

Maine Forensic Association By-laws

Adopted September 2009, Revised 2011, 2015, 2016

Revisions passed in 2016 highlighted

Article 1. Membership

Section A. Amount of Dues

1. Annual dues shall be \$75.00 per school.

Section B. Payment of Dues

1. An invoices shall be made available to all schools by the Fall Coaches Conference.
2. Membership fee must be paid in full by December 1 or an additional late fee of \$25.00 will be charged.
3. Schools which pay MFA dues will be added to the MFA Mailing list and will receive all invitations to Maine Speech and Debate tournaments, depending on their stated preference.
4. New schools may pay ½ price on MFA membership dues and tournament entry fees during their first year of membership.

Section C. Benefits of Membership

1. Schools that are members of the Maine Forensic Association shall each have a vote at regularly scheduled meetings, as well as at any other meetings (physical or electronic) called by the MFA officers.
2. The Secretary will update the membership list at Fall Coaches Conference.
3. The Secretary shall publish the membership list and provide a copy to each coach by Oct. 1.

Section D. Officers and other positions

1. The MFA president shall serve a two year term, beginning in the fall after they have served at least one year as President elect (see #5 below). The duties of President shall include
 - a. Running the Fall and Spring Coaches Conference and any other meeting designated by the officers
 - b. Designating a tab staff of the Speech State Championship Tournament, the Debate State Championship, and the Student Congress State Championship.
 - c. Assisting the school(s) hosting the State Tournament
 - d. Make any other executive decisions for the good of the organization as necessary in circumstances that urgency or confidentiality does not allow an executive committee vote.
2. The MFA shall have a Vice President, who is elected for 2 years beginning in the fall of the odd numbered year in which they are elected, and whose duties shall include
 - a. Assisting the President throughout the year.
 - b. Serving as a liaison between the Maine Forensic Association and the Maine Principal's Association including the Spear Contest.

- c. Assisting the State Tournament Director in running the tournament(s).
 - d. Overseeing the Student Advisory Board (i.e. "The Council of Nine")
3. The MFA shall have a Treasurer, who is elected for 2 years beginning in the spring of the odd numbered year in which they are elected, and whose duties shall include
 - a. Keeping financial records for the Maine Forensic Association.
 - b. Serving as a receiving agent for MFA dues and registration fees for the State Tournaments.
 - c. Assisting the state Tournament Director in running the tournament.
4. The MFA shall have a Secretary, who is elected for 2 years beginning in the spring of even numbered year in which they are elected, and whose duties shall include
 - a. Maintaining notes at all meetings.
 - b. Publishing minutes from all meetings.
 - c. Maintaining an address list of all MFA schools.
 - d. Assisting the State Tournament Director in running the tournament.
5. The MFA shall have a President Elect, who is elected for a year, beginning in the fall of the even numbered year in which they are elected.
 - a. The President Elect will have voting rights like all other officers and will have one year of training before becoming President the following year for two years.
 - b. In the event the President Elect is unable to assume the duties of the President after the one year training period, a majority of MFA members in attendance at the next announced Coaches Meeting may elect any association member, including the current President to a one year term.
6. The MFA will annually elect moderators for each of the following areas: Lincoln Douglas Debate, Public Forum, Speech, and Congressional Debate. The moderators will serve as a reference for questions that arise in their specific field. They will help new programs get started and old programs to continue.

Article II. Quorum

Section A. No quorum is necessary for holding a meeting. A vote shall be binding by membership in attendance and including proxies.

Article III. Order of Business

Section A. Order of business shall follow the procedures set forth in Robert's Rules of Order, Newly Revised.

Article IV. Amendments

Section A. Amendments to these by-laws shall be proposed any time in writing and will be communicated to coaches in writing 30 days before the vote is needed.

Section B. Amendments shall pass with a two-thirds majority vote of the MFA members present.

Section C. In the event a bylaw change must be made during the commutative season, the President may authorize, with the concurrence of all other MFA Officers that a vote be taken at a tournament already scheduled provided that:

1. Notice of that intent be given at least one month ahead of time, and is included with the invitation to the tournament, sent to all MFA members.
2. Any discussion and vote should not interfere with the running of the tournament.
3. Provisions are made for MFA member schools to vote by mail, phone, and fax or email if unable to attend the tournament. The MFA President or their designate shall collect and tabulate these votes, before information the MFA of the final decision.
4. The date of amendments passed will be included in future versions of these Bylaws.

Article V. Lincoln-Douglas Debate

(adopted September 2005)

Section A. Resolutions

1. Lincoln-Douglas debate resolutions shall be those determined and published by the NFL for each tournament event date.
 - a. For the months of September and October, the Lincoln-Douglas Resolution published by the NFL for the months of September/October shall used for tournament events, except when only a single regular debate event is scheduled for the September/October period, whereupon the NFL November/December Lincoln-Douglas Resolution shall be used.
 - b. If a tournament event is scheduled for February and is postponed until March due to inclement weather, the January/February Resolution shall be used at the March tournament event unless voted otherwise by a majority of MFA member schools.
 - c. Tournament directors may choose an alternate topic for the resolution if all teams are given three weeks notice.

Section B. Debate Format

1. Each Lincoln-Douglas round shall include a single debater representing the Affirmative side of the Resolution and a single debater representing the Negative side of the Resolution. The order of speaking, according to time allotment, shall be as follows:
 - a. Affirmative Constructive 6 Minutes
 - b. Negative Cross Examination 3 Minutes
 - c. Negative Constructive 7 Minutes
 - d. Affirmative Cross Examination 3 Minutes
 - e. First Affirmative Rebuttal 4 Minutes
 - f. Negative Rebuttal 6 Minutes
 - g. Second Affirmative Rebuttal 3 Minutes
2. Each debater shall be allotted a maximum of 4 minutes of preparation time, to be used at the debater's discretion, immediately prior to any of their respective speaking or questioning periods.
3. Consult the current MFA LD manual Debating the Maine Way for additional detailed information about common Lincoln-Douglas event rules, format and judging.

Section C. Participation in Lincoln-Douglas Debate

1. There shall be three Lincoln-Douglas debate divisions:
 - a. Novice - Anyone who has not previously participated inter-scholastically in MFA competition (Debate, Congressional Debate or Speech) at the high school level.
 - b. Junior Varsity - Anyone with not more than one year of prior debate experience.
 - c. Varsity - All other debaters.
2. Successful Novice or Junior Varsity debaters are encouraged to move to the next higher debate division. Advancement of debaters to higher debate divisions shall be left to the discretion of the debate coach, to be based on individual circumstances.
3. A coach may seek an exception to assignment of debaters to the above divisions by consulting with the tournament director before registration. For the MFA State Championship tournament, a coach may file for exception to assignment of debaters per debate division due to extenuating circumstances by submitting a written petition to the MFA President. The MFA President shall have the final authority in making decisions regarding debater assignment to debate divisions.
4. The above divisions of Lincoln-Douglas Debate shall be offered at regular season tournaments when the Tournament Director deems appropriate. At the State Championship Tournament, the MFA Officers may collapse divisions if registration numbers mandate.

Section D. Judging Lincoln-Douglas Debate

1. Each participating school at a debate event shall be responsible to provide one judge for every two Lincoln-Douglas debate participants.
2. Judges shall have completed judges' training and have the following experience. Judges' training shall consist of attendance at an MFA instructional event, or other training provided by a local MFA debate coach.
 - a. Novice debate- Judges may participate in Novice division with any prior Lincoln-Douglas judging experience. First time judges (without prior judging experience) shall have observed at least two rounds of Lincoln-Douglas debate at an MFA tournament event with an experienced judge.
 - b. Junior Varsity Debate - Judges who have at least eight prior rounds of Lincoln-Douglas judging experience at MFA tournament events may participate in the Junior Varsity division.
 - c. Varsity Debate - Judges who have at least sixteen prior rounds of Lincoln-Douglas judging experience at MFA tournament events may participate in the Varsity division.
3. Post-secondary students with high school and/or collegiate debate experience shall be eligible to serve as debate judges. Such students must have completed at least one academic year of post-secondary education, and they must meet the judge experience requirements for each division of debate. Post-secondary college students shall be limited to judging the Novice division until their third post-secondary year.
4. Judges shall not judge debate rounds that include debate participants from the same school that the judge represents.
5. Parents of participating debaters shall not judge debate rounds in the debate division that their children participate.
6. Judges shall not judge any debate participant more than once at a given tournament event unless permitted by the tournament event director.

7. It shall be the participating school's responsibility to identify Lincoln-Douglas judge qualifications according to debate division. Judge qualifications shall be submitted with the tournament event entry registration. In addition, any parent/school judging conflicts shall be identified with the event tournament entry registration.
8. Varsity debaters with a minimum of 250 NFL points may judge at the novice tournament.

Article VI. Public Forum Debate

Section A. Resolutions

1. The resolution used for Public Forum Debate shall be those determined by the NFL and published in The Rostrum, changing monthly.
2. Tournament directors may choose an alternate topic for the resolution if all teams are given three weeks notice.

Section B. Participation in Public Forum Debate

1. When entries allow, there shall be two Public Forum Debate divisions (the following distinctions are guidelines only, and are subject to coach discretion):
 - a. Novice - Freshmen and sophomores who have not previously debated inter-scholastically.
 - b. Varsity - All other debaters (Open division).
 - c. A coach may seek an exception to assignment of debaters to the above divisions by consulting with the tournament director before registration. For the MFA State Championship tournament, a coach may file for exception to assignment of debaters per debate division to due extenuating circumstances by submitting a written petition to the MFA President. The MFA President shall have the final authority in making decisions regarding debater assignment to debate divisions.

Section C. Judging

1. Coaches will be required to provide a judge for every two teams entered in a tournament or fraction thereof.
2. Coaches are required to familiarize their judges with the Public Forum debate format.
3. Parents of debaters shall not judge divisions in which their children are competing.
4. First year high school graduates who competed in MFA events may judge novice rounds only.
5. Varsity debaters with a minimum of 250 NFL points may judge at the novice tournament.

Article VII. Speech/Individual Events

Section A. Events offered at individual Maine Speech Tournaments traditionally can include: Dramatic Interpretation, Duo, Ensemble, Extemporaneous, Humorous Interpretation, Novice Poetry, Novice Prose, Oratorical Declamation, Original Oratory, Original Works, Poetry, Prose, and Storytelling.

Section B. Extemporaneous may be combined into a single event. Extemporaneous topics are limited by a committee in the fall, with additional categories added to the limited list of each month. After January 1st, no topic limitations within the division exist.

Section C. Singing in Speech events will be limited to 30 seconds per performance piece.

Section D. Individual Events

1. Dramatic Interpretation, Humorous Interpretation, Duo and Original Oratory must be memorized by December 1st.
2. Scripts are optional in Ensemble and Original Works.
3. Scripts must be used in Poetry and Prose reading, as well as Novice Prose and Novice Poetry.
4. Novice Prose and Novice Poetry are limited to students in their first year of Maine Forensic Competition.
5. Storytelling is neither read, nor memorized. The category rules state that the story is to be told.
6. Extemporaneous Speakers may use a note card until December 1st.
7. Multiple characters can be used in Duo.
8. In Original Works both speaking and writing will count equally.
9. In Oratorical Declamation the use of scripts and a podium are optional.

Article VIII. Congressional Debate

Congressional Debate will be offered at appropriate regular season tournaments at the discretion of each tournament director. Student written bills will be submitted by that student's coach to the Congressional Debate Moderator or their designee prior to the tournament. The Congressional Debate Moderator will publish a schedule of due dates for each tournament at the beginning of the competitive season.

Article IX. State Championship Tournaments

State Championship Tournaments for Debate, Speech, and Congress will be run in accordance to the MFA State Championship Handbook.