PHSSL State Championships 2026
Debate Judge Instructions

Meeting Links
Opening Meeting 8:30am Friday: https://meet.google.com/iad-ixnu-bsu

Full Tournament Schedule: https://www.phssl.org/st-sched/

Public Forum & Lincoln Douglas Debate

Friday March 20
8:30am - Morning Meeting - Haas Auditorium

	Pairings Released (judges ACKNOWLEDGE ballot)	**In Room Time** (all in room)	**Start Time** (round should be underway!)
Round 1	10:00 am	10:20 am	10:30 am
Round 2	11:15 am	11:20 am	11:30 am
Round 3	1:30 pm	1:50 pm	2:00 pm
Lunch			
Round 4	ASAP	3:05 pm	3:15 pm
Round 5	4:30 pm	4:35 pm	4:45 pm
Round 6	6:00 pm	6:05 pm	6:15 pm

Saturday March 21

	Pairings Released (judges ACKNOWLEDGE ballot)	**In Room Time** (all in room)	**Start Time** (round should be underway!)
Octo Finals	8:00 am	8:20 am	8:30 am
Quarter Finals	9:45 am	10:05 am	10:15 am
Semi Finals	11:30 am	11:50 am	12:00 pm
Finals	1:10 pm	1:20 pm	1:30 pm

Policy, Parli & Extemp Debate

Friday March 20
8:30am - Morning Meeting - Haas Auditorium

	Pairings Released (judges ACKNOWLEDGE ballot)	**In Room Time** (all in room)	**Start Time** (round should be underway!)
Round 1	9:00 am	9:20 am	9:30 am
Round 2	11:00 am	11:20 am	11:30 am
Lunch			
Round 3	2:00 pm	2:20 pm	2:30 pm
Round 4	4:15 pm	4:35 pm	4:45 pm

Saturday March 21

	Pairings Released (judges ACKNOWLEDGE ballot)	**In Room Time** (all in room)	**Start Time** (round should be underway!)
Qtr Finals (ExDeb, Parli, & Policy)	8:00 am	8:20 am	8:30 am
Parli & ExDeb Semi	9:45 am	10:05 am	10:15 am
Policy Semi	10:15 am	10:35 am	10:45 am
ExDeb Final	11:30 am	11:50 am	12:00 pm
Parli & Policy Finals	1:10 pm	1:20 pm	1:30 pm

Before the Tournament*:*

- Ensure that you have completed your NSDA Cultural Competency and Debate level 1 & 2 trainings for the event you are judging. See this document for helpful instructions on how to find and complete these trainings.
- Make a judge paradigm if you have not already done so. Here is a helpful guide on writing a paradigm.
- **Hired Judges**: Make sure you've sent your W9 to hstrin2@commonwealthu.edu (this only applies to judges hired by PHSSL for this tournament).
- If you will be a **virtual judge**, check the compatibility of your device with NSDA Campus, the platform we will be using for the tournament.
    - Go to https://campus.speechanddebate.org/ Enter a name for your test room (it doesn't matter what) and click enable room.
    - If possible, have another person also log-on using the same test room name - you'll both be in the same test room. If you can see and hear each other, your device should work on tournament day.

During the Tournament but *before* the Round Begins:

- Stay near your devices throughout the day(s) you're obligated to judge. Even if you are not initially assigned a round, we may assign you if a replacement is needed for any reason. We may blast rounds early when possible…so please keep your devices handy!

- Tabroom.com isn't built to notify you when you *don't* have a round. We recommend that you log-in to your tabroom.com account, and click your email at the top of the screen. You should see your ballots (or a tab for "current ballots").
    - If you have already tried this but are still not sure and/or are having trouble, you can TEXT us in the Tabroom at 412-444-8259.
- **Acknowledge your ballot immediately**. If you do not acknowledge your ballot by the in-room time, you *may* receive a call from us (unless we can otherwise verify you are in the room). If you don't answer or are not in the room by the round start time, we will replace you and fine your school (if a school judge) or reduce your payment (if hired judge).
- **If debaters are missing at "In Room" Time**, send a message to tab text or email tab at the address at the top of this document (do not leave the room).

During the Round:

- Flow (take notes).
- Keep time. Students may keep their own time, but you are the master timekeeper.
    - A student who finishes their sentence after the time ends is NOT over time.
- **Virtual judges are required to have their CAMERAS ON during the entire round.**
- Enter comments on tabroom between speeches or during prep time
- That's it. Do not ask additional questions, comment on arguments, or get involved in the debate in any way.

At the End of the Round:

- **Make your decision promptly and submit it**. You must write the "I voted for [code/name] on the [side]" as the first line of your ballot, and at least 3-5 more words to be able to submit. Submitting your decision and points promptly is the priority. You can write your full critique by Sunday, March 22rd at 8:00pm
- Speaker Points:
    - 30 = Perfect, or nearly so
    - 29 = Better than most debaters
    - 28 = Effective with only minor mistakes
    - 27 = Good, but room for improvement
    - 26 = Adequate, but with notable errors
    - 25 = Significant strategic errors
    - 24 = Missing key debating skills
    - 23 = Unprepared to debate
    - Below 23 = Offensive or rude
- **Please do not confer with the other judge**. There is no need for your ballot to "match" the other judge.
- Once BOTH JUDGES have submitted their ballots, disclose your decision to the debaters. No other critiques or comments should be given. Just the decision.
- Wait patiently for your next round. We thank you so much for your service to the tournament!

Event Specific Instructions:

Policy Debate

Resolved: The United States federal government should significantly increase its exploration and/or development of the Arctic.

- Speech Times:

    - Affirmative Constructive - 8 min
    - Neg Cross-examination - 3 min
    - Negative Constructive - 8 min
    - Aff Cross-examination - 3 min
    - Affirmative Constructive - 8 min
    - Neg Cross-examination - 3 min
    - Negative Constructive - 8 min
    - Aff Cross-examination - 3 min
    - 1st Negative Rebuttal - 5 min
    - 1st Affirmative Rebuttal - 5 min
    - 2nd Negative Rebuttal - 5 min
    - 2nd Affirmative Rebuttal - 5 min
- 8 minutes of prep time.
- No new constructive arguments shall be introduced in the rebuttal speeches.

Lincoln Douglas Debate (LD)

Resolved: The United States military ought to abide by the principle of non-intervention.

- Speech Times:
    - Affirmative Constructive - 6 min
    - Cross-examination - 3 min
    - Negative Constructive - 7 min
    - Cross-examination - 3 min
    - 1st Affirmative Rebuttal - 4 min
    - Negative Rebuttal - 6 min
    - 2nd Affirmative Rebuttal - 3 min
- Each debater has 4 minutes of prep time.
- Voting should be based on how well a debater upholds their side of the resolution. This typically involves effective analysis, evidence, delivery, reasoning, and/or refutation.
- Many rounds will utilize a framework to conceptualize the resolution. The framework provides a value (i.e. - “justice”) or goal,for which an ideal society might strive. It also includes a value criterion which can allow that society to evaluate the progress towards that goal (i.e. - “maximizing expected well-being”).

Public Forum (PF)

Resolved: The United States federal government should ban corporate acquisition of single-family residences.

- No coin flip. Sides are set.
- Speech Times:
    - Constructives (Pro) - 4 min
    - Constructives (Con) - 4 min
    - Crossfire between 1st speakers - 3 min
    - Rebuttal (Pro) - 4 min
    - Rebuttal (Con) - 4 min
    - Crossfire between 2nd speakers - 3 min
    - Summary (Pro) - 3 min
    - Summary (Con) - 3 min
    - Grand Crossfire - 3 min
    - Final Focus (Pro) - 2 min
    - Final Focus (Con) - 2 min
- Each team has 3 minutes prep time

Parliamentary Debate (Parli)

- Flip for sides each round. Gov always goes first. Make sure you verify which sides/kids you're voting for. Always vote for the team who won, not the side, if they don't match. Text Tab if they don't match.
- Logical arguments and hard evidence/cards are weighed EQUALLY in this event.
- PHSSL Evidence Rules do not apply here because of the prior point.
- There is no prep time and the clock doesn't stop unless there is a point of order called in the final speech for bringing up a new contention-level offensive argument. This includes the "point of procedure" to avoid topicality arguments.
- The Government case has the burden of defining the resolution and the freedom to define the resolution. The opposition can run a topicality argument if the way the resolution is defined is abusive or harms the educational value of debate.
- If the Opp runs a topicality, they can still win if the judge doesn't buy the topicality argument. Just like anything else, it's at the judge's discretion what the most important parts of the round are
- If the Opposition defeats the Government's case, they win the debate no matter if their own "off case" still stands.
- There are no points of clarification or information in the first and last minutes of each speech. Students CAN ask questions in the middle 3 minutes of the final speech.
- Students don't have to accept questions, but how they handle denying questions can be part of your decision
- AI is permitted at all times
- Please feel free to inspect any documents students are using to ensure that no one outside the round has access to the documents
- Both the Parli Handbook and PHSSL Bylaws have the power of law in PHSSL Parli Rounds. Any questions can be texted to the helpline. Please don't make up rules! PHSSL Parli might be different from the parli you are used to.

Extemp Debate

- Flip for sides each round. This is done virtually. Make sure you verify which side each competitor is on. kids. Judges should verbally confirm this before they start the round and check it against their ballot. If the ballot doesn't "match" the competitor's expectations, PLEASE REFRESH YOUR BALLOT. If there is still a discrepancy or another source of confusion, please text the tab room.
- Logical arguments and hard evidence/cards are weighed EQUALLY in this event.
- PHSSL Evidence Rules do not apply here because of the prior point.
- AI is permitted at all times
- Please feel free to inspect any documents students are using to ensure that no one outside the round has access to the documents
- Speech Times:
    - Pro Constructive - 2 min
    - Cross-examination - 1 min
    - Neg Constructive - 2 min
    - Cross-examination - 1 min
    - Mandatory Preptime - 1 min
    - Pro Rebuttal - 2 min
    - Neg Rebuttal - 2 min
    - Mandatory Preptime - 1 min
    - Pro Rebuttal - 2 min
    - Neg Rebuttal - 2 min

PHSSL Evidence Rules

- A. Students have one minute per piece of evidence or what is deemed reasonable by judges outside of prep time to produce all complete requested evidence, then prep time starts for the opposing team. Otherwise, prep time will not be deducted for either team during the exchange of evidence.
- B. Evidence needs to be clearly highlighted, and the evidence needs to be produced in its entirety with at least a link to the full piece of evidence.
- C. Evidence that cannot be produced at that point leads to an automatic loss of the round and may possibly lead to disqualification if the opposing team calls for a “formal evidence challenge.” A formal evidence challenge may not be done after the completion of the round. The results are recorded as a “win” or a “loss” for the appropriate team, not a “bye” or a “forfeit.”
- D. Students may not prep during exchange of evidence

Additional Judging Resources:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1YdZeTktwVMoecj0zH7dlwE2ip40RJnN2?usp=drive_link

Complete PHSSL Rules: https://www.phssl.org/docs/