

National Forensic League Tournament Competition: The NFL district and national tournaments operate a bit differently from invitational tournaments. In NFL *district* tournaments a double-elimination format is used, meaning teams continue to compete until they have lost a second round of debate. The NFL *national* tournament assigns competitors to six preliminary rounds of competition, with each round having two judges. Competitors accumulating at least eight ballots after the six preliminary rounds then go into a double-elimination bracket. Contestants continue to debate until they have received a second loss or until a national winner is determined.

FINDING TOURNAMENTS IN WHICH TO COMPETE

Most state organizations sponsoring debate competition maintain websites listing approved tournaments throughout the debate season along with the events to be offered at each tournament (see Appendix D for a state-by-state listing of these websites). Many tournaments also allow online registration through the Joy of Tournaments web entry system (www.joyoftournaments.com). The Joy of Tournaments website lists tournaments chronologically for each weekend of the debate tournament season. Coaches and debaters can scrutinize these listings to find tournaments in their local areas on desired weekends.

What if there are no public forum competitions in your local area? You could contact tournament directors in your area to express your interest in starting a public forum division. Most tournament hosts are willing to support new debate events if enough coaches and debaters express interest in competing. Even if no tournaments are available, you can get involved by establishing a practice contest with neighboring schools. After several such schools have established public forum programs, a new tournament can be created.

PUBLIC FORUM DEBATE TOPICS

Who Picks the Topics? The national public forum topic is announced on the website of the National Forensic League (www.nflonline.org) on the first day of each month during the debate season (September through April). For each invitational debate tournament, participants should carefully read the tournament invitation to determine the topic for debate.

FURTHER READING