

CONSTITUTION THE CATHOLIC FORENSIC LEAGUE DIOCESE OF PITTSBURGH

ARTICLE 1 - NAME

The name of this organization shall be **The Catholic Forensic League, Diocese of Pittsburgh**, hereafter called **League**.

ARTICLE 2 - PURPOSE

The purpose of this League shall be the development of articulate young people through whose skill truth may be widely spread and thus they might become an influence in the life of the community. To achieve this purpose and to promote forensic activities both in Catholic and non-Catholic schools, the League aims to coordinate speech and debate activities in and among its member schools. The League sponsors a diocesan tournament to establish national qualifiers for the Grand Tournament at the end of the scholastic year.

ARTICLE 3 - MEMBERSHIP

Section 1. Eligibility

Any high school in the Diocese of Pittsburgh shall be eligible for membership in the League. Voting will be restricted to members of the prior year and/or full members. Students of member schools of this organization whose moderators deem them qualified for membership shall be entitled to membership in the League. A school must be a full member of the National Catholic Forensic League (NCFL) before December 28 to compete in the League Diocesan Tournament and thus to qualify for the NCFL Grand Tournament during the academic year. To be a full member, the school must have paid its dues and have submitted its NCFL data card to the League moderator.

Section 2. Certification

Application for membership shall be made to the moderator of the League. School membership shall become effective upon submission of a membership fee the League moderator.

ARTICLE 4 - OFFICERS

Section 1. Moderator

The league moderator shall serve for a term of three years. In keeping with the tradition for which the League is named, the moderator should be the director of forensics from one the Catholic schools that is a member of the League. The moderator will be elected by a majority of votes from member schools during the general spring meeting, (conducted as part of the diocesan tournament). Each member school shall have one vote and a simple majority is needed to win. The moderator will be responsible for the general operation of the League, finances, communication within the League, enforcement of all provisions of the Constitution and its by-laws and shall make necessary arrangements for the League's participation in the NCFL Grand Tournament.

Section 2. Executive Board

An executive board will be elected by ballot in the spring at the diocesan qualifying tournament. Each member school shall have one vote and a simple majority is needed to win. There shall be four members, and each member shall have a term of four years. (For the first election, two members will be elected for terms of two years, and two members elected for four years. After that, elections will be held every two years, so that membership on the board is staggered.) The purpose of the board is to

assist the moderator in decisions concerning general League business, implementation of the Constitution and its by-laws and other necessary League functions.

ARTICLE 5 - **STANDING RULES**

Section 1. **Number of entries**

The number of entries to nationals advancing from the diocesan qualifying tournament is determined by the number of schools in the League as set forth in the NCFL constitution.

Section 2. **Alternate qualifiers**

If a student who has qualified to the NCFL Grand National Tournament cannot attend, the coach should notify the League Director by April 1. The League Director will then notify the next ranked student and his or her coach.

Section 3. **Speech material**

All speeches and interpretation pieces must not have been used by the student prior to the current competition year,

Section 4. **Extraordinary circumstances**

Extraordinary circumstances are to be handled at the discretion of the League Director and/or the Executive Board.

BY-LAWS

ARTICLE 1 - **DUES AND FEES**

Section 1. **Dues**

The dues are \$40.00 each year with \$20.00 going to the National Headquarters and \$20.00 staying with the Diocesan League for operating expenses.

Section 2. **Fees**

Each school shall be charged a fee for each student entering the Diocesan Qualifying Tournament. The fee is to be determined by the diocesan director in consultation with the executive board.

ARTICLE 2 - **DIOCESAN QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT**

Section 1. **Speech guidelines**

Rounds:

1. All rounds will be randomly paired before the tournament. Scheduling will be the responsibility of the tournament committee to be appointed by the diocesan director.
2. There will be three guaranteed round if the category has eight or more contestants. If there are fewer than eight contestants, there will be two rounds with two judges per round.
3. Final rounds will be determined by totaling ranks from the three preliminary rounds. The five to seven contestants with the lowest total ranks will advance to finals.
4. There will be three judges in each final round. The ranks of the three judges will be added to the preliminary totals for each contestant to determine the final placement of each contestant.

Judges:

1. One judge will be used in each preliminary round of speech, except as indicated above.

2. Three judges will be used in each final round.
3. The tournament committee in advance of the tournament will schedule Judges.
4. Each school is responsible for supplying one qualified judge for every three contestants or a fraction thereof. These judges will be required to remain for the duration of the tournament.
5. Schools are encouraged to exercise good judgment in choosing qualified and sensitive judges.
6. Judges may assess a penalty for overtime after a 30-second grace period. A judge should interrupt no speaker. The penalty may not be more severe than ranking the student last in the round.

Tie-breaking procedures:

1. Ties in preliminary rounds will be broken using reciprocals.
2. Ties in final rounds will be broken first on judges' preference in the final round and then by reciprocals.
3. If a tie for a national qualifying position still exists, a one round run-off will be held with a three-judge panel.

Format of the tournament:

1. A one-day tournament will be standard with the site open to any school that wishes to host the tournament.
2. Coaches should adhere to pre-registration guidelines. [Tournament registration deadlines should be met, judging quotas should be met, fee should be submitted on time, and schools should arrive at the tournament site at least 15 minutes before registration is scheduled to close.]
3. Speech registration should begin at least one-half hour before the opening assembly.
4. The opening assembly should include general instructions to all participants followed by specific instructions by category for all judges. The assembly will be conducted by the diocesan director and/or appointed committee members.
5. Three rounds of competition will be held before lunch, with final rounds being held after lunch. In categories with fewer than eight participants, a staggered time schedule may be used.
6. Final placement for national qualifiers in each speech category will be determined by the cumulative method. [All judges' ranks from all rounds will be totaled.] The lowest scores - number of qualifiers determined by the national quota- will qualify for the Grand National Tournament. First and second alternates, if available, will be designated in each category. An alternate will be invited to participate in the national tournament if one of the qualifiers is unable to participate and the change meets the national deadline.
7. Coaches must notify the diocesan director by April 1 if a national qualifier is unable to participate at the national tournament. Students who are precluded from participating at the national tournament should not enter the Diocesan Qualifying Tournament.

School quotas:

1. Individual schools may bring no more than four contestants in any speech or debate category.

Section 2. **Debate guidelines**

Judging:

1. The quota of judges for team debate will follow this table:

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|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1-2 teams | 1 judge |
| 3-4 teams | 2 judges, one of whom should be neutral for all schools involved |
2. The quota of judges for Lincoln Douglas debate will follow this table:

1 contestant	1 judge
2-3 contestants	2 judges
4 contestants	3 judges, or 2 judges one of whom should be neutral for all schools involved
 3. One judge will be used in all rounds.

Tournament format:

1. There will be four rounds of debate in the Diocesan Qualifying Tournament. Two random rounds will be paired in advance. Schools will not meet their own schools.
 2. Succeeding rounds will be power-paired, based on record. The scheme will be straight-power (best record vs. best record). Teams meeting previously in the tournament will debate the opposite side. No team will hit another team more than twice.
 3. Ties will be broken in the following priority:
 - win-loss record
 - median team speaker points
 - median team speaker ranks
 - total team speaker points
 - total team speaker ranks
- Lincoln Douglas will use the first, second and fourth criteria listed above.
All national qualifiers will be determined in this fashion. At no time in the tournament will teams from the same school meet each other.
4. In the event of an uneven number of teams in policy debate, a bye shall be given in each round. Byes will be determined at random in the first two rounds, and will go to the lowest record team in rounds three and four. However, no school or team will receive more than one bye. Speaker points and ranks will be averaged for the purpose of breaking ties and pairing rounds.
 5. In the event of an uneven number of contestants in Lincoln Douglas debate, a bye will be given in rounds one and three, to be made up with that contestant debating twice in rounds two and four.
 6. Teams should debate an even number of rounds both affirmative and negative in the tournament. Exceptions will be made if power pairing requires teams to meet. In such cases, sides will be drawn at random, with both coaches present.

General standards for selecting judges:

1. Judges should have a minimum of one year of judging experience in NCFL, NFL, or PHSSL events.
2. Judges should normally be a sophomore in college or older. Exceptions might be made with a request to the tournament committee.
3. Coaches must familiarize all judges with judging criteria for NCFL events in advance of the tournament.

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