oral Interpretation, Dramatic Interpretation.
- Group Events: Dramatic Duo, Readers Theatre.
- Platform Speeches: Informative, Persuasive, After Dinner Speaking (ADS), and Communication Analysis (CA).
- Limited Preparation: Impromptu and Extemporaneous.

Collapsing Divisions

- Efforts will be made to protect novice competitors.
- If fewer than five entries exist in a division, the event may collapse.
- In such cases, the top non-advancing novices will be recognized at the awards ceremony.

Forfeiture Rule

- Competitors must adhere to the tournament schedule.
- Individual events competitors must arrive at their rounds within 45 minutes of the scheduled start time.
- Competitors not in the room and ready to perform within this time will risk forfeiture.

Criteria for Elimination Rounds

- Events with fewer than seven entries will not have a final round.
- Events with 34 or more entries should have a semi-final round, if possible.
- No more than half of the field will advance to finals.
- Advancement will be determined in the following order:
 1. Lowest cumulative rankings.
 2. Highest reciprocal score (decimal conversion).
 3. Highest cumulative ratings.

Placement/Advancement in Elimination Rounds

- Rank ordering will be based on the following:
 1. Lowest cumulative rankings.
 2. Judge's preference.
 3. Highest cumulative ratings.
 4. Highest reciprocal score (decimal conversion).

Readers Theater Showcase

- In order to build interest in the RT event and support the schools that plan to compete in it later on, we plan to offer RT as a showcase event happening outside of regular IE patterns. There will be one adjudicated round, Saturday, following Pattern A Finals. Each panel will consist of up to 2 RT entries. This will count towards sweepstakes points only if 2 or more schools are entered.

Event Patterns

- Pattern A: Impromptu, CA, Info, DI, Duo, POI
- Pattern B: Extemp, ADS, Persuasion, Poetry, Prose

Debate Events

Use of Laptops and Internet-Connectable Devices

NFA-LD

- Laptops are allowed to read evidence and flow during rounds.

NPDA

- Laptops are allowed for flowing, preparation, and partner communication.
- Competitors may only use information typed or written during the prep round by themselves or their partner(s).

IPDA

- Laptops can be used during preparation but **not** during rounds.

Guidelines and Rules for Divisions and Rounds

Collapsing Divisions

- Three divisions will be offered: Novice, Junior, and Open.
- If there are **fewer than 18 entries** in a division of debate, the lower division may be collapsed into the higher division.

Preliminary Rounds

- **Rounds:** There will be three preliminary rounds of IDPA and four preliminary rounds of NFA-LD and NPDA
- **Preset and Power-Matching:**
 - Rounds 1 & 2 will be preset.
 - Subsequent rounds will be **power-matched** (high-low) within brackets.
 - Efforts will be made to minimize **pull-ups**, but matches may be lagged if time constraints arise.
 - Priority will be given to matching students in contention to break against one another when making pull-up decisions.

Criteria for Elimination Rounds

- **Advancing Teams**
 - The tournament will attempt to advance **half the field**, schedule permitting.
 - If advancing all winning records results in less than 50% of the field advancing, additional teams will be pulled up to meet the 50% threshold.
 - **No teams with a losing record** will advance.
 - Full elimination rounds will be held for all Open debate events. If judges and time allow, full elimination rounds will also be provided for Junior and Novice events.

Advancement to Elimination Rounds

- **Field Limit:** No more than **half of the field** will advance to elimination rounds unless special circumstance warrants it.
- **Breaking Brackets:** The tournament will break brackets in line with national guidelines.
- **Seeding for Elimination Rounds:** Determined by the following sequence:
 1. Number of wins.
 2. Opposition Record
 3. Adjusted Speaker Points in the following order
 - Drop Low (scores 1-3)
 - Total (All scores)
 4. Judge Variance (Z-Score)
- **Speaker Ranks:** Determined by the following sequence:
 1. Total Speaker Points
 2. Drop Low
 3. Drop High/Low
 4. Judge Variance (Z-Score)

Judge Disclosure

- NCFA Bylaws require judges to be afforded time to disclose.
- Judges should submit ballots within **1 hour and 15 minutes** of the round's start time.
- Please limit judge disclosure to 5 minutes.
- Judges can submit ballots first and return to leave comments later if needed.

Hybrid & Three-Person Teams (NPDA)

- Each school may enter **one hybrid team** OR **one three-person team** per debate event (in all divisions).
- Schools should enter as many **two-person teams** with partners from the same school as possible, even if it requires novice competitors to move up to the Open division.
- **Hybrid Teams:**
 - Hybrid teams will have any sweepstakes-eligible points divided equally between the two schools.
 - Hybrid teams will be **protected from debating member schools** in out-round brackets, if possible. However, the Tournament Director may require hybrid teams to debate member schools to reduce pull-ups and increase debates.
- **Three-Person Teams:**
 - Allowed to break into elimination rounds.
 - No **one-person teams** are permitted.

NPDA Guidelines

Resolution

- A unique resolution will be presented for each round at a specified time before the debate begins.
- Topics will focus on **current events** or **broader questions of social importance** and will be general enough for a well-educated college student to debate.

Use of Materials

- Any published information, whether electronic or otherwise, may be consulted **prior to the debate**.
- **During the debate**, debaters may only use:

1. Notes they have prepared during the **designated preparation time**.
 2. A copy of the NPDA "**Rules of Debating and Judging**."
- No **published materials, prepared arguments, or external resources** may be brought into the debating chambers.
 - Students are responsible for their technology in and out of the round. If a round has started, and the technology has failed, it is incumbent on the student competitor to:
 1. Alert the judge and/or tab as necessary in a timely manner,
 2. Work to resolve the issue as quickly as possible, and
 3. Continue without the technology if the technological issue takes more than 5 minutes to resolve.

Preparation and Transit Time

- For the 2026 NCFA Spring Championship, preparation and transit time will be **25 minutes**.
- Each team is responsible for ensuring they arrive at the debate room on time.
- **Prep time may be adjusted** if logistical needs arise. Any changes will be communicated to participants by the Tournament Director **before the topic announcement**.

Post-Prep Timing and Contact

- At the expiration of preparation time, the judge will begin a timer.
- If a team is not present by the expiration of their first speech's total time, they will forfeit the round and receive zero speaker points.
- If neither team is present 8 minutes after prep time expires, both will be forfeited, with zero speaker points awarded.

Enforcement and Compliance

- **Judges are required to enforce these rules without discretion.**
- Refusal to comply will result in removal from the judging pool, an uncovered judge fee charged to the team the judge represents, and potential penalties determined by the Tournament Director.
- Affected teams should immediately report non-compliant judges to the tab room.
- The Tournament Director reserves the right to overturn a judge's decision if they fail to enforce these rules.

Judges' Responsibilities

- Judges must adhere to the prep clock, ensuring they are prepared and present at the designated start time of the round.
- Judges who are late may face penalties equivalent to those imposed for missing a round.
- Debaters may report late judges to the tab room.

Bathroom Breaks

- Judges may allow teams arriving before the expiration of prep time to use the restroom or fill water

bottles as needed.

- This discretion must not cause egregious delays or disruptions to the tournament.
- Students should prepare for the round (e.g., using the restroom) before prep time begins.

Speaking Times

First Proposition Constructive: 7 Min

Opposition Flex Time: 2 Min

First Opposition Constructive: 8 Min

Proposition Flex Time: 2 Min

Second Proposition Constructive: 8 Min

Opposition Flex Time: 1 Min

Second Opposition Constructive: 8 Min

Opposition Rebuttal by First Speaker: 4 Min

Proposition Flex Time: 1 Min

Proposition Rebuttal by First Speaker: 5 Min

- ***Flex Time:*** Flex time may be used by the controlling team to prepare arguments, drink water, set up stands, ask questions of their opponents, etc. Flex time may not be used as additional speech time.

NFA-LD Guidelines

2025-26 Topic

- **Resolved: The United States Federal Government should substantially increase its military presence and/or scientific exploration in the Arctic or Antarctic.**
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Technical Difficulties

- Teams must contact the judge or tournament staff within the first 6 minutes of the 1AC if experiencing technical issues.

Round Forfeiture

- A team not present by the expiration of their first speech's total time will forfeit the round and receive zero speaker points.
- If neither team is present 8 minutes after prep time expires, both teams will forfeit, with zero speaker points awarded.

Judges' Responsibilities

- **Judges must enforce these rules without discretion.**
- Refusal to enforce the rules will result in:
 - Removal from the judging pool.
 - An uncovered judge fee is charged to the team the judge represents.
 - The Tournament Director determines additional penalties.

Reporting Non-Compliance

- Teams should report non-compliant judges immediately to the tab room.
- The Tournament Director has the authority to overturn a judge's decision if they fail to enforce these rules.

Late Judges

- Judges arriving late may face penalties equivalent to missing a round.
- Debaters may report late judges to the tab room.

Bathroom Breaks

- Judges may allow teams to take restroom or water breaks as needed.
- Such breaks must not cause egregious delays or disruptions to the tournament.
- Students are encouraged to prepare for the round (e.g., using the restroom) before prep time begins.

NFA-LD Times

1AC	CX	1NC	CX	1AR	1NR	2AR
6min	3min	7min	3min	6min	6min	3min

IPDA Guidelines

Topic Selection

- At the start of each round, students will be provided with five topics.
- The opposition speaker will begin the topic-striking process, with students rotating until one topic remains.

Preparation and Start Time

- IPDA preparation will begin at the posted scheduled start time or upon the announcement of the draw.
- Once prep time concludes, debaters must begin their debate immediately.

Post-Prep Timing and Contact

- At the end of preparation time, the judge will start a timer.
- **Technical Difficulties:**
 - Teams must contact the judge or tournament within the first 6 minutes of the 1AC if technical issues occur.

Forfeiture Rules

- If a team is not present by the expiration of their first speech's total time, they will forfeit the round and receive zero speaker points.
- If neither team is present 8 minutes after prep time expires, both teams will forfeit, with zero speaker

points awarded.

Enforcement and Compliance

- Judges must enforce these rules without discretion.
- Refusal to comply will result in:
 - Removal from the judging pool.
 - An uncovered judge fee charged to the team the judge represents.
 - Additional penalties as determined by the Tournament Director.
- Reporting Non-Compliance:
 - Teams should report non-compliant judges to the tab room immediately.
 - The Tournament Director reserves the right to overturn a judge's decision if these rules are not upheld.
- Late Judges:
 - Judges who arrive late may face penalties equivalent to those imposed for missing a round.
 - Debaters may report late judges to the tab room.

Bathroom Breaks

- Judges may permit restroom or water breaks for teams arriving before the expiration of prep time.
- Such breaks must not cause significant delays or disrupt the tournament schedule.
- Students are encouraged to prepare for the round (e.g., using the restroom) before prep time begins.

IPDA Debate Times

1 AC	CX	1NC	CX	1AR	1NR	1AS
5min	2min	6min	2min	3min	5min	3min

JUDGING

Judge Pool Management and Requirements

Judge Info & Conflict Reporting

- **Coverage-**
 - 1 Judge will cover 6 entries PER PATTERN (but may not cover debate on same day)
 - 1 judge will cover 2 entries in IPDA (but may not cover speech on same day)
 - 1 judge will cover 2 entries in NPDA (but may not cover speech on same day)
 - 1 judge will cover 2 entries in NFA/LD
 - Special circumstances for schools covering debate and IE please contact the tournament director at least 2 weeks in advance.
- **Accurate Judge Information:** to minimize expenses associated with hired judging, it is essential to provide accurate and complete judge information.
- When entering judges online, please indicate:
 - **Availability:** If a judge will be unavailable at any time.
 - **Eligibility:** If a judge is ineligible to judge Open Division rounds (note the tournament may still use any judge in an open round unless it hurts their eligibility).
 - **Conflicts:** Any prior associations that prevent a judge from hearing competitors from specific schools.
- Judges may also submit conflict information directly to the Tournament Director via the email provided above.

Debate Judging Philosophies

- **Submission Deadline:** All judging philosophies **SHOULD** be uploaded **by the registration deadline for the tournament**. However, the official deadline is before round 1 of the debate event you are covering.
- **Failure to Submit:**
 - Judges who do not meet the deadline will be **ineligible to judge Open Division rounds** until the philosophy is submitted.
 - The team the judge represents may incur a **prorated uncovered judge fee** for Open rounds missed due to the lack of a judging philosophy.
 - Late submissions will not guarantee round assignments or coverage.
- Even judges who are new or only judging IPDA should provide two to three sentences about who they are and their background as an individual.
 - E.G.- Janice Schmidt- I am the legal law librarian for Stanislaus County. I worked as a paralegal for 25 years before transitioning into my role as a librarian. My two great joys are my grandchildren and my dog Sadie.
- All judges entered in an event may be assigned to judge **any level**, as needed by the tournament. However, the Tab staff will make every effort to accommodate requests when possible.

Electronic Ballots

- The tournament will use **electronic ballots** for all events.
- Judges must have:
 1. A **linked forensicstournament.net account**.
 2. A device with access to forensicstournament.net.

Covered/Uncovered Judges

- **Covered Judges**
 - A **covered judge** is a judge provided by a school to meet its judging obligation for its entries in a tournament. These judges fulfill the requirements proportional to the number of competitors or entries a school has in individual events (IEs) or debate formats.
 - A **school is "covered"** when it supplies enough qualified judges to meet its judging commitment.
 - **Covered judges** are available for the rounds they are assigned, including preliminary and elimination rounds, as required by the tournament.
 - By providing covered judges, a school avoids additional uncovered judging fees.
- **Uncovered Judges**
 - **Uncovered Judge Policy:** an uncovered judge refers to a judging obligation that a school has failed to meet due to one or more of the following reasons:
 - **Insufficient Judges:** The school did not provide enough judges to fulfill the required entries.
 - **Unqualified Judges:** Judges provided by the school are ineligible or lack the necessary qualifications to judge assigned events.
 - **Unavailable Judges:** Judges are unable to fulfill their duties due to:
 - Absence during scheduled rounds.
 - Excessive conflicts with competitors.
 - Failure to adhere to the tournament schedule.
- **Important New Judge Coverage Policy: To help minimize conflicts in judge assignments:**
 - Judges who have coached two students currently attending two different programs may judge those students in a debate round **if both coaches agree**.

Judge Assistance and Fee Reduction Requests

- Programs experiencing difficulty securing judges should **notify the tournament** as soon as possible by emailing the Tournament Director and the **NCFA Executive Committee by February 6, 2026**.
 - Assistance in **finding judges** may be provided.
 - **Judge-related fees may be reduced** on a case-by-case basis.
 - All requests will be reviewed by the **NCFA Executive Committee**, which will make final decisions regarding judge accommodations.

Competent Judge Standards

- Each participating college must either **fulfill** the judging requirement or **pay the required judging fee**. Only **competent judges** may fulfill the obligation. Competent judges include:
 - **College Forensics Coaches** (current or former).
 - **College instructors** of Speech Communication or allied disciplines.
 - **High School Forensics Coaches** (current or former) or high school teachers of speech or related fields.
 - **College graduates** with **two or more years** of college forensics competition experience.
 - **Current students** who:
 1. Have **retired from competition** and **exhausted their eligibility**.
 2. Are at least **two years removed** from **Novice competition**.
 3. Had a **distinguished record in Open Division** in the event type they are judging.
 4. Such students **may judge Novice Division** in their first tournament and Open Division thereafter.

Final Judge Expectations and Tournament Support

- Bring judges and be open to judging past your commitment if needed.
- If you are **qualified to judge Debate**, please **submit a judging philosophy**, even if you do not intend to judge, in case the tournament requires additional judges.
- If you are in the **Debate pool** but can judge **Individual Events**, consider taking an IE ballot **if we are short**.
- The Tournament Staff will do their best to provide downtime, but we need your support to ensure a successful event for our students.

FEES

Uncovered Judging Commitment

Uncovered NPDA = \$100 X #of Uncovered

Uncovered IE = \$30 X #of Uncovered

Fee Calculation Details

FEE	Cost Per	Number	Total
NCFA Dues	\$50		
NPDA Team	\$80		
Per Person Fee (Fri)	\$10		
Per Person Fee (Sat)	\$10		
Per Person Fee (Sun)	\$10		
LD Entry	\$30		
IPDA Entry	\$30		
IE Entry	\$12		
Duo Entry	\$12		
Uncovered NPDA Entry	\$100		
Uncovered IE (per slot)	\$30		
School Fee	\$75		
Total			

Checks should be made payable to the Northern California Forensics Association.

AWARDS

Student Fellowship Award: NCFA will recognize, based on the votes of peers, the students who embody the finest qualities of intercollegiate forensics. Ballots will be distributed to coaches at registration and should be deposited in the ballot box near postings by no later than Sunday at Lunch.

NPDA District Student Representative: Since NCFA schools and students comprise a majority of District 1, and since not all of these schools and students can attend NPDA, NCFA has decided that students should vote for their district representative at NCFA Spring Champs. Please alert all your students who compete in NPDA debate that we will be holding an assembly for them to run for office and vote for their district representative. The election will occur during the lunch period on Saturday.

Interstate Oratory Representative: The student from a Northern California school (determined to be a current or former dues-paying member of NCFA), who places highest in the open division of Persuasive Speaking will be designated the Northern California representative to the Interstate Oratory Contest. If that student cannot go, the next highest-placing student from a Northern California school will be designated the representative. The designation will be passed down until a student is found who will attend the contest. NCFA will partially fund the representative's trip.

Sweepstakes: All sweepstakes categories will be based on the number of entries at the entry deadline, not on the day of competition. Sweepstakes awards will be given to the top three schools in each of the following divisions:

1. Open University Division
2. Limited Entry University Division (Seven or fewer contestants from a school)
3. Open Community College Division
4. Limited Entry Community College Division (Seven or fewer contestants from a school)

Calculation for Sweepstakes:

Individual Events Points

- 10 points for each first place
- 7.5 points for each second-place
- 5 points for each third-place
- 2.5 points for each finalist
- 1 point for each semi-finalist

NFA-LD points

- 10 points for first place
- 7.5 points for second-place
- 5 points for semi-finalist
- 2.5 points for quarter and octo-finalists

NPDA, Reader's Theatre, Policy Debate Points

- 20 points for first place
- 15 points for second place
- 10 points for semi-finalist
- 5 points for quarter-finalists
- 2.5 points for octo-finalist

IPDA Points (split proportionally)

- 15 points for Gold
- 12 points for Silver
- 9 points for Bronze

*Note on IPDA points: Since IPDA will be broken to festival finals, there may be more gold medals awarded than there are first places for any number of events. This could tip the sweepstakes calculations in a way we might not expect, depending on the size of the entry. To reflect this, the points assigned will not be equal to those of other Individual/Single Competitor debate events.

[2026 NCFA Spring Champs Schedule](#)