

## **Constitution of District III of the National Debate Tournament**

### **Article I. Name and Purpose**

- A. This organization shall be called District III of the National Debate Tournament (NDT).
- B. This organization has as its purpose the selection of teams to the annual National Debate Tournament and representation of District III in the process of NDT governance. Additional purposes include encouragement of civil discourse, fostering the free engage of ideas, supporting tolerance and non-discrimination, and encouraging participation in debate (both encouraging new programs and supporting current programs).
- C. The policies and procedures of District III will be congruent with the National Debate Tournament.

### **Article II. Membership**

- A. Membership is open to all dues paying member schools of the National Debate Tournament in District III as defined by the American Forensic Association, currently consisting of members in Arkansas, Kansas, Louisiana, Missouri, New Mexico, Oklahoma, and Texas.
- B. District schools are entitled to receive information regarding the National Debate Tournament and are eligible to participate in qualifying procedures to attend the NDT. Each District III NDT dues paying school is entitled to one vote on all processes and motions.

### **Article III. Officers**

- A. District III has the following officers:
  - 1. The District Chair shall preside over the meetings and will serve on the NDT Committee. The chair is responsible for coordinating with the host, including provision of a hosting document to cover expectations such as costs, hotels, room spaces, etc. The chair shall keep the district informed about NDT committee business, the NDT itself, district tournament fees and logistics.
  - 2. The Vice Chair shall attend meetings and serve as chair in the chair's absence. If neither is present, the chair may designate an individual to serve in the chair's role.
  - 3. The Secretary shall attend meetings and record notes that are then distributed to the membership via email, and are retained as documented history of the organizational decisions. (Optional: The secretary shall record the minutes of all meetings and have them sent to the district chairperson no later than two weeks after the meeting. The chairperson will mail a copy of these minutes to every subscribing member of the district within one week of receiving the minutes from the secretary. The secretary will be responsible for recording all district meetings; said recording will be made available upon request. The secretary may ask for contributions to cover costs.)
- B. Officers will be elected from the members of the District III.
- C. Elections for officers will be held via email following the NDT, with the new officers taking their position on May 31. Ballots are secret and submitted to the current chair if chair is not running for reelection. If chair is running for reelection then the vice-chair shall run the election. If the vice chair is running in the election, the chair will designate an individual not running to count the ballots and announce the results.

- D. Vacancies will be filled by special election.
- E. The Chair has the power to appoint committees.

#### **Article V. Meetings**

- A. The chair will call regular meetings, at least one each fall and spring. The meeting times should be announced, if possible, by August 1<sup>st</sup>. These meetings should be held within the District, with concern for maximizing participation and geographic distribution.
- B. Special meetings may be called by agreement a 40% or more of paying District schools, so long as all schools are notified as soon as possible.
- C. All meeting notices shall include a time, date, place, and agenda.
- D. All binding votes should take place via email, giving every member school a chance to vote on issues. The meetings should be primarily informational, except at the D-3 tournament, where if issues arise 75% of the schools in attendance at the D-3 tournament constitute a quorum for a binding vote.
- E. Proxies are allowed for votes at District meetings, but must be declared to the chair prior to the meeting. Proxies shall not be persons who already have a vote.
- F. All interested persons (including debaters) shall be invited to attend and shall be granted permission to speak at all District III business meetings unless 2/3 of the members present shall vote to go into executive session.

#### **Article VI. District Tournament**

- A. All district tournament guidelines should be consistent with NDT requirements for District tournaments. This will supersede other rules in this section.
- B. Preparation for Tournament
  - 1. The district shall select two individuals to run the district tournament by February 8<sup>th</sup>. If possible, the district should facilitate the selection of at least one of these individuals as a neutral party. The tab room shall post wins and ballot counts at the end of the day. If necessary to resolve an issue, the director shall convene a meeting of the committee as a whole. District fees may be used for hiring, housing, and boarding neutral tab-room personnel.
  - 2. If possible, the tournament site and date shall be voted on by the paying District membership prior to June 1.
  - 3. The district shall create and maintain a list of expectations for prospective hosts.
  - 4. Since each additional team at districts may help the district secure additional NDT slots, schools are encouraged to bring the maximum number of teams.
  - 5. Participation in the District Process is defined as having a director submit all eligible teams wishing to attend the NDT and then having those teams ranked by the directors participating in District III tournament. The top ranked eligible team(s) from a school will be invited to participate in the District. Each school may bring a maximum of two teams, minus first round at-large teams, to the District tournament. If this results in an odd number of teams, the director should encourage a school bringing less than the maximum to bring an additional team. If this does not even the number of teams, a BYE will be used. BYE's will be given to the top ranked teams according to pre-ranking in the first half of the tournament and by the tournament director's discretion in the second half of the tournament. .

6. All teams competing must have declared their intention to compete by the announced deadline, and be ranked by schools. Schools are allowed to submit additional teams for the purpose of district tournament pre-rankings.
7. Eligible teams must meet standard of eligibility to compete at the NDT. Maverick teams are not eligible to enter. If a team becomes a Maverick during the tournament, it forfeits any round in which either member cannot debate.
8. The number of rounds will be determined by the paying District membership. As a general guide: 16 teams or fewer = 6 rounds, 17 teams or more = 8 rounds.
9. The national intercollegiate proposition, as stipulated by the NDT Committee, and 9-3-6 time limits shall be used at the tournament. There shall be a ten minute preparation time rule.

#### C. Judges

1. Each team requires the equivalent of three quarters of one full commitment (rounded up) to cover its judging obligations. One judge shall hear each preliminary round of debate. If a member of the District is chosen to serve in the tab-room, that person shall not count toward a school's judging obligation but District fees can be used to pay for additional rounds to cover the obligation. The host school may designate one person to hold out of rounds to handle host administrative tasks. That person shall not count toward the host school's judging obligation but District fees can be used to pay for additional rounds to cover the obligation. Persons held out of judging under this section should appear on the strike sheet, and may be placed in extreme situations.
2. All individuals qualified to judge debates and attending the district tournament with a participating school will be required to be available for every round in which they are attending the tournament until a 1/3 judging commitment, rounded up, is completed. This rule does not apply to individuals volunteering rounds from non-attending schools. All judges must meet NDT eligibility guidelines, except for minimum round counts. The tournament director has the authority to grant exceptions under extenuating circumstances.
3. All judges must make a judging philosophy available by the announced deadline in the format determined by the tournament director.
4. Judges are precluded from judging competitors if they have previously coached or debated with the competitor, been affiliated with the school in the prior two years, are seeking to work for the school in the next year, or involved in a close relationship with one of the debaters, or have a significant fiduciary relationship with a program. Judges and directors must reveal their preclusions to the tournament director prior to or at registration..
5. The tournament director will administrate a mutual preference system. MJP will be used. Each judge should only judge each team once in preliminary rounds.

#### D. Tournament Procedures

1. The first two rounds will be pre-set, based on the pre-rankings
2. After the first two rounds, power matching will be used.
  - A. During the last two rounds, the tournament director should pair teams in break rounds to hit each other, even if it results in larger skews or repeat match-ups for eliminated teams.
  - B. Round 3 should be high high, all others high/lo.
  - C. In order to preserve the integrity of power-matching, the tournament directors may, at their discretion, pair teams to meet for a second time in rounds 7 and/or 8 if they have determined that those teams have been statistically eliminated from winning a bid.)

3. Round start times should be at least 30 minutes after the release of pairings. Coaching should cease and judges should report 5 minutes before round start time.
  4. Each judge will be REQUIRED to declare ONE AND ONLY ONE WINNER and ONE AND ONLY ONE LOSER in each debate to which they are assigned by the tab room. Compliance with this rule requires each judge to complete an official judge ballot as designated by the tab room. Completion of the ballot requires the judge to clearly designate affirmative or negative to signify a winning team. Judges will also be required to confirm their choice by indicating the school with which the designated winner is affiliated. The side (affirmative or negative) and school affiliation must match the assignments made by the tab room.
  5. Judges must render a decision within 2 hours and 45 minutes of the round's start time.
  6. All evidence must be consistent with current NDT rules. Any evidence challenge, or ethical challenges, will be conducted consistent with current NDT procedures.
- E. Qualification to the NDT
1. The teams qualifying to the NDT shall be ranked by:
    - A. Total wins
    - B. Adjusted speaker points
    - C. Total speaker points
    - D. Double Adjusted speaker points
    - E. In the event that teams are tied for the last qualifying slot and the first non-qualifying slot on the basis of wins, there shall be one or more runoff debates. The teams tied on wins shall be seeded for the runoffs according to speaker points, and a bracket shall be designed consistent with normal practice for elim brackets. No team that is tied on wins for the remaining spots should be eliminated without the opportunity to debate, however teams may qualify to the NDT based on higher speaker points.

## **Article VII. Finance**

- A. There are no annual dues beyond annual NDT dues.
- B. District tournament entry fees
  1. District tournament entry fees cover the cost of entry and other district expenses.
  2. Entry fees will be determined by the district chair, based on sufficiency to cover expenses
- C. The district chair is responsible for maintaining financial records, and updating the district on its finances.
- D. If a D-3 school is to host the NDT, some portion of District III fees and/or an added surcharge for entries at district tournaments should go to the NDT host to help defray hosting expenses.

## **Article VIII. Amendments**

- A. Amendments to the District Constitution must be publicly proposed at least 1 week prior to an official vote. These votes should be made via email with all members getting chance to vote.
- B. Amendments require a 2/3 majority to pass.

C. Emergency exceptions may be approved only if unanimous.

**Article IX. Ratification**

This constitution shall become effective immediately upon approval by a 2/3 vote of the membership.