

## IPDA National Championships and Convention, April 10-13, 2026



The International Public Debate Association is pleased to announce our annual Individual IPDA National Championships and Convention will be held Friday through Monday, April 10-13 on the campus of Middle Tennessee State University in Murfreesboro, TN. We are setting up a face-to-face tournament/convention. The IPDA will also need a **Student Enrollment verification form** from each competing school. The form is available on the IPDA webpage (listed with our April tournament) and on the FTN website for registration. This will apply to all divisions except Professional. The form should be signed by your Registrar and sent to Joe Ganakos; jganakos@lee.edu.

Pat Richey and the fine folks at MTSU are working hard to make this a memorable event. The National Championship tournament will start off with Team IPDA competitions on Friday, April 10. We are planning for 5 rounds of TIPDA. Our Convention events and individual IPDA competitions will begin on Saturday, April 11. The national tournament will feature 8 rounds of IPDA Individual debate in our 4 divisions: Novice, Junior Varsity, Varsity, and Professional.

Out rounds will start on Sunday afternoon, April 12 and IPDA is planning to provide lunch that day. Then we will have the last out rounds and our Awards Ceremony on Monday, April 13.

A few reminders are necessary as we welcome those from other debate formats: 1) IPDA does not allow the use of **any device** that has a connection to the Internet while *in* any competitive rounds. This includes but is not limited to timers, smartwatches, iPads, smart phones, smart glasses, or laptops. This applies to competitors, judges and audience members. The only exception to this is for a documented ADA competitor. The tab room is going to be **quite adamant** about enforcing this IPDA rule. 2) Prep help is allowed from coaches and teammates. Intersquad prep between programs is encouraged and builds collegiality. 3) While prep help is allowed, no assistance is allowed in draw/strike.

Please remember that our National Convention is an excellent opportunity for students and directors, alike, to feature debate-specific academic work in an educational and professional environment. Please encourage your students to attend the presentations or panels that will be scheduled on Saturday; right after tournament registration. We hope this will encourage everyone to attend these enlightening convention events. If you are interested in presenting a paper or research at our convention, please contact IPDA Managing Director, Sheila Ritchie, via email; listed in the signature below. Please join us in Murfreesboro, TN for an educational and exciting weekend!

Sincerely,  
Sheila Ritchie (Abilene Christian University) 325-674-2387  
sheila.ritchie@acu.edu  
IPDA Managing Director

### **TOURNAMENT INFORMATION**

**ENTRY PROCEDURE AND DEADLINE:** **Entry deadline is 5:00 PM, Friday, March 27, 2026.** Each school will enter this IPDA tournament via the **Forensics Tournament (FTN) website at <https://forensicstournament.net>**. Entries and fees owed will be visible in the ForensicsTournament.net program. Changes will be allowed through Thursday, April 2, 2026. After that only entry drops will be allowed. Entry drops made after 5:00 PM, Monday, April 6, 2026 will be assessed a \$20 drop fee per individual change. **PLEASE NOTE:** The Executive Committee of IPDA reserves the right to review and make changes to the names used to identify individuals or independent programs during the National Championship.

**TOURNAMENT RULES AND ETHICS STATEMENT:** The tournament will follow IPDA guidelines and regulations as outlined in the Constitution and Bylaws which are available on the IPDAdebate.info website. There is an IPDA Ethics Statement on the FTN website that all competitors, judges, coaches and visitors are expected to read and adhere to for the entire tournament.

**PAYMENT OF FEES:** Although checks and cash are preferred, IPDA will accept a credit card for the payment of dues and fees for the National Convention and Tournament. Credit card payments will be processed after registration. Please print out the Fee Sheet from the FTN website before registration at the physical tournament. The Tournament Director will take your information and set up a time for our IPDA President, Keith Milstead, to process your payment after registration.

## **JUDGES - REQUIREMENTS FOR NATIONALS:**

You will notice on the entry form there is no price for uncovered entries. **This is not an option!** We require that each program cover its entries to ensure a diverse and unbiased judging pool. One judge will cover up to four individual debaters and/or two teams. Programs are mandated to meet this requirement: so, for every four debaters or two teams you enter, you **MUST** bring a judge!

**All judges are obligated to ALL rounds; including ALL out-rounds.** The tab room will try to release schools as soon as possible during the out-rounds of the tournament, but this is not guaranteed.

### **Judging for the National Championship Tournament**

1. All judges are expected to deliberate independently. Each ballot should be decided by the assigned judge with no discussion or outside influences. Judges and contestants are required to abide by this judging caveat.
2. To maintain consistency and fairness for the National Championships Tournament, participating programs will be expected to provide the same judges throughout the duration of the tournament. The name of each judge should be submitted at the time of the team's entry. Judges unable to continue their duties for ANY reason during the tournament must be immediately replaced: even if this means removing a competitor from the tournament and placing them in the judging pool for the remainder of the tournament. Rounds **must** be judged by the person named at the top of the ballot – NO "BALLOT SWAPPING" IS ALLOWED.

### **Procedures for judging assignments and ballot distribution:**

Judges' ballots for each program are going to be placed into a folder or packet designated for that program (e.g. ACU will get a folder with all the ballots assigned to the ACU judges for that round).

1. EACH program will be asked to submit the name of the person who will be responsible for picking up these ballot folders. EACH program must pick up their ballot packets no later than fifteen minutes prior to the start of each round to allow their judges enough time to start each round on time.
2. A "Three-Strike" penalty system will be used for failure to comply with these procedures.
  - a. A strike will be:
    - i. Failure of a judge to start the round within five minutes after that round's prep time **has expired.**
    - ii. Failure of a program to notify the tab room of a name change on the designated ballot. IF a program encounters a problem, the tab room **MUST** approve any judging changes.
  - b. Any delay stemming from tab room procedures will NOT be considered a strike.
3. PENALTIES:
  - a. 1<sup>st</sup> strike-a warning will be issued to the program's director. It is assumed that this will correct any problems with a program's judges.
  - b. 2<sup>nd</sup> strike – a competitor for that program may be shifted from competition to the judging pool.
  - c. 3<sup>rd</sup> strike – the program may be disqualified from the tournament.

## **HOTELS:**

There are a variety of hotels in the Murfreesboro area. Please choose the space that best works for your program and your budget. No hotel blocks are negotiated. Or **Contact Pat Richey at [Patrick.richey@mtsu.edu](mailto:Patrick.richey@mtsu.edu)** if you have questions about a specific establishment

**ETHICS Statement for the IPDA National Convention and Tournaments:** This document is available on the FTN website: <https://forensicstournament.net/IPDANationals/26>

## 2025 NATIONAL IPDA TOURNAMENT and CONVENTION SCHEDULE

Please note that ADA accommodation should be requested no later than Monday, March 30, 2026.

### FRIDAY, April 10 – TIPDA competition

8:00 am	<b>Team Debate Registration –</b>
8:30 am	TIPDA Round 1 -Draw
10:00 am	TIPDA Round 2 -Draw
11:30 am	TIPDA Round 3 -Draw
1:30 pm	TIPDA Round 4 -Draw
3:00 pm	TIPDA Round 5- Draw
4:30 pm	Coaches Review
5:00 pm	<b>Breaks posted</b>
<b>ASAP</b>	TIPDA Double Octofinals
7:00 pm	TIPDA Octofinals
8:30 pm	TIPDA Quarterfinals

### SATURDAY, April 11 – Convention and IPDA competition

8:00 am	TIPDA Semifinal Round – Draw
8:30 am	Joint meeting of Governing Board and EC– Rooms TBA on the MTSU campus
9:30 am	TIPDA Final Round - Draw
9-10 am	<b>IPDA Registration</b>
10:00 am	<b>Convention Panels and Presentation of papers –</b> Rooms TBA on the MTSU campus
11:15 am	Round 1 – IPDA Draw will be set by division and will take place in or near the main prep areas
1:00 pm	Round 2 - draw
2:45 pm	Round 3 - draw
4:30 pm	Round 4 – draw
6:15 pm	Round 5 - draw
8:30 pm	Season-Long Awards

### SUNDAY, April 12

9:00 am	Round 6 – Draw
10:45 am	Round 7 – Draw
12:30 am	Round 8 - Draw– we will try to have packets ready for early review for the Coach’s Review
2:00 pm	<b>Lunch Break – Food provided by IPDA – probably pizza (gluten free options may not be available)</b>
2:45 pm	<b>Coaches Review –</b> Please be mindful of the 30-minute window for Coaches Review. Once this window closes, no corrections or challenges will be accepted.
3:15 pm	<b>Breaks posted</b>
3:30 pm	First Elimination Round - draw
5:15 pm	Second Elimination Round - draw
7:00 pm	Third Elimination Round or “Partials” - if needed

\* Times may vary depending on the need for additional out rounds - ALL participants need to hasten the out round process!

**Partial rounds –** IPDA partials will be determined based on need if winning records are not advancing. TIPDA partials will be determined based on the number of entries. If the number is more than halfway to the next break, we will consider partials, if the schedule allows. However, winning records are not guaranteed to advance in TIPDA due to the odd number of rounds.

### MONDAY, April 13 – All out rounds will be held on MTSU Campus

8:30 am	Quarterfinals for all divisions - draw
10:00 am	Semi Finals for all divisions - draw
11:30 am	Finals for all divisions - draw
1:15 pm	IPDA Awards Ceremony

**ENTRIES – Due by Friday, March 27, at 5 pm CST. PLEASE REGISTER at <http://forensicstournament.net>**

**We prefer that you bring a check to the tournament for the Fees payment, but credit card payments will be accepted.**

Please make checks payable to: **International Public Debate Association**

Payments (check or cash) will be accepted at the Tournament Registration on April 10 (TIPDA) or April 11 (IPDA).

Credit Cards will be accepted, but are not preferred: Instructions at the bottom of Page 2 of this invitation.

If your school accounting office needs an address for the check contact: [sheila.ritchie@acu.edu](mailto:sheila.ritchie@acu.edu)

**ENROLLMENT VERIFICATION is required:**

Enrollment verification is required for all competitors entering an undergraduate division (Novice, Junior Varsity, Varsity, Team). These forms are available on the IPDA website and the tournament page on FTN. Please have your campus registrar complete these forms and remit them (as PDF attachments) to [jganakos@lee.edu](mailto:jganakos@lee.edu) no later than two weeks prior to on-site registration; the deadline for the 2026 IPDA National Championship Tournament is Friday, March 27, 2026 at 12:00pm CT. Any student who lacks the requisite enrollment verification may enter the Professional Division. If you have any questions regarding this process, please reach out to Joe Ganakos at [jganakos@lee.edu](mailto:jganakos@lee.edu).

**Entries and fees will be finalized in the FTN registration process.**

**FEES:**

\*\* Tournament Fee, Convention Fee and Annual IPDA dues will appear as a “School Fee” in the FTN registration = \$90.

\*\*If you need a separate invoice for the IPDA dues – please contact Sheila Ritchie: [sheila.ritchie@acu.edu](mailto:sheila.ritchie@acu.edu)

**Calculate your Fees:**

Program/School Tournament Fee	\$35.00
Program/School Convention Fee	\$20.00
Program/School Annual IPDA Dues	\$35.00

\_\_\_\_\_ TIPDA – team fees @\$70.00 each = \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Individual IPDA @ \$40.00 each = \_\_\_\_\_

Total Fees.....\$\_\_\_\_\_

**AWARDS:**

Tournament trophies will be given to all competitors who break to out-rounds, the top ten speakers in each division, and the top five overall sweepstakes programs. IPDA has a national tournament award for the top sweepstakes community college winner and the Scholastic Champion. The formula for calculating points will be the same as that detailed in the IPDA Constitution and Bylaws.

Season awards, which are based on this debate season’s cumulative points, will also be given to the top ten individuals in each division (the top 5 for TIPDA), the top five speakers in each division, and the top five programs in each division. The Founder’s Award will also be presented to the top five programs earning the most combined points over the course of six regular season tournaments. In addition, awards such as the Bennett Strange Coach of the Year Award, the Scholastic Championship Award, and other association-specific awards will be presented.