

How a Speech and Debate Tournament is Run

Jargon is in *italics* with explanations in (parenthesis).

Hosting a tournament is a lot of work. More entries equate to more profit but more work. Schools send in their *entries* on Monday. Changes can be made up until Wednesday at noon. It is not until at least Wednesday that the tournament schedule begins to be put together.

Friday night is more standardized than Saturday. Debate is won on a record of wins and losses of *rounds* (actual debates between different competitors). Generally there are four *LD* (Lincoln Douglass) rounds and four *CX* (Cross Examination or Policy) rounds on a Friday evening. Sometimes there are three rounds, rarely five. A 4-0 record gets first place, 3-1 second, etc. A *CX* round lasts 72 minutes, and a *LD* round lasts 42 minutes. There is more *time between rounds* for *LD*. Obviously the schedule is built around the *CX* rounds, but that standardizes the times. Most tournaments start at 3:30 and go on a 3:30, 5:00, 6:30, 8:00 schedule. That means the last round is over at 9:15 if everything is on schedule, which does not happen often. OSSAA rules state a round cannot start after 9:00 P.M. I have started rounds at 8:59 before.

Saturday schedules are determined more by the number of *entries* (actual students in each round). There are 11 *events* (Extemp, HD, Poetry, Prose, etc.) on Saturday. They are usually broken into two groups. *Group A* (five of the events) starts at 9:00, and *Group B* (the other six events) starts at 10:30. These are called *preliminary rounds*. Based on preliminary rounds, approximately the top half in each event advances to either a semi-final round or a final round which is called an *out round*. If things are on schedule, the out round for Group A happens at the next hour and a half interval around 12:00. Then Group B has its first out round at 1:30. *Placing* (getting a medal) in an event is based on *rankings* (how the judge thinks you compare to the other competitors) in the final round alone.

The rules state that we can *go straight to finals* if there are eight or fewer entries in an event. If there are 9-24 entries we can take the top 6-8 from one preliminary round and go to finals. If there are more than 24 entries, we must have a semi-final round of 12-16. Another factor that can affect the schedule of a tournament is that out rounds must have three judges. The rankings are based on the lowest cumulative scores of the three judges. Sometimes it is hard to get that many judges for one round, so the tournament lengthens. Experienced tournament hosts try to start rounds as soon as possible. In medium to large tournaments which have a lot of entries the last final rounds often begin at 5:00. We do not know this schedule until Thursday and sometimes not until Friday night when we debate.

Everything has to be *tabulated*, and sometimes this does not start until 6:00. Medals and trophies are handed out at an awards assembly which takes about 45 minutes. We often can leave for home at 7:00. After stopping to eat on the drive home, it is often 9:00 before we are back to Bartlesville. Some smaller tournaments can be finished at 4:00, but small tournaments are usually weaker competitive experiences. We prefer the larger, later ones.

Each student who places first, second or third, receives a medal and *qualifies* for the Regional Tournament where they compete to qualify for the State Tournament. *Sweepstakes* points are awarded to the school of each student competing in a final round. The better the placing, the more points are awarded. Team trophies are awarded to the three teams with the highest sweepstakes points. As more students compete, the chance of winning a trophy increases.