

Comrades:

I've gotten some very good questions from one of our new coaches, John Spencer of Newbury Park. I think other new coaches would profit from his questions and my answers. Please take the time to read the attached document, and I apologize in advance for its length. It's mainly for the new coaches, but veterans might want to refresh their memories as well!

John: I wanted to get more information on how my new team of novices can qualify for State. TCFL is only allocated a certain number of slots it looks like, so if our student can make it, it will have to depend on the # of slots our league has?

As we head into the qualifier season, you should familiarize yourself with our per event allocations. These represent the number of kids our league can send to States in each event. You can find them here: <http://trivalleysite.yolasite.com/2010allocations.php>

Now, it's a little misleading to think that the top 4 or 5 or 6 or 8 in each event indicated will actually be the students who represent the league at States. This is because students may only qualify in ONE individual event. Many kids compete in 2 or 3 IEs, plus student congress. If they qualify in more than one IE in addition to congress, they must make a choice on the spot at the IE qualifier BEFORE the awards ceremony. **This is why we ask all students who double or triple or quadruple enter the qualifiers, to know in advance which event(s) they will yield in case they qualify in more than one.**

So, due to the yielding process, often kids who do not rank in the top 4 or 5 or 6 or even 8 end up "qualifying" for states. Last year, we went down to 14th place in one of our events due to numerous yields! It's entirely possible to not break into the qualifying final round and still end up going to states.

By the way, our qualifying tournaments are run very differently from our league tournaments. We run our qualifiers as closely as possible to the state tournament itself. Jerome can send you an old schedule if you like, but basically IEs start on Friday with Round 1A/B. They resume Saturday morning with Round 2 A/B. Then events with 3 or more panels break to semi-finals. Events with 2 or fewer panels go straight to Finals. We always take 7 competitors into a final round. And our qualifiers are all HAND-PANELED on cards. There are often ties, and we use the CHSSA tie-breakers as spelled out in the state constitution. It takes longer b/c we are obsessed with accuracy.

There is an exception to the single entry restriction at States. **Debaters can double qualify in both their debate event and one IE.** They may not however do Congress. **Congress kids at States only do congress**, b/c it runs on its own schedule and conflicts with the other events. **Parli Debaters are restricted from entering Extemp**, however (because both extemp and parli require a prep period, and the tournament falls behind schedule trying to accommodate double-entered extempers).

John: Now that Newbury Park has competed in an open IE tournament, are we eligible to go to state Quals?

As far as your eligibility: you have joined CHSSA so your school is eligible to compete in any of the qualifiers.

John: We assume that our students that have competed in an open tournament can go to

state quals only in the event that they actually competed in?

No. **Students who have competed at either the Open IEs, the Open Debates, or at the October Congress are eligible to compete at any of the qualifiers IN ANY EVENT.** They are not restricted to the events in which they have already competed--the field is wide open. If you have students who have not yet competed at the open level, they have 2 more chances to establish their eligibility: at the January Open Debates on 1/26 and at the February 2nd Open IEs.

John: Does the student have to place in a certain rank or win a trophy/certificate in an open tournament to even be eligible for state quals?

It does not matter if they have won anything or not. The only events in which we restrict entries is in LD and Parli--and perhaps Public Forum if our numbers stay large. Typically, you are restricted to 7 LD entries and 4 Parli teams. Most coaches send their top kids, but that is completely a coach decision.

The only other BIG thing you need to prepare yourself for is the script submission process. All of your prepared events (OO, OA, Expos, OPP, OI, TI, DI, HI, and DUO) must go thru a vetting process. **Scripts must be prepared according to the state manuscript rules which you and your students can find on page 2 of the State Coversheet for each event.** But because the rules are so many and so arcane, I do a comprehensive **Script Tutorial during the Debate Open tournament on January 26. Even if you have no one entered, you should plan to attend. I will bring samples of approved scripts and I will have a set of cover sheets for each coach (but you can download these yourself from the cahssa.org website.**

Bottom line: **Only kids with APPROVED SCRIPTS may enter the qualifiers.** I will figure out the **submission dates timeline** with Jerome and publish that soon. You will have several chances to submit your scripts for committee reads and final approval by me. **And you will have several opportunities to make any needed corrections in order to satisfy the state rules. Our goal is not to disqualify any speaker—rather it is to help you get the script in "legal" shape so your kids can compete.**

Finally, **each script must be submitted with the aforementioned coversheet which requires signatures: yours, the student's, the parent's, and the principal's.** If you have a principal like my current one, he just trusts me and signs off on them. If you have a principal like my old one, you must give him time to read thru them before signing. Plan accordingly! Also, when your student signs the coversheet, they are *guaranteeing* that they will compete at States if they qualify. In other words, no kid can compete just to win a plaque and then say, "Oh, I never planned to go in the first place--I yield my spot." We've had that happen. **The student's signature, and the PARENT'S signature, signifies their serious intent to compete at States if they qualify.** Of course, unforeseen circumstances arise and kids do end up dropping after the qualifiers, but **when they compete, they MUST have every intention (and their parents' permission) to compete at States, April 19-21.**

I hope that clears up a few things--sorry for the length. Keep the questions coming!

Kathy