The Washington Arlington Catholic Forensic League is using the NSDA Campus platform to conduct its online debate and speech tournaments during the COVID-19 pandemic. This document provides guidance to coaches, competitors, and judges regarding hardware and software requirements, competition, and judging procedures, as well as behavioral expectations.

No later than a week before a tournament, competitors and judges should test and ensure their equipment (computer and headphones/microphone) work successfully in the NSDA Campus platform — the NSDA Campus software is integrated with the coach's, judge's, and competitor's Tabroom account. We strongly recommend competitors and judges do not *wait until the day of the tournament to test their equipment.*

All tournament participants must review the NSDA Campus Equipment & Connection Requirements, Competition Space Recommendations, and the relevant event section (Debate, Congress, or Speech) of this document and act on the requirements and recommendations prior to their first competition (the Congress and Speech sections are forthcoming).

TAB ROOM SUPPORT DURING A TOURNAMENT

- **Tab Room Email:**   **wacfl.tabroom@gmail.com**
- **Tab Room Text Line:**   **240-428-0301**

Whom you should not contact: Do not email help@tabroom.com or info@speechanddebate.com. They are not the Tech Support/IT staff for the tournament.

WACFL
Washington-Arlington Catholic Forensic League

WHAT'S COVERED IN THIS DOCUMENT

NSDA Campus Equipment & Connection Requirements

NSDA Campus is an internet based platform. It does not require the download of any applications and runs only on the Google Chrome browser (ensure you have the latest Chrome update). We recommend competitors, judges, and coaches watch this 3-minute overview of NSDA Campus.

To ensure everyone on your team is as prepared as possible for online competition, please review and act on the recommendations in the Team Tournament Preparation section.

A laptop or desktop is required to participate in online debate — you cannot run NSDA Campus on your smartphone or tablet. Some competitors and judges find having two devices or monitors helps.

The device must have a camera capability and the camera and microphone must be permissioned to run on Google Chrome browser (this can be accomplished during the testing process).

Use an external microphone or headset with microphone included to ensure you can be heard. We recommend headphones (*e.g.,* corded cell phone earbuds or gaming headphones) attached to the computer via audio jack or USB. Ear pods (e.g. Samsung Galaxy buds, AirPods) connected to the device are also acceptable, but please note that bluetooth devices may create a delay of voice and video connection (and are not recommended).

High Speed Internet Connection — We recommend a minimum bandwidth speed of 5 MBPS. If you are unsure of your internet speed, please visit www.fast.com to run a test.

If your connection is inadequate, consider the recommendations below to improve connectivity and optimize performance when competing from home.

- Reboot the router
- Update the firmware
- Use a dual-band router
- Move closer to the router
- Create a separate channel
- Enable WME/WMM (if applicable)
- Connect via ethernet instead of Wi-Fi
- Minimize interference (e.g. walls, home appliances, electronic devices)

Personal Competition Location Recommendations

A private space free of external distraction (*e.g.,* bedroom, living room, home office) — ambient noise may come through during competition.

Set up in a desk area with comfortable seating and a solid background (*e.g.,* wall, curtain, sheet). Provide lighting that allows you to be seen on-screen. We recommend that you avoid setting up in front of windows or large light sources so you are not backlit.

> **Judges, Please Note:** Unless it is a case of extreme distraction (*e.g.,* loud noises, extreme glare from lighting), scorers are not to consider the student's surroundings as part of their scoring rubric.

Move around and stretch between rounds and during breaks.
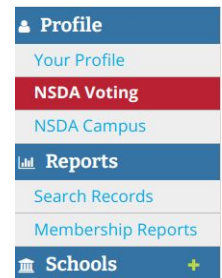
Team Tournament Preparation

WACFL strongly recommends that coaches prepare their teams for online competition by visiting the National Speech & Debate Association's NSDA Campus orientation page as part of their regular practices leading up to tournaments.

Coaches, competitors, and judges can access Test Practice and Test Competition Rooms from this page.

NSDA Campus offers free practice space for NSDA members, built into NSDA accounts. Current NSDA members can log into their NSDA accounts and experience the video conferencing portion of NSDA Campus. NSDA Campus practice rooms are accessible via the left sidebar on your NSDA Account page (not in Tabroom).

A Training Guide is also available.

Please note that given the added preparation the NSDA Campus platform requires, judges, especially, must be identified and trained well before a tournament. In addition to the regular event knowledge and skills, judges must also know NSDA Campus procedures and meet the equipment, connection, and private location requirements.

Online Debate

Pre-Tournament Checklist

All participants must have Tabroom.com accounts linked to their school's rosters.

Digital Bus & Registration Confirmation

The coach should set a designated time prior to tournament day registration confirmation so they can confirm that all judges and competitors are at their computers and ready to participate — analogous to "meeting on the bus" prior to departure for a physical tournament. The coach should instruct competitors and judges to meet there upon "arrival" at the tournament. This is the NSDA Squadroom in Tabroom.

No action is necessary unless you cannot locate a student or judge. If all registered participants are accounted for, then click on the Onsite Confirmation tab. You will see your current entry, including any drops, judges, etc. **If you need to make changes, you will have to contact the tournament directly via the Tabroom text number (240-428-0301) or the Tournament Virtual Office Zoom link, since the add/drop deadline will have passed.**

Otherwise, if your registration is accurate (and *only* if) and all people listed on your entry are on your Digital Bus, you can confirm your entry.

Do you solemnly swear the above is correct and everyone is on site?

Yes I do. Register Me!

Tech Time for Policy, LD, & PF

Each debater has 10 minutes during a round for technical problems/issues. If a student experiences technical issues or is disconnected, the judge should start a 10-minute countdown timer. If the student cannot resolve their technical issue or reconnect in 10 minutes, please let the tournament Tab Room know at **240-428-0301 or wacfl.tabroom@gmail.com** so that we can assign a forfeit. **Judges cannot assign a forfeit from the ballot.**

Cameras On

It is required that cameras stay on for all competitors and judges. First, this is a necessary safeguard against outside assistance. Second, it is an important accessibility issue. Some participants may have a difficult time understanding audio without a corresponding image. Third, leaving cameras off degrades the social and interactive elements of online debating. Finally, for safety reasons, it is helpful if the judge is able to monitor the competitors to ensure they are safe and well.

Due to the nature of the online setting, judges interact with students in their "home" spaces. If you observe a situation where a student may be in physical, emotional or psychological danger, please visit the tournament's Tab Room and notify the Tab Staff immediately (or as soon as safely possible)

Only if there is a technical issue should the camera be turned off (for instance, there are times when turning your camera off will free bandwidth necessary to continue the round).

Muting Microphones

Those who are not the active speaker should have their microphone muted.

In-Round Procedures

Virtual tournaments are quite different from traditional, on-site tournaments.
- Practice and test different strategies before competing in virtual tournaments.
- Consult your partner (if applicable) on preferred methods for preparation, competition, communication, etc.
- Try using a variety of headsets, webcams, headphones, microphones, and mice (if possible) to determine which one is best for you.
- Maintain the high standard of conduct expected at on-site tournaments, exhibiting appropriate decorum at all times.
- Communication with third parties (*e.g.,* coaches, teammates) during rounds remains *strictly prohibited*.

Round Check-In Procedures

Students and Judges should not report to the room until the Tech Check time, 10 minutes before the scheduled round start. Once they arrive, they should check that the camera works, check that their sound works, exchange email addresses to start the email chain for evidence sharing and make sure everyone can see and hear one another.

Eliminate/Reduce Disturbances

- Find a private/enclosed space to set up for the entire competition day.
- Ask family members/friends on your network to limit data usage during your round (*e.g.,* Zoom, video games, Netflix, streaming, etc)

Check-in Time

Typical round structure—

9:00 AM   Pairing Released
9:20 AM   Tech Check
9:30 AM   Round One
10:45 AM   Decision Time*
varies depending on event

Ten minutes prior to the start of the round, all competitors and judges must enter the assigned room. The purpose of an early check-in is to—

- Verify participants are online.
- Ensure video and audio works for everyone.
- Set up any email chains to exchange evidence (each competitor or partnership should consider creating a separate email account for online competition — adding a personal email address to an email chain is not recommended.) (Bear in mind that NSDA Campus supports evidence sharing.)
- Engage in argument disclosure in a timely fashion.

Once the check-in concludes, the round is ready to start — it must start by the posted time or Tech Time must start running.

Pre-Round Checklist

Make a plan with your opponent/judge should a technology failure arise.

● Contact the Tab Room Tech Support at **240-428-0301 or wacfl.tabroom@gmail.com**.
● Turn off your video to reduce bandwidth.
● Leave the room and attempt re-entering.
● Restart your browser/computer.
● Restart your router.
● Try using a smart phone or MiFi as a hotspot.

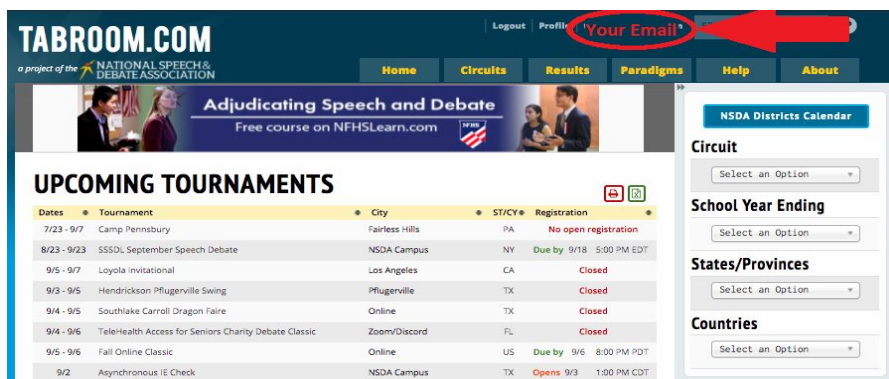Under no circumstances should the round move to another platform — contact Tab Room Tech Support for assistance.

Pre-Round Troubleshooting

If you have issues connecting before the round begins, we suggest the following steps for troubleshooting—

● Close other applications.
● Close tabs that aren't being used.
● Turn off/on your wifi connection.
● Restart Chrome.
● Clear your browser cache.
  ○ Settings —> Privacy & Security —> Clear Browsing Data
● Use an "Incognito Window"
  ○ Settings —> New Incognito Window (CTRL+SHIFT+N)
● Restart your computer.
● Restart your router.

Competitors

Competitors must log into their Tabroom account once pairings are released and can access their round by first clicking on their email address at the top of the screen.

Competitors will then see two blue video links on their screen—

● One, located in the center of the screen, will take them to their team's squad room and is indicated by the name of their school and the text "Squad Room" immediately to the left of the blue video link.

(Purple Circle - Image Below)
● The other link will take them to their round and is located under the "Room" header. (Red Circle - Image Below)

Competitors will also see the start time of their round both in their local time zone (based on what time zone is listed in their Tabroom profile) and the time zone that the tournament has designated as the tournament time zone.

Competitors will also see their opponent(s) and judge(s) on this screen.

Once you click on the link to your round, you will be taken to this screen where your round will take place. Some features such as "Mute everyone" will only be available to the moderator (judge).

This is what your round room will look like after you click on the blue video link. Judges who enter the round will be designated Moderator. Please familiarize yourself with the options and watch this 3-minute overview video—

● Your section number will vary depending on the event you are judging and your specific ballot's ID code.

- You will see your name and (if your camera is on) your video feed. All participants will join with their cameras and microphones off.
- From left to right at the bottom of the screen, you will see options to Raise/Lower your hand, open/close the chat feature, mute/unmute your microphone, turn your video feed on/off, select between gallery and speaker view, and open further options that include managing video quality, making the round full screen, and muting everyone. Only moderators will have the option to mute everyone.

There are also three tabs on the right side of the screen. Please take a look and familiarize yourself with the options—

The first tab and the default is the INFO tab. It provides instructions on how to access the room.

The second tab is used for debaters and judges to share evidence.

The third tab is the TIMER feature. By default, the timer opens up with the prep time clocks as the default on screen. Please ensure that you are using the correct amount of prep time for the tournament and division you are located in.
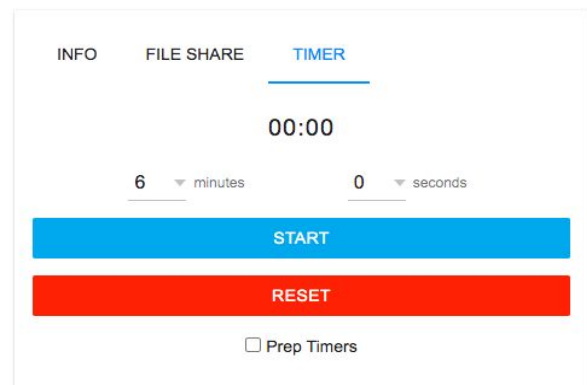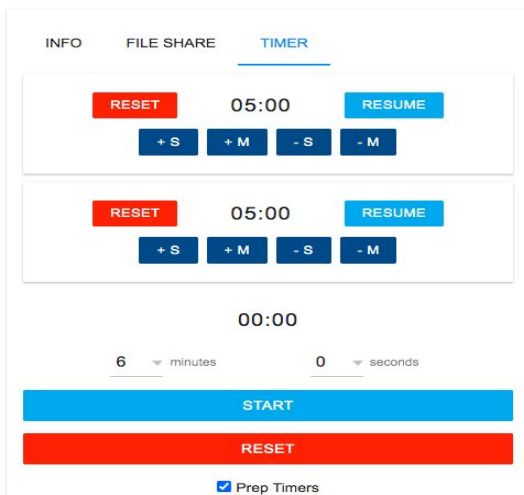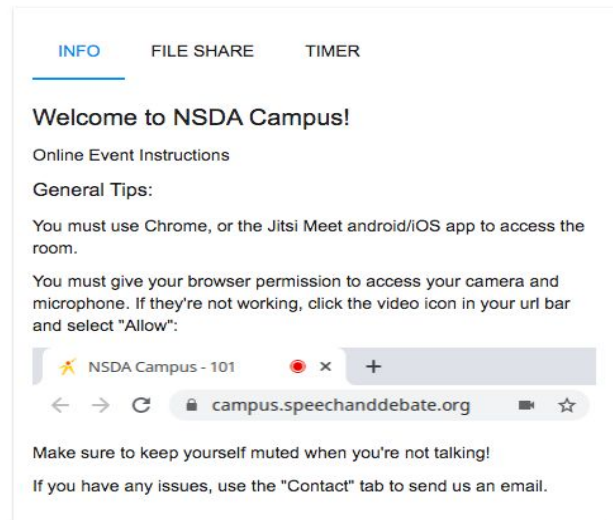
Under the two boxes for prep time, there is a box to use the speech timer, and a checkbox to not display the prep clock called "Prep Timers". Unchecking this box will result in the following view at the right.

You can set the time using the dropdown menus for minutes and (if needed) seconds. Then you can use the blue START button to start the timer, pause the timer once started, or the red RESET button to reset the timer.

Partner Communications

Competitors must comply with their schools physical distancing rules. In partner events, such as Public Forum, Policy, and Duo Speech, students are not allowed to be physically together while relevant pandemic restrictions apply. This, of course, means that communications between partners during the round do not look like those for in-person tournaments. Students must establish a way to communicate with each other during Prep Time and speeches, such as texting, phone, email, Google Doc, or other similar platforms. Methods must not interfere with the conduct of the round.

[It is recommended that email chains be used for any evidence echanges with opponents and judges — see below.]

Under no circumstances are communications with anyone not directly involved in the round permitted!
This will result in a forfeit for the round and possible disqualification from the tournament.

Exchanging Evidence

Debaters must send original sources via PDF or Word document; no links directly to online articles may be shared due to possible paywalls, subscription restrictions, and the inability to highlight the sections read or paraphrased. Evidence must be shared as a PDF or Word document through a link in the virtual room chat box or through an email chain. Students who plan to use the email option are recommended not to use their personal email address, and instead, to create a tournament-only account to use. The email chain must be created in the 30 minutes prior to the debate in order to be used. Judges should be added to the email chain if they so request.

- Evidence is generally exchanged via the competition room chat or an email chain, established at the beginning of each round. The judge(s) must be included on the email chain if they request access.
- Debaters should be careful to specify the exact evidence they seek.
- A cut card may be sent as an attached document, or pasted into the body of an email.
- An original source should be sent as an attachment, with the cut card pasted into the body of an email.
- A paraphrased source should be sent as an attachment, with the specific section pasted into the body of an email, in accordance with official regulations.
- A file that is too large to send via email should be uploaded and shared via Google Drive.
- A link or hyperlink pasted into the body of an email is not an accepted method.
- Each competitor or partnership should consider creating a separate email account for online competition. Adding a personal email address to an email chain is not recommended.

Practicing this *before* competition is strongly recommended.

Judges

Judges access both their ballots and NSDA Campus via their Tabroom account. After logging in, click on your email address at the top of the page and then on Upcoming Ballots or Current Ballots in the right sidebar — this provides access to the Judges Lounge link and ballots once pairings have been released..

Decision Times — Please start your round at the assigned time. You have about 60 to 75 minutes for LD and PF to make a decision (about 105 minutes for Policy), type comments, assign speaker points, assign a winner and a
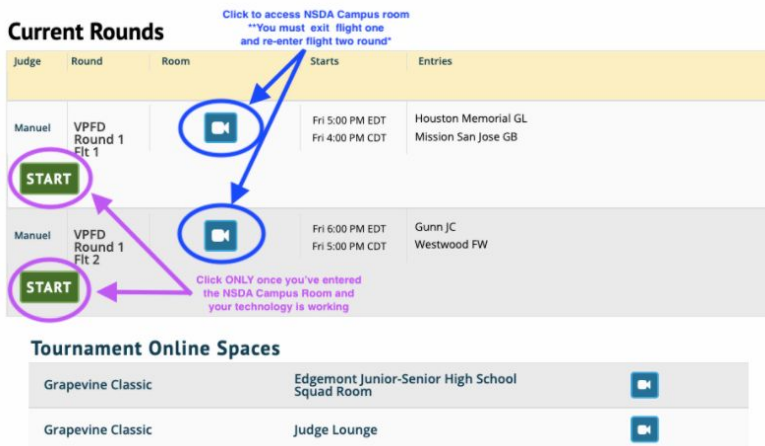
loser, and provide a Reason for Decision (RFD). The most important role of the judge is to write thoughtful and thorough ballots.

Standby Judges — If you are not assigned a round during your flight, you are expected to check into the JUDGES LOUNGE remain there until all rounds have started. The Tab Staff will call out for replacement judges. If you are not scheduled during your flight and are not in the JUDGES LOUNGE when called, your school will receive a "missing judge" fine. We appreciate your help to ensure the event remains on schedule.

While you will view the round in NSDA Campus, you will complete your ballots in Tabroom.com. We greatly encourage you to test your system to keep two windows or screens open or even use two different computers (checkout the Chrome Split Screen extension from Dualless). Please do not wait until the round has finished to begin typing your ballot. This can greatly delay the tournament. In the midst of this new, innovative environment, we want to ensure our students receive the necessary feedback and encouragement to continue improving their performance with a positive mindset and appreciation of the experience.

Completing Your Ballot
If you are a judge with a ballot and click on your email address at the top of the Tabroom screen, you will see this screen (alternatively, click on either Current Ballots or Upcoming Ballots on the right sidebar). Please use the Blue Video Link (Circled in Blue) to access your room. Your room will open in a new browser tab.

When you press START, your ballot will appear on your screen. Your ballot will look like every other Tabroom.com ballot with one notable change: the blue video link to access your room (Purple Circle) will be located at the top of your ballot screen:

Judges are required to provide helpful, written feedback. Keep in mind that written feedback will be visible to the coaches of the competitors and that coaches and competitors use this feedback for educational purposes.

Coaches

Digital Bus / Squad Room

Coaches should direct competitors and judges to meet before the tournament in a "digital bus" in Tabroom's Squad Room to confirm "arrival" for the tournament before confirming Registration.

Coaches can monitor the round assignments of their competitors and judges by clicking on the tournament Results tab in Tabroom and then clicking on the School Dashboard link in the right sidebar.
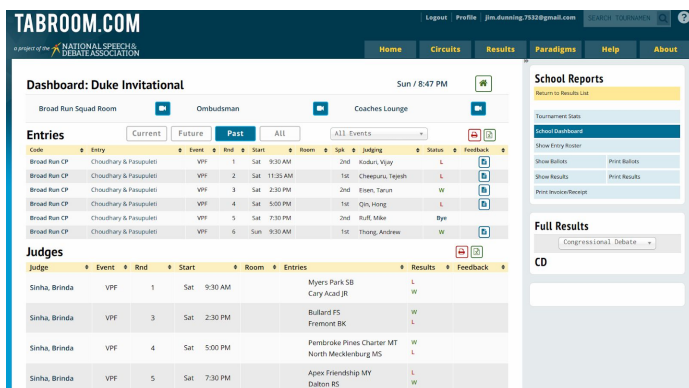
Once you're on the tournament dashboard, and pairings are released, you can see all of your competitors current, past, and future rounds. More importantly, you can access your team Squad Room," which is provided through NSDA Campus.
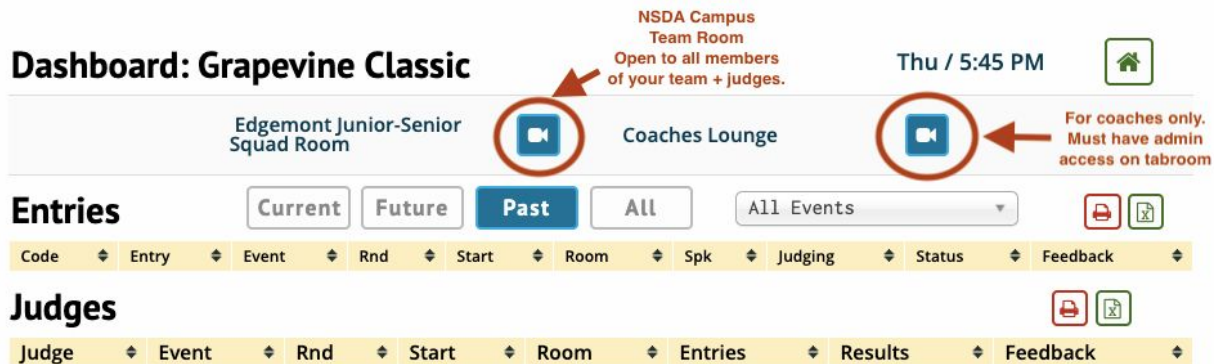
In-Round Troubleshooting
The success of in-round troubleshooting will depend on your pre-round planning. Use all available resources available to you and implement your "Plan B."

- Use the troubleshooting steps listed above
- Record your round on your phone, computer, or another recording device
- Use a MiFi or mobile hotspot

While we cannot be your solution to tech problems during the tournament, we strongly believe that preparing ahead of time and following the guides listed in this document will set you up for success.

WHAT IF THERE IS TECH ISSUES? OR MEMORY ISSUES? OR NOISE IN THE BACKGROUND?
OR PUPPIES RUNNING AROUND?

Please exercise patience and understanding if students get lost, drop out, freeze, lag, have dogs barking in the background, arrive appropriately late, whatever. Regardless of reason, we want to ensure our competitors and judges feel valued in their competition experience.

If a student's technology drops out, they will be afforded an opportunity to rejoin the room and continue **where they dropped out**. If a student experiences technical issues or leaves the call, the judge should start a 10-minute timer. If a student is unable to rejoin or solve their technical issues within that 10 minutes, then they will be assigned a forfeit. Please contact Tab Room if someone utilizes all of their Tech Time. Before you penalize any student for what you believe to be an infraction of the rules, please contact Tab Room by texting 420-428-0301. We will arrange a call or Zoom room where we can talk over the concerns with you.

We'd like to thank our colleagues at Loyola HS in Los Angeles, Grapevine HS in Dallas, TX, and Brian Manuel of Edgemont Sr. HS, and Crawford Leavy at Duke University for sharing screenshots and tips from their invitationals. Also, thanks to the Yale Invitational and the Duke Invitational for guidance.