



Tarheel Forensic League State Tournament Qualification Procedures

Rationale:

The Tarheel Forensic League State Championship is a culminating tournament resulting in the crowning of state champions in each of the main NSDA and CFL events. As such, it is the belief of the TFL Executive Committee that it should be a meaningful tournament that students earn their way into through a combination of regular season success and dedication to attending North Carolina tournaments. The state tournament has grown substantially in recent years and is outgrowing the space at many potential host schools with an open unlimited entry policy. The implementation of a bid system keeps tournament numbers manageable while also increasing the quality of competition. It creates a meaningful state championship experience for all involved.

Eligibility to Compete:

- All TFL schools that pay dues by the established deadline are eligible to participate in the TFL State Championship Tournament.
- Varsity students from member schools qualify to enter the state tournament through either earning one bid at participating North Carolina regular season tournaments or by receiving one of their school's "wild card" bids from their coach. Students may also qualify by receiving an automatic bid, outlined in a separate section below.
- All students in their first two years of Speech and Debate competition are eligible to enter the Junior Varsity (JV) division of an event when that division is offered (currently Lincoln Douglas, Public Forum, and Congress). No bids are necessary to enter JV and each member school receives an unlimited number of JV entries unless TFL needs to impose a cap due to room availability.

Earning bids to the TFL State Championship:

- Each student or partnership must earn **one** bid during the academic year in order to participate in Varsity or Open divisions of the TFL State Championship Tournament.
- Bids are offered at all TFL sanctioned tournaments within the state of North Carolina. Guidelines for sanctioned tournaments are listed in a separate section.
- A bid to the TFL State Championship Tournament may be earned at sanctioned tournaments in one of the following ways:
 - Placement in an event at a sanctioned tournament according to the formulas below
 - Earning four "legs" over the course of a season. A "leg" is defined as participating in all preliminary rounds of a sanctioned tournament regardless of placement. All four legs must be earned in the same academic year and with the same partner if it is a team

event (PF and Duo). They also must be earned in the same event. So any student competing in all preliminary rounds of four different sanctioned tournaments in the same event (with the same partner, if applicable) will receive a bid in that event.

- A student who is disqualified for any reason at a tournament may not receive a bid or a leg from that tournament.
- **Sanctioned Tournaments** must meet the following minimum criteria:
 - Approval from TFL by application (guidelines noted in separate section)
 - A minimum of eight (8) participating schools to award any bids at the tournament
 - A minimum of two (2) schools participating in any event receiving bids
 - Participating schools do not have to be from North Carolina to meet the minimum criteria for awarding bids as long as the tournament is held in North Carolina
 - In the event that a tournament has placing students from out of state or from non-TFL schools, bids will move down in order to the next placing competitor from a TFL member school as long as they have a winning or even record in debate or are in the top half of the field in a speech event. Congress students should be in the top half of their chamber. In the case where a final session of Congress is held, only students in the final session are eligible.
- **Debate Events (LD, PF):**
 - 2-6 entries: Champion receives a bid
 - 7-11 entries: Top three finishers receive bids
 - 12 or more entries: Top six finishers receive bids
 - Number of competitors is set and locked at the end of final registration the morning of the tournament
 - Every competitor listed must compete in at least one round
 - Bids can only be awarded to students with winning or even records. No bids can be awarded to losing records even if the event meets the entry numbers listed above.
- **Congressional Debate:**
 - Tournament must have a minimum of two sessions of at least 2.5 hours each
 - Bids are determined by the total number of students entering congress (not the individual chambers) and are divided equally among chambers. For example, if the event is entitled to six bids and there are three chambers, each chamber will award bids to the top two finishers (total of six for the event).
 - A tournament with a finals chamber will award bids to the top six finishers, provided that there were at least 12 total competitors in the event. If a finals session is offered, no bids will be awarded out of the preliminary chambers.
 - 2-6 total entries in Congress: Only one chamber allowed and only champion receives a bid
 - 7-11 entries in Congress: Only one chamber and top three competitors receive bids.
 - 12 or more total entries in Congress: Six bids awarded. Bids are evenly distributed among the number of chambers offered.
 - 1 Chamber: Top 6 receive bids
 - 2 chambers: Top 3 in each chamber receive bids
 - 3 chambers: Top 2 in each chamber receive bids

- Number of competitors is set and locked at the end of final registration the morning of the tournament
- Every competitor listed must compete in at least one full session of Congress (minimum 2.5 hours)
- **Speech Events:**
 - 2-6 entries: Champion receives a bid
 - 7-11 entries: Top three finishers receive bids
 - 12 or more entries: Top six finishers receive bids
 - Number of competitors is set and locked at the end of final registration the morning of the tournament
 - Every competitor listed must compete in at least one round

Bid Entry Exceptions:

- Schools may enter an unlimited number of students in Junior Varsity (JV) divisions of events (currently Lincoln Douglas, Public Forum and Congress). No bids are necessary in JV divisions.
- Each member school receives five “wild card” entries that may be given to any student on their team that does not receive a bid through the normal qualification process.
- New TFL member schools will receive 10 “wild card” entries in their first year of competition in the league. A new member school is defined as a school that has never been a TFL member or was once a member but has not joined the league for the five consecutive years prior to the current year.

Automatic Bids / Autoqualification:

- Any participant in a Varsity elimination round at the previous year’s TFL State Championship earns automatic entry into the TFL State Championship Tournament in that event. If the event is a partnership event (PF or DUO), both partners must have competed together at last year’s tournament. ***[NOTE: This does NOT apply for the 2021 TFL State Tournament season due to the cancelation of the 2020 TFL State Championship due to COVID-19.]***
- Any student or team that earns one bid to the University of Kentucky Tournament of Champions (TOC) during the course of the school year receives an automatic entry into the TFL State Championship Tournament in that event. If the event is a partnership event (PF or DUO), both partners must have competed together at the tournament in which the TOC bid was received.
- Any student or team that autoqualified to the current year’s NSDA Tournament receives an automatic entry into the TFL State Championship Tournament in that event. If the event is a partnership event (PF or DUO), both partners must have competed together in the previous year’s NSDA Tournament.

Becoming a Sanctioned Tournament:

- Before the tournament: Tournaments wishing to be sanctioned must fill out an application and submit it to the TFL Executive Committee. Any paid TFL member school or paid affiliate school as defined in the TFL Constitution submitting an application and meeting minimum requirements will be considered a sanctioned tournament for that academic year. Tournaments must reapply every year. The application must include the following information:

- The names of all Tab staff. Tab staff with administrative access to tabulation software for the tournament must include coaches or personnel unaffiliated with the host school.
- A complete tournament schedule
- Tiebreaking methods to be used at the tournament
- Tab software being used (must be Tabroom, SpeechWire or Joy of Tournaments)
- Confirmation that all rules are clearly and publicly posted online
- Tournaments must adhere to the following guidelines as a condition of awarding bids:
 - A school must be a member of the TFL in order to host a tournament eligible to award bids. Being a member last year, or prepaying this year, or intending to pay this year prior to the state tournament counts.
 - Students from the host school may be allowed by their coach to compete in their own tournament if the host school declares its intention as part of the bid application process. A change in this decision must be made with the TFL Chair before the tournament date in time to give reasonable notice of the change to all participating schools.
 - Tab staff must include coaches or personnel unaffiliated with the host school
 - No member of the tab staff may do anything in the pairing of rounds or judges to give their own team an unfair advantage.
 - All judges must be high school graduates
 - Judges may not judge their own school except in the case of Congress when impossible to pair judges without doing so
 - Tournaments must be open to all North Carolina Schools, but that does not guarantee entry. However, a tournament's entry criteria including limits and deadlines must apply equally to all schools.
- Within three days after the tournament is over, the host school must submit to the TFL Bidkeepers (*) all of the following:
 - List of qualifiers by event
 - Full results packet
 - Certification that events with qualifiers met required standards
 - List of all events that did not meet required standards and, thus awarded no bids or legs

Tracking Bids:

- The TFL Executive Committee will appoint official Bidkeepers to track and publish a list of current bids to the TFL State Championship, including automatic qualifications.
- Upon receiving result materials from the host school, the TFL Bidkeepers will publish an updated list of awarded bids within seven (7) days of the conclusion of each TFL sanctioned tournament.
- The Bidkeepers will also keep track of students earning legs toward a bid for each tournament.
- After reviewing the published bid list, coaches believing a student has earned a bid but does not appear on the bid list may submit proof to the TFL Bidkeepers for review and consideration.
- In the event that a question remains after review by the Bidkeepers, the TFL Executive Committee is the final avenue of appeal and its decision is final.

(*) The TFL Bidkeepers for the 2019-2020 academic year are Chris Harrow (christopherc.harrow@cms.k12.nc.us) and Bilal Butt (bbutt0817@gmail.com).