

Understanding WASDL MetroFinals

How students qualify for MetroFinals and the NCFL Grand National Tournament.

Washington Area Speech and Debate League

About MetroFinals

WASDL MetroFinal tournaments determine which students qualify to attend the National Catholic Forensic League (NCFL) Grand National Tournament, held each year over Memorial Day weekend. Middle school students can compete at MetroFinals, but are not eligible to compete at NCFL Nationals. (The NCFL holds a virtual national tournament just for middle school students.) Each academic year, from October – February, WASDL holds five preliminary tournaments in each event. Preliminary tournaments are open to all students at member schools and determine which students are eligible for the MetroFinals, which are held in March.

WASDL is separate from the Catholic Church and is not organized or governed by it. However, our league is structured into two geographic regions, corresponding to the Arlington Diocese & Washington Archdiocese boundaries. Schools in these regions compete *together* at preliminary tournaments, but *separately* in Speech and Varsity debate at MetroFinals. Students qualify for WASDL MetroFinals and the NCFL Grand National Tournament representing either the Arlington or Washington diocese. For the 2026–27 school year, both the Arlington and Washington Dioceses can send up to 7 entries in each event to the NCFL Grand National Tournament.

In PF, LD and Policy debate, only students competing in the Varsity division at MetroFinals are eligible to advance to the NCFL National Tournament. In Speech and Student Congress, students of all experience levels compete together, so the top achieving students in these events will receive NCFL bids.

Coaches are responsible for tracking student eligibility for MetroFinals, based on the results from each preliminary tournament. Upon the conclusion of the final preliminary tournament, WASDL will release a list of students eligible to compete at MetroFinals.

Qualifying in Speech (all events)

There are several ways to qualify for MetroFinals in Speech:

- The student has received a first through sixth place award at *any* preliminary tournament.
- The student has achieved a **total rank of 10 or less** at any preliminary tournament.
- The student is one of the **top three** contestants from **each diocese** in any event.
- The student has competed in the same event at **three or more preliminary tournaments**, regardless of where they have placed.

- At each preliminary tournament, if a student has previously qualified for MetroFinals, another student from the day's competition may be named an **additional qualifier**.
- Students must compete at MetroFinals in the event they qualify in, though they may change pieces if they desire.
- In Duo Interp, pairs may be changed for MetroFinals as long as **both students** have qualified in Duo. A Duo pair that qualifies for NCFL Nationals must compete as that pair and cannot change partners.
- At Speech MetroFinals, students will only compete against others from their diocese in the four preliminary rounds. Meaning, an Arlington school will not compete against a Washington school.
- After the four preliminary rounds, there is a single Championship Round, with the top 3 students from each diocese in each event. This round is for the WASDL Championship, and does not affect qualifications to NCFL Nationals.
- Students can double-enter at WASDL MetroFinals, but can only single-enter at NCFL Nationals. If a student qualifies in two events, they must choose one and the coach must notify the League President within two weeks of MetroFinals.

Qualifying in Public Forum, Lincoln-Douglas and Policy debate

In these events, there is no Novice MetroFinal division, just Varsity, Junior Varsity (JV) and Middle School (MS) divisions. In Varsity, students compete only against schools in their diocese. In JV and MS, all schools compete together, regardless of diocese, similar to WASDL preliminary tournaments. Only students in the Varsity division are eligible to advance to the NCFL Grand National Tournament. There are several ways to qualify for MetroFinals:

- An entry competing in Varsity, Junior Varsity or Middle School has received a first through sixth place award at *any* preliminary tournament.
- An entry in Varsity, JV or Middle School has 3 wins and 1 loss at any **two** preliminary tournaments or has a record of 4 wins and 0 losses at any **single** preliminary tournament.
- The first-place finisher in the **Novice** division at each preliminary tournament will automatically qualify for MetroFinals in the **Junior Varsity** division. The second through sixth place finishers in Novice at each preliminary tournament shall be considered to have earned a record of **3 wins and 1 loss in the Junior Varsity** division for purposes of determining MetroFinal qualifications. Some coaches refer to this as earning a “half-bid” or “half-qual”, with the other half coming as a 3-1 record in JV. (Any student finishing in the top six in Novice at a preliminary tournament must advance to JV or Varsity.)
- An entry in Novice finishing less than first place, but with a record of 4-0 shall be considered to have earned a record of 3 wins and 1 loss in the JV division (a half-bid) for purposes of determining MetroFinal Junior Varsity qualifications.

- At each preliminary tournament, **additional qualifiers** may be named, so that there are **six** new entries from the top finishers.
 - In **Varsity**, if the top six finishers provide three new entries in each diocese, no additional qualifiers are named. If not, additional entries will be pulled up so there are three new qualifiers from the Washington diocese and three from the Arlington diocese.
 - In **Junior Varsity and Middle School**, if the top six finishers provide six new entries, regardless of diocese, no additional qualifiers are named. If not, additional entries are pulled up so there are six new qualifiers from each preliminary tournament.

In Public Forum and Policy debate, students qualify for MetroFinals as individuals. Meaning, at the end of the preliminary season, students may change partners, as long as **each student has individually qualified** for MetroFinals. Coaches may not create a team using one qualifying student and another student who has not qualified. Both students must compete in the highest division that they qualified in. A pairing that qualifies for NCFL Nationals must compete as that pair and cannot change partners.

Qualifying in Student Congress

There are several ways to qualify for MetroFinals in Student Congress:

- The student has received a first through third place award at any preliminary tournament.
- If a student has previously qualified, another student may be named an **additional qualifier**, so that a minimum of two students from each chamber in each diocese qualify for MetroFinals.
- If there are fewer than fifty (50) entries in a given diocese (Arlington or Washington) of MetroFinals, then additional call-ups shall be made for that diocese based on the ranking of each student's highest total score at a single tournament during the preliminary season.