

## **Overview of State Qualification Tournaments as sponsored and administered by the Tri-County Forensic League (TCFL), Area 3.**

Prepared and submitted by Kathy Graber and Jerome Robinson, Co-Presidents.

### **Practice and Procedure**

It is the intent of the TCFL to run each of our three qualification tournaments according to the State Tournament rules as closely as possible. TCFL communicates to its members via e-mail reminders and our league website, created by and maintained by Co-President Jerome Robinson (<http://trivalleysite.yolasite.com>).

### **Tournament Dates and Locations**

The dates of our state qualifying tournaments are calendared during the summer preceding the academic year; each tournament is hosted by a volunteer member school. All tournament expenses are paid for by the league, and the host schools receive a monetary honorarium.

Ideally, our state qualifying tournaments are held on three successive weekends in the following order: Debate, Congress, IEs. Contingent on the state tournament entry deadline, our state qualifying tournaments begin in late February and conclude by mid-March.

### **Eligibility**

Any paid-up member school (league dues of \$100 are due at the first tournament of the season) who is a verified member in good standing with the parent organization, CHSSA, may enter any or all of the state qualifying tournaments. **Individual students must satisfy their eligibility to enter by competing in at least one Open level Debate or IE tournament or one Student Congress during the competition year. There are 6 opportunities from October to February for students to enter and compete 3 rounds at a league open tournament.** Eligibility is verified by a league co-president upon submission of student name.

### **Entry Restrictions**

We have a long-standing agreement in TCFL: if qualified debaters enter our SQ congress tournament, they are signaling to the league that they PREFER congress to debate. In other words, they are committing themselves to yielding their debate slot if they qualify in congress.

This agreement exists to prevent kids from entering congress merely to rack up points, plaques, or bragging rights. When they do that, they are stealing a possible spot in a break round or a plaque from a student who legitimately WANTS to qualify in congress above all else.

The same rule applies to IE: if congress-qualified students enter our SQ IEs, they are signaling to the league that they prefer IE to Congress, and are pre-committed to yielding their congress slot if they qual in IEs.

Exception: if a qualified debater is hoping to double qual with an IE, and that student's honest preference is the Debate/IE combo over congress, then that student may enter the congress and wait to see what happens with IE. But should that student NOT double qual, then the understanding is that student prefers Congress over his/her single debate entry and will yield the debate entry in order to go in congress.

## **IE Script Submissions**

Coaches have several opportunities to submit their scripts for approval prior to the entry deadline for the State IE Qualifier. A script prep tutorial is offered in January and committee assignments are made. The first due date for scripts generally coincides with our February Open IE tournament. There are several more due dates prior to the IE Qual paneling session. **Students in prepared events who have not successfully submitted an approved script by the state qual paneling session are not permitted to enter.**

Submitted scripts are distributed to committee members. There are generally 3 readers in each committee; typically our committees are: OI/TI, OO/OA/EXPOS/OPP, DI/HI/DUO. Scripts are read during the SQ Debate tournament and the SQ congress, as well as one or two dedicated meetings. Readers use a league checksheet to vet each submission; errors are noted on the checksheet and returned to the submitting coach for corrections. Eventually each script is checked by co-President Kathy Graber, who signs off on the coversheet and retains each script until qualifying scripts are submitted to the Area Chair. Scripts that do not qualify are returned to coaches after the state tournament, generally at our league May/June meeting.

## **Entry Deadlines, Fees and Limits**

The entry deadline for each tournament is generally the Tuesday prior to the tournament date. Entries are submitted electronically and co-President Jerome Robinson creates a master chart and posts it on the league website. Debate entries are seeded by the submitting coach and are subject to limitations, depending on the number of total entries. Typical limits are 7 LD entries and 4 Parli/PF/Policy teams.

State Qual Entry fees are slightly higher due to the greater expense of qualifying plaques and finalist medals and judging stipends; there is also a mandatory \$20 school fee.

Coaches are required to meet judging obligations, typically one judge per every 2 teams, 4 LDs, 6 congress speakers, and 6 IEs. College-age judges must be 2 years out of high school. Every effort is made to secure a “non-biased” judging pool.

## **Round One IE Paneling**

In the case of IE quals, coaches are **required to attend the hand-paneling session on the Wednesday before the tournament. This session is also the last opportunity to submit a corrected script.** Paneling generally starts at 4 PM at a convenient school site. Coaches must appear to fill out a paneling card for each entry. Coaches will record the speaker’s name and title or topic per each event. Coaches are permitted to “protect” two of their speakers in each event by starring their cards in the upper right hand corner. Coaches may use a double star for their top seed and a single star for their next in line. TCFL encourages its coaches to use this system judiciously and to only star those speakers who truly have demonstrated their abilities.

Once every card has been filled out, coaches who have been pre-assigned paneling duties panel the first round in each event, taking great care to “even the power” in each panel. Every effort is made to keep double stars away from each other, to keep speakers from the same school apart, and speakers who have identical or very similar pieces apart. Once each panel is laid out, it is vetted by either one of the league co-presidents. If approved, posting sheets are made and all materials placed in an envelope dedicated to that event.

The starring system becomes moot after the first round and is replaced by actual round 1 results, however the tournament continues to power protect until the final round.

## **Judging Assignments**

For IEs and Congress, we use 2 judges in prelims unless we have enough for 3. Events advancing straight to Finals are assigned 3 judges in Finals. For bigger events and Congress, Semis have 3 judges and Finals have 5. Debate judges are explained in the debate guidelines.

## **Tabbing and Tie-Breakers**

Although TCFL uses tab room software to panel its regular season tournaments, all three state qualifiers are hand-paneled on cards (Impromptu is the exception due to its large entry; for Impromptu we rely on the software). Paneling follows state guidelines per the CHSSA constitution, Article X “I.E. Tabulation” pages 1-4. Results of each round are recorded on cards and then the next round is paneled following CHSSA guidelines. Ties are broken using CHSSA rules (Article X). For semis we place 7 in each panel instead of 6 and use CHSSA tabulation rules for final placement. Students in events with 14 or less advance straight to Finals and students in events with more than 14 competitors advance to Semis and then Finals.

## **Correcting Errors**

If an error in tabbing or paneling is caught before the round goes out, it is repaneled immediately. Once a preliminary round begins, it won't be re-run. If a student is accidentally dropped due to tabbing error, and the breaking rounds have already begun, s/he will be placed in one of the break round panels for that event. We have an open tab room so coaches can view scores and identify tabbing errors before the break rounds begin.

## **Protests**

The Co-Presidents handle all protests. If it is determined that a script, speech, or action by a competitor has deliberately violated a TCFL or CHSSA rule, s/he will be disqualified, depending on severity. If it is uncertain whether a CHSSA rule was violated, a call to the Vice-President of CHSSA will be made to rectify the problem. Should a protest occur concerning tabbing, it will be resolved using CHSSA rules for IEs and Congress, and both TCFL rules and CHSSA rules for debate.

## **Pairing IE/Debate**

IEs are paired according to CHSSA guidelines. The only exception is that Round I is power protected. Debate uses a combination of CHSSA, NSDA, and TCFL rules to pair rounds. The guidelines are as follows:

### **TCFL Debate State Qualifier**

#### *Automatic Qualification:*

If there are not enough entries from other schools to compete for all qualifying spots, a school can automatically qualify for those spots as long as the students taking those spots have competed in at least one Open level TCFL tournament. The coach from the school with several entries will choose the students to fill the vacant spots. Historically, the only debate event affected by Auto Qual is Policy Debate.

#### **Entries:**

Each school is allowed to enter a maximum of 4 teams for Parli, PoFo, and Policy and a maximum of 7 entries in Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

**Judges:**

Each school needs 1 qualified judge for every 2 teams in one event or fraction there of.  
Each school needs 1 qualified judge for every 3 LDs or fraction there of.

**Judging Panel:**

We will use one judge for prelims and begin using 3 judges, depending on our judging pool, when we are within 3 rounds of determining our qualifiers. If the judging pool is small, then we will begin using 3 judges when it is mathematically feasible.

**Paneling:**

1. Schools will rank their entries from 1-4 for team events and 1-7 for LD. This is because we will try to power-protect through the entire tournament. No 1s should be hitting each other during the 1st round.

2. For the 2nd round, each team will take the opposite side and the pairing will be based on speaker points. The Highest Speaker on AFF will get the Lowest Speaker on Neg. If a bye were awarded to a team in the first round, then his/her placement in the 2nd round will be based on his/her school rank, 1 being considered a top speaker and 7 being considered a low speaker.

3. The 3rd round on will be separated into the winner's bracket and loser's bracket with the pairings simulating round 2. **All double losses will be taken out of the pool from this point on.** If the winner's bracket is uneven, the lowest speaker in the loser's bracket that fits will be put into the winner's bracket for that round. If the same thing occurs in the loser's bracket, a bye will be drawn following these guidelines:

- No school can have more than one bye unless all schools in the once-defeated pool already had one.
- Byes are drawn from competitors who lost to a team in the winner's bracket.
- If all candidates for byes are from schools with a previous bye, then the bye will be randomly drawn from all other schools in the once defeated pool with no previous byes.

For every odd numbered round from here on, students will flip for sides to try and ensure side equalization.

4. The undefeated competitor can automatically qualify if the remaining once-defeated competitors can fill the other spots with one more round. If it is determined that more than one round will still be needed, then the undefeateds must keep debating.

**Special Circumstances:**

Because we are power-protecting, if it is known before the paneling of a round that a school will have to debate itself, the coach will be allowed to choose which competitor must leave the pool before the paneling is laid out. Once the paneling is done and a school is debating itself, the coach may then decide which of those two will go on and there will be no repaneling. If for some reason the coach chooses not to decide which one will advance, it will be decided on speaker points. We will not assign judges to a round where 2 teams from the same school are competing against each other. **Although everything will be done to try and make it a true double-elimination tournament, coaches can vote to minimize the pool based on speaker points once the tournament has surpassed 5 rounds regardless of win/loss record.**