

Orange County Debate League

# Coach and School Agreement

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**Table of Contents**

Introduction .....2

Requirements for Membership Eligibility .....2

Requirements for Tournament Participation.....2

Responsibilities of the League.....2

Responsibilities of the Coach/School .....3

    Coach Responsibilities ..... 3

    Providing Judges ..... 3

    Fees/Fines..... 3

Other League Policies.....3

    Students with Disabilities ..... 3

    Abnormal Score Correction ..... 3

    Judge Scoring Calibration ..... 4

    Award Retraction Policy ..... 4

    Disqualifications ..... 4

    Final Round Top Teams ..... 4

    Tie Breaks ..... 4

Novice League .....5

Expulsion from League Participation .....5

League Policy Changes .....6

## Introduction

The Orange County Debate League's mission is to *promote academic and personal growth in youth through the sport of debate*. This document, outlining all roles, responsibilities, and administrative functions for the Orange County Debate League (OCDL) is to be referenced as an agreement between the OCDL and its member schools. To ensure that every student who *wants* to participate is *able* to participate in a fun and educational environment, strict attention should be paid to the spirit, not simply the letter, of the rules.

## Requirements for Membership Eligibility

The requirements for each participating school to become a "member school" of the OCDL are as follows:

- a) Prospective schools must be a public, private, religious, after-school academy, or homeschool group.
- b) Participation in OCDL tournaments is not open to students competing independently of the entities mentioned above.
- c) Each school must pay the required annual dues to the OCDL in a timely manner. The board of directors will determine a fair and reasonable amount per squad.
- d) Annual dues must be received by October 15th each year. Returning schools will be given priority over new schools. If space permits, new schools will be admitted by November 1st on a first-come, first-served basis.
- e) Registration at the middle-school level is accepted on an annual basis. For the high school division, schools may register for individual tournaments.
- f) Schools may register up to two squads per year. A squad may comprise of 1 to 6 teams of 3 students.

## Requirements for Tournament Participation

- a) Each squad must bring at least one OCDL-certified judge for every two debate teams (or six debaters for the Scramble (mixed-team) tournament) the participating school sends to each tournament.
- b) Schools must provide one volunteer per event to help with OCDL administrative duties and/or tournament preparation.
- c) Schools may register up to two squads for each tournament, or eighteen students per squad for scramble tournaments.
- d) Schools must ensure that a consistent adult representative (coach) be present at all OCDL events for the entire duration of the event in which the school participates.
- e) Coaches must register via tabulation software for each tournament by the required due date.

## Responsibilities of the League

Each season, the OCDL will provide:

1. Three high school and five middle tournaments (including one Scramble tournament and one championship)
2. A public awards ceremony with trophies offered at the end of each tournament
3. At least one student and one judge workshop
4. Timely issuance of administrative paper work (dues, fees, permission slips) as well as topic announcements
5. Annual ranking of the top speakers of the OCDL for the purposes of a championship admission  
Note: The ranking will combine average speaker points throughout the year and student win/loss record from all tournaments (except the Scramble tournament). Students must attend at least two "regular season" debates to qualify for these annual rankings. Specific guidelines for the ranking will be determined at the discretion of the tabulation administration.
6. Correspondence with potential/new schools and assistance with onboarding of new schools
7. Address of grievances from coaches and judges

## Responsibilities of the Coach/School

### Coach Responsibilities

- Maintain record of and submit any and all necessary paperwork (e.g. affidavits) for their student debaters
- Remain on site all day to supervise his/her students
- Responsible for the conduct of their parents, guests and judges
- Keep and submit any and all email and phone number contacts for all students in case of emergencies
- Have ultimate discretion over which students may be a member of their squad

### Providing Judges

Coaches must provide trained judges (one judge for every two teams he/she brings to a tournament). All OCDL debate judges must be trained through an official OCDL judge-training program, even judges who have prior debate experience in another debate league/organization. The OCDL prides itself on establishing a *fair and consistent* judging program, and to maintain such a program all judges must participate in and meet the criteria in a mandatory training/shadowing program before being permitted to judge in any OCDL tournament.

### Fees/Fines

Schools failing to provide the requisite number for judges will be fined as follows:

- \$100 for every missing judge (\$75 at the three-round scramble)
- \$25 for every judge failing to show for his/her round

Fines will also be placed on late hour student drops specifically during the Scramble tournament

- \$25/student after two students have dropped.

All fees must be paid by the given school prior to registration for any subsequent tournaments. New schools are allowed a one-tournament grace period (excluding the Scramble) in order to train new judges. This grace period is not allowed for second squads from existing schools.

## Other League Policies

### Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities may have exceptions made to note-taking and similar situations pursuant to the Americans with Disability Act; however, the OCDL administration must be notified of any exception prior to the start of a given tournament.

### Abnormal Score Correction

At the end of the tournament day, if a student has a speaker performance score that is 15+ points higher or lower than all other scores of the day, the tabulations administrator can make changes, provided that the following has occurred:

1. The scoring abnormality has been brought to the attention of the tabulations/judging administration by the coach of the student. OCDL board members or tabulations staff can also bring the matter to the attention of the judge or administrator.
2. A member of the administration has discussed the low/high score with the judge and has determined and revealed from the conversation a clear misunderstanding and scoring.

## Orange County Debate League Coach and School Agreement

3. A majority decision by three members of the administration (head judge, president and tabulations administrator) has determined that the score was indeed an error.
4. This challenge from the coach, board member or administrator must be made within 15 minutes after the final round ballot has been received by the tabulation administrator.

The following changes can take place:

1. The abnormal score can be dropped.
2. The score will be replaced with the average of the remaining three speaker scores to determine the student's overall speaker placement.

Students/coaches will not be notified of the scoring correction during the tournament day unless they ask about the situation. In the latter case, the administration will inform the student/coach at the end of the tournament day.

### **Judge Scoring Calibration**

The OCDL's goal is to rarely have more than a 10-point variance among the scores a student receives during the day from judges. After each tournament, the OCDL administration will review scores to determine if a particular judge is consistently scoring outside the "normal range" for students. Judges that consistently score outside normal ranges may be asked to retrain.

### **Award Retraction Policy**

In the event that the OCDL erroneously awards a student, team, or squad with a particular award, the OCDL will not retract awards; instead, OCDL policy regards such instances as ties, with trophies being awarded to both competitors.

### **Disqualifications**

Teams may be disqualified for using contraband materials during prep time and the round (e.g. use of the wrong color paper, electronics during prep time). In the event of a disqualification, the individual student scores from the round will remain intact but the offending member(s) team will automatically take the loss for the round.

### **Final Round Top Teams**

During championship tournaments, the top two teams will compete in a final public round. These two teams cannot be from the same school regardless of squad affiliation. In this instance, teams will retain their previous rankings despite any adjustments made in order to match two teams from different schools. For example, if the final round features the first-place team and the fourth-place team (based upon victory and student points), a win for the fourth-place team will result in the original first and second place teams being tied for second place.

### **Tie Breaks**

All tiebreakers will be determined by the tabulation administrative team.

### Novice League

The OCDL has a division as a place for newer debaters to practice the format of OCDL tournaments and grow in confidence. The **Novice League** shall comprise new students who are starting their debate journey. The **League** shall comprise all other debaters, including novices who feel comfortable competing at a more challenging level. Although there is no experience level requirement to register in the League, at least one year of debate experience is recommended.

The category simply defines the pool of debaters with which a team of three students will compete. Schools will continue to register with the OCDL, and the OCDL will continue to facilitate all tournament functions. Students/individual teams can choose in which category to compete. Students of all grade levels can register for either category, but coaches should offer guidance as to which category fits each individual student most appropriately.

At the end of each tournament, the Novice League will allocate awards to the top 10% teams and speakers. The split in categories will not affect top school awards.

Further rules include the following:

- These divisions will not be included in the Scramble tournament nor the championship: All students will compete in the same pool and there shall be no distinction between categories.
- Debate results in the Novice category will not count toward Top Speakers of the Year awards, nor will they qualify students for MSPDP Championships.

### Expulsion from League Participation

The league may need to restrict membership to maintain an environment conducive to fun and educational purposes. In all cases, a fair and upfront warning will be given to the school or individual in question before the removal process begins.

Schools may be restricted from membership for the following reasons:

- Consistent failure to submit payments (dues, fines, etc.) in a timely manner
- Failure to bring a sufficient number of OCDL-certified judges (this may be used to limit teams of a given school)
- Institutional disregard for league rules

Individuals may be restricted from membership or asked to leave the tournament for the following reasons:

- Continued defiance of OCDL rules
- Any particularly inappropriate or egregious behavior, as determined by the board of directors

**League Policy Changes**

The OCDL generally does not change policy in the middle of the debate season; however, interested parties may submit any recommended amendments to the league president and/or secretary by June 1<sup>st</sup>. The amendment(s) may then be brought to the board of directors for final discussion and approval.