

Speech Judge Reminders and FAQs

How can I avoid technology problems?

- Top tip: use Google Chrome if possible.
- Be sure your camera and microphone are enabled.
- Click [HERE](#) for the [Technology Guidelines](#) detailing Device and Browser Requirements


How do I access ballot selection?

Check In

- **Approximately 45 minutes before the round**, please log in to your account on NCFCA.org with a supported browser.
- Find the Tournament under My Upcoming Tournaments and Enter.
- Click on Check-in and follow the prompts to confirm your contact information and rounds (Community Judges)
- Wait for the Select button for the round to display near the top of the screen.
- See the screenshots below.

2025 Test Tournament

NOTIFICATIONS

 Please check in daily to take a ballot once the tournament starts.

Judge Tournament Check-In ✕

1 Verify your information 2 Confirm your rounds 3 Complete check-in

Thank you for checking in as a volunteer judge! You will need to check in on each day you are registered to judge.

Please confirm that the phone number listed below is the number you will use during the tournament to receive notifications and for tournament administration to contact you if necessary. Editing the phone number provides contact information for this tournament only.

If you need to update your account profile, click exit to return to the registration dashboard, then click the drop down arrow next to your name in the top right corner of the screen, and select "Update Profile." Contact the Judge Coordinator if you need additional assistance.

First Name
Talia


Last Name
Test Judge


Mobile Phone Number *

May we text you tournament updates at this phone number? *

Please select...


Email Address
name@email.com


Leave Tournament --> 


 **Test Judge**


name@gmail.com


COMMUNITY JUDGE


 Information

 Community Judges

 **Check-in**

 Schedule / Postings

 Contacts

 Resources

2025 Test Tournament (Tab)

Tournament Actions

Ballot Selection

Select

Choose Your Speech Round 1 A Ballot

Why do I need to log in 45 minutes before the round?

- Ballots are released to judges in groups well ahead of the round. We aim to have all judges on ballots 20 minutes prior to the first speaker. This allows you to have time to check-in and check technology, have a choice of ballots, review event information, and be ready at the competition room before the first competitor's assigned speaking time.

How do I choose a ballot?

- **About 30-45 minutes before the round begins**, judges will begin to see notifications by text and on the tournament dashboard that it's time to select a ballot.
- A ballot selection button for the round will appear on your dashboard screen.
- Our system will show two competition room choices at a time with the names of the competitors.
- Click to accept a ballot that does not include competitors that you know on a personal basis.
- If you need assistance finding a ballot that works for you, please contact Tournament Administration.

What if I accidentally choose a ballot with someone I know?

- In the event that you discover a conflict with your ballot selection, please contact Tournament Administration as soon as possible for assistance with a reassignment.

What should I do after selecting my ballot?

- Once you have selected a ballot, you will see the room you have selected on your screen with a View button that displays participants. Please check again to be sure you do not have conflicts with competitors.
- There may be a waiting time while other judges select the rest of the remaining ballots.

- While you wait, you can read about your selected event and preview a sample ballot.
- This is also a good time to refill your beverage and prepare for the round which will take approximately 2 hours. Please do not leave the competition room during the round. If there is an emergency during a round, please contact Tournament Administration.
- When it's time for the round to begin, you will receive a text and/or dashboard notification from Tournament Administration.
- For an in-person tournament, the View button will change to Open.
- For an online tournament you will see a Join button to enter the electronic competition room.

What should I expect during the round?

- Be ready at your room before the first scheduled speaker.
- The Head Judge will keep the round moving.
- Make notes for each competitor in the electronic ballot between speeches.
- Enter the time announced for each student and mark the Timer Issue box if instructed to do so by the Head Judge.
- Some events have a checkbox to indicate that a student used a script.
- Adjust scores and ranking as the round progresses. Click [HERE](#) for a demonstration of ranking students. You can keep adjusting up until your ballot submission.
- Students love your feedback! Use the comments sections to write qualitative feedback for each competitor.
- Confirm your ranking before submission, as *submitted rankings are final*.

Which fields am I required to complete on my ballots?

The following must be completed on your ballots in order to submit them successfully.

- Did/Did Not Compete
- Time
- Timer Issue
- Script Use (if applicable to the event)
- Overall Comment
- Score for each category criterion
- Ranking

Where can I find out more about the events?

To see a preview of all the events you can judge, scroll down on the [welcome judge page](#). You can click on any of the ten events to find out more!

Do I need to read the event rules?

- We do not expect our community judges to be familiar with all of our event rules. You are asked to evaluate the round based on the event description and ballot criteria.
- An NCFCA affiliate will be assigned as the Head Judge for the room. The head judge has instructions for reviewing the rules and for bringing any rule questions they may have to the Compliance Team after the round.
- Other judges are also welcome to read the rules if you would like.
- If you have questions about a rule, please bring your question to the Compliance Team after the round.

May I ask the competitors questions?

- Please do not interrupt or ask questions of the competitors during or after the round. Competitors understand they are only supposed to introduce themselves by name and then speak with judges during their timed speech. Speaking to them before, during, or after the round should be limited to communication needed to begin the speech.

What if I have questions about something in the speech?

- Please do not conduct independent research or confer with other judges or discuss questions with anyone except tournament administration regarding the speech content, the rules, or your rankings.
- Our competitors will receive your feedback on their ballots at the end of the tournament.

May I take photographs or recordings?

- Please do not record the round or take photographs of the competitors.
- Please do not use your cell phone during the round unless you encounter an issue that requires a conversation with tournament administration.

What do I do if I need help?

- For an issue that must be resolved during the round
 - At in-person tournaments, contact a member of our Communications Team, identified by green name tag inserts and stationed near your room.
 - At online tournaments, change the room status to “Need Help” in the upper right corner of your screen. If you are not able to use the functionality in the competition room, please try to use the Contact

Tournament Administration button on your dashboard and monitor your phone for contact from a tournament representative.

- For help after the round is complete
 - You may use the Contact Tournament Administration button in the upper right corner of your screen.
 - At in-person tournaments, you also have the option to consult members of the Compliance Team, identified by yellow name tag inserts.

What do I do after the round ends?

- At the end of the round, please exit the competition room to finish filling out your ballot. For in-person tournaments, please remain at the facility until your ballot is submitted.
- You will receive a notification indicating the time when ballots are due. In order for the tournament to proceed in a timely manner, please prioritize your decision and speaker rankings, then provide as much additional feedback as time allows.
- Once your ballot is submitted, your work for the round is complete.

Can I get volunteer hours for judging?

Thank you for judging! If you would like a Volunteer Certification for your time, please contact our Judge Support Team.

Speech Ballot Ranking Tips

Our new ballots are designed to be a flexible tool for all types of judges. If you haven't already done so, we recommend watching the [Completing a Speech Ballot Demonstration](#) and perusing the ballot samples and rubrics, which can be found on the [Speech Judge Information page](#).

We recommend two methods for completing your speech ballots. You may prefer to modify your method as you become more comfortable completing ballots this season. The tips below are for judges who want to know more about our new scoring and ranking system.

Score First Method: I would like to score as I go along and let the system rank for me.

Yes! We recommend rewatching the chapter called "Score First" Method (3:06) in the [Completing a Speech Ballot Demonstration](#) video.

How to "score first":

1. Score, make any comments, and fill in the required information in the ballots as you hear the speakers.
2. The system will automatically add the scores and rank the speakers. *Do not adjust the speakers' rankings as you go along.*
3. At the end of the round, select the arrows next to the “rank” column to change the display from speaking order to rank order.
4. Work from **top to bottom** to break any tied scores. It's perfectly fine if scores are tied. When reranking equal scores, consider the overall impact of the speeches or what criterion you want to weigh as more important.

Rank First Method: I would like to rank as I go along and not worry about the scores until the end.

Yes! We recommend rewatching the chapter called “Rank First” Method (5:20) in the [Completing a Speech Ballot Demonstration](#) video.

How to “rank first”:

1. Leave the speakers with no initial score until the end of the round.
2. Add comments and rank competitors as you go through the round with no scores.
3. At the end of the round, select the arrows next to the “rank” column to change the display from speaking order to rank order (pictured below).



4. Work from **top to bottom** to assign scores. Once you've given the top competitor a score, the system will undo the rankings as you assign scores, but it will keep the order of competitors as you have ranked them.
 - a. The ballot requires a score to submit.
 - b. Begin adjusting scores from top to bottom, giving your top-performing competitors high-ranking scores, those in the middle “capable” scores, and those on the bottom “developing” scores.
 - c. It's perfectly fine if scores are tied. When reranking equal scores, consider the overall impact of the speeches or what criterion you want to weigh as more important.

When 3 or more scores are tied, the system erases my ranking of the first two. Is this a glitch in the system?

Our system dynamically adjusts rankings according to the numerical scores. Any equal scores will need to be reranked, which requires the judge to break the ties again if he or she goes from a 2-way tie to a 3-way tie. This ensures the judge has considered how to rank all three tied students against one another.

I don't feel comfortable giving competitors low scores.

We know our judges don't want to discourage our competitors by giving them lower numbers, but we also hope that providing a rubric as a guide will help judges see how their feedback might help students understand their ranking.

The scores I picked don't reflect how I want the rankings.

While our scoring system will generally yield the ranking that judges want, we understand that sometimes the nuances of evaluating speeches may not exactly follow the scores. That's okay!

If a competitor has a low score and should be ranked higher, choose one or two criteria to score higher, making the total score higher. If the score does not reflect the description in the ballot rubric, you can give the competitor qualitative feedback that does reflect your opinion in the comments section.

Remember, our tournament staff in the judge hospitality area is ready to help you navigate the ballot submission process.

What do we mean by "Academic Integrity"? Isn't that a simple question of yes or no?

Bolstering the speaker's credibility through logical and clear communication in our platform and limited prep events becomes a crucial skill to challenge and equip our competitors to communicate truth with *integrity* and grace. Mastering the skill of communicating academic integrity is in degrees; thinking of academic integrity as a "yes" or "no" concept may miss a great opportunity for judges to promote growth in our competitors toward excellence in this skill!

Think of this criterion category as a skill to be developed. *How well did the speaker communicate the ownership of the ideas presented?*

In the ballot's Academic Integrity criterion rubric, the descriptions will prompt you to think about how well the speaker offers support and citations to the ideas presented. *How well did the speaker support their ideas with logic or expert opinion? Was the source of a quote clearly understood? How easily did I understand the difference between the speaker's ideas and those taken from others?* With excellence, this academic integrity builds credibility for the "ambassador of Christ" and the truth he or she presents will more effectively be received. This is an area of growth for most speakers as they develop their speeches, and we are excited for our judges to be equipped to promote this growth through honest scores and encouraging feedback!

What happened to the "Impact" section on the platform and limited prep ballots? How do I include the impact in my ballot ranking?

The impact of a speech should be seen and felt through all aspects of a speech. By weaving this idea throughout the rubric, we hope to simplify the judging process and allow for greater efficiency. Judges will include how well these areas impacted them as they score each criterion, and they will also consider the overall impact of the speech as they break any tied scores in the room. Sometimes the content may be more impactful in one speech, and the joyful delivery may be more moving and memorable in another speech. Overall rankings can reflect these aspects, as well as any comments.

Although no longer a section in our limited prep and platform events, Impact is still a separate criterion section in our interpretation ballots. In our interpretation speeches, we purposefully elevated Impact to appeal to the rhetorical art of *pathos*, allowing judges to consider how well the speech connected to the audience to emphasize the art of storytelling.

What if I don't view all the ballot criteria categories equally? What if I want to weigh content more than delivery?

Weighing one criterion category over another can certainly be done with our new ballots. Often this will happen when two speeches are very close in ranking. They may have tied scores, and you can use one category, such as content, to determine which speech should be ranked higher than the other. If you find that you always prefer one criterion category over the rest, then you may find the "rank first" method of ballot ranking to be your preferred method.