

Welcome to Southeast Forensics!

 The entire coaching staff at Lincoln Southeast welcomes you to the world of high school competitive forensics! Competitive speech & debate is exciting, entertaining, educational and fun. This is true not just for the competitors, but also their supporters.

 You have joined an activity that, while long and tough, will return to you tenfold what you put into it. Not only will you improve your speaking and analytical abilities, learn more about current events, gain a deeper understanding of literature, and increase your level of personal confidence, but you will also meet many new people, see new places, and have some fun in the process. The skills you learn in this activity will only help you in the future. Also, hundreds of colleges and universities award thousands of dollars in scholarships and talent grants each year to top speakers and debaters alike.

 So welcome to Southeast Forensics! It’s hard work, but in the end, you’ll find the experience more than worthwhile. It’s hard work for the coaches as well – but we stick around year after year because this is a great activity filled with great people! The Southeast Forensics team strives to be just that – a team! Team members stick up for each other, tackle problems together, survive each other’s quirks, and generally make each other (and the coaching staff) smile! We’re so glad to welcome you to the team, and we’re looking forward to a wonderful season here at Lincoln Southeast!

Sincerely,

The Coaches

 Speech Debate

Mr. Tommy Bender Mr. Sam Segrist

Mrs. Leisa Larson Mr. Sam Segrist, Sr.

Mrs. Kelsey Lorimer Mr. Ben Schoeneberger

# Requirements for becoming a member of Knights Forensics

1. Any student in grades 9-12 may join, provided they are in good academic standing. Forensic team members are expected to keep their grades in good standing. Coaches can (and will) look up students grades at any time. Any student who is failing a class can be suspended from tournaments, pending written approval from the teacher involved. Any student who fails to do so will be placed on probation, where the student will use practice time as study time. In addition, students must meet the NSAA requirement for eligibility: passing at least 20 credit hours of class during the semester prior to competition.
2. Students must adhere to the rules and regulations of the school as listed in the student handbook. Failure to do so may result in suspension or dismissal from the team. Students must also comply with the regulations set forth in this handbook.
3. No student shall present any material in competition without specific permission of the coach.
4. A student must sign up or otherwise indicate to a coach their intention to attend individual tournaments a full week before that tournament. Students who commit to a tournament who fail to attend will be required to reimburse the school for any fees incurred on the student’s behalf.
5. A student may be suspended from the team for engaging in conduct – at any time – which is deemed detrimental to the team or the school. This shall be the decision of the coach approved by the school administration.
6. Plan on an early evening for the night before a contest. The team transportation will not wait for students beyond the designated departure time. Arriving on time for all activities will eliminate the necessity of calling parents to determine where students are. We **will check** on your location on the morning of tournaments.
7. Team members who miss two meetings in a row or three meetings in a semester (unexcused absences) may be suspended from the squad. Absences must be approved in advance by one of the coaches.
8. Team members who fail to practice two weeks in a row or three times in a semester (unexcused absences) may be suspended from the squad.
9. Southeast Team Members who violate the school’s drug/alcohol policy shall be suspended from team activities and competitions minimally for one semester, and may be dismissed from the team permanently. Such suspensions shall be the decision of the director with support from the school administration.
10. Students selected to participate in qualifying tournaments, such as NSAA districts of NFL districts, need to be prepared to fulfill their commitments should they qualify for further competition. In other words, if a student participates in NFL districts, it is with the understanding that they **will attend** Nationals should they qualify. They need to check family schedules and circumstances **before** entering these tournaments.

## Practice & Tournament Requirements

 As with any activity, speech and debate require a minimum level of practice and commitment to ensure your success. As coaches, we see the following requirements as your responsibility to the team. Unless we each perform to the best of our abilities, the team cannot succeed.

1. Team members are required to practice for at least one hour per week with coaches and peer coaches. If you are in an event with a partner, you must attend practice together. In general, we have an “official” practice night for both speech and debate. Speech is on Thursday evening, and Debate is on Tuesday evening. However, afternoon and other alternative practice times are available by appointment. If you do not practice the week of a tournament commitment, you **will not** be allowed to travel. Failure to practice in a regular and responsible manner may result in suspension and/or dismissal from the team.
2. If you must miss a scheduled practice session, you must let the coach know **in advance**. I realize emergencies come up, certain times of the school year are very hectic, etcetera, but you are still responsible for putting in your time. Your practice time for this activity is as important as practice time for athletics – if you miss an athletic practice, you wouldn’t expect to play – the importance of practice for speech and debate is no different.
3. Team members will be required to attend a minimum of EIGHT (8) of the scheduled tournaments in speech and debate, if they want to remain on the team. We feel it is necessary to attend and compete as a team, and going to tournaments, then, is a given.
4. Once you have turned in contracts for tournament attendance, we look at that as set in stone – you are committing to those tournaments. You can add after the contract is turned in, but not subtract, so long as you do not go over 12 regular season tournaments. Withdrawal from a tournament once entries have been submitted will require you to reimburse the team for any expenses incurred on your behalf. The **only** exceptions are a documented illness or a family emergency.

### Tournament Behavior and Dress

 Southeast Forensics Members are expected to act with respect and decorum at all times. You are essentially being judged from the time you step off the bus until the tournament is over. We do not do anything that would embarrass ourselves, our teammates, or most importantly – our school. Parents may be contacted to arrange for a student’s immediate transportation home in the case of serious rules infractions while at a tournament. Here are some general guidelines:

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* Don’t wear anything labeled with the school name or mascot (this also goes for spectators). All speakers and judges are given codes at tournaments so no one can be judged better or worse according to what team he or she belongs. Likewise, a speaker shouldn’t discuss his or her school or town.
* Don’t ever, ever, ever, knock on a door! Many schools have very soundproof doors and while you may not hear someone speaking inside, they will definitely be disrupted by a knock on the door!
* Don’t watch the judges while they are judging another speaker to gauge their reactions. Believe it or not, at some point *everyone* is tempted to do this. But just imagine how annoying this is for the judge – and we don’t want on their bad side! In general, don’t talk to judges in or out of rounds unless they speak to you first!
* Do not gossip about judges, competitors, teams, comments on ballots, or anything else while at the tournament! If you have nothing positive to say, don’t say anything. Critical comments take place somewhere other than the tournament. In other words . . . NO WHINING!
* Don’t dwell on things that are out of your control. You win tournaments one round at a time, and when and given round is over you can’t do anything about it. Go on and do your best in the rounds you have left.

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* Do be on your best behavior constantly! At tournaments, always remember that a judge may be listening to what you say – both in and out of rounds. Even judges who may not judge you today may judge you or a teammate at a later tournament or they may talk about you to other judges. Sometimes, rounds are won or lost by an inappropriate comment in the hall. In a word, DECORUM! Know it, learn it, live it, let it become a part of you. Please remember that you represent your team!
* Do wait to hear the applause when entering a room! When you are double entered and arriving at a room when the speaker has already begun, if there is no window, wait to hear applause before you enter the room, so as not to disturb the competing speaker. When you hear applause, you know a speaker has just finished.
* Do stay in your rounds and listen to all speakers. **If** you are double entered, you may be excused after you speak. When double-entered, mark the boards in both rooms so the judges know your status **before** the round. Go to your earliest scheduled event, then ask politely to be excused once finished. Do not leave or enter a room while someone is speaking. If you go to watch a teammate, stay for more than one speaker.
* Drink WATER – it’s the best thing for your voice.
* Remember we are guests at the host school. You must respect their property and facilities. We will clean our area before leaving any tournament; if you keep it clean in the first place this will not be a large job.
* Do get some sleep the night before the tournament! True, we will often leave at a ridiculous hour, but you must do your best to get some rest before then. Tournaments are long and draining events and you need every advantage!
* Do stay healthy! The speech season is long and your health affects your performance in everything! Take care of yourself!
* Do sit with our team during awards ceremonies. Have patience while waiting for the results – running a tournament isn’t easy. It is always important to be gracious losers and humble winners. Please congratulate those schools and students who win sweepstakes or their particular event. We expect you to change **ONLY** after finals rounds are finished, and **ONLY** into a team shirt. Remember, we are a **TEAM**!

#### Tournament Apparel

 Dress for success! The nonverbal picture painted by your attire at a tournament can make a very strong statement – both positive and negative. The judge’s first impression will be how you’re dressed. Although the perfect attire won’t guarantee success, the wrong outfit does guarantee problems. Although judges don’t have “clothing” categories on your ballots, they are human and will be subconsciously affected by what you wear. Consequently, you are expected to represent LSE well by dressing up for tournaments. Here are some general rules of thumb:

* Neatness counts – detail is important because all eyes are on the speaker, and whether it is a crooked tie, an untucked shirt, sloppy grooming, or wrinkly clothes, it will be noticed. Pay attention to detail.
* Never wear busy patterns – stick with solid colors and subtle prints. Be conservative! If your Grandma wouldn’t approve, chances are neither will your judges.
* Avoid “noisy” clothing – there’s nothing more distracting than clanking jewelry or change in the pockets. You want them to listen to you, not your clothes.
* Wear comfortable dress shoes – you’ll be on your feet a lot!
* Hair needs to be conservative and off the face (both genders!) – there’s no sense in working on great facial expressions if the judges can’t see them, or are distracted by you subconsciously fixing your hair.
* You don’t have to overdo it – most speakers can get through an entire season with one or two well-cared-for outfits.

WOMEN:

* DO wear dresses or business-type suits. Speech and debate tournaments are formal affairs in the sense you need to be dressed up. Not “prom dress” dressed up – think professional.
* AVOID shorts, miniskirts, dangling earrings, lots of jewelry and/or makeup, extremely high heels (longer than 2”), and anything denim.

MEN:

* DO wear slacks, dress shoes, dress shirts, black socks, and a tie. The same rules of professionalism apply. If it is possible to find a suit or sport coat, I HIGHLY recommend it.
* AVOID jeans, khakis, corduroys, short sleeves, string ties, and hats.

We can verify from experience that it is possible to meet the expectations for dress on a limited budget. Please don’t let these rules of thumb scare you off or keep you from joining the squad . . . I’m confident if there is a will there is a way, and we’ll find a way to get you fixed up and confident about how you look. ***Additionally, state legislation also provides for students who may have difficulty meeting the financial aspect of speech and/or debate. Please see a coach if you have a concern about this. Your privacy is guaranteed.***

**Post-Season Team Selection**

 Being chosen as a post-season team member is one of the highest honors you can receive during the season. The entire season becomes, in essence, a “tryout” for the team. All year we emphasize participation in several events in order to be competitive at large tournaments and to build team depth. However, as the season winds down, we are faced with three tough coaching decisions: (1) selecting the team for district and state competitions (which allow only two competitors per event); (2) choosing who will be eligible to attend the NFL National qualifying tournament, and; (3) determining who to nominate for NCFL consideration. It has always been difficult to perform these tasks, but as our team becomes more and more successful – and consequently, more and more internally competitive – we feel the necessity for an objective method of making these decisions. Therefore, we will follow this process for team selection:

 **In speech**, the procedure involves the computation of your average rank in rounds and your “break ratio.” In other words, we will keep track of how well you perform in both preliminary and final rounds. If you never receive anything but firsts and seconds, you will have a very low average rank, and chances are you will also have a high break ratio. We will also heavily consider the number of tournaments you attend, and this will be figured into the final decisions. **In debate**, NFL points will be used to decide who will advance to Qualifiers and/or State. First year competitors may advance, but points earned in the novice division of tournaments will be multiplied by .70 when compared to points earned in varsity competition.

 Despite this attempt to objectify the decision-making process, sometimes the choice isn’t so cut and dried. In those instances, please keep in mind the following:

1. We will always do what we feel is best for the team. For us, the success of the team is the ultimate goal, and we will make decisions based on what we believe will make us successful.
2. We will always do our best to reward dedication and years committed to the program. Especially with NFL and NCFL, we believe juniors and seniors who have demonstrated loyalty and dedication to the program have the first chance at the slots we earn. If we could guarantee everyone a trip to nationals, we would. Unfortunately, the system doesn’t work that way. In some cases it may be a case of “waiting your turn.” At other times, if we believe a younger member of the team has an outstanding chance of making it to nationals, we won’t hesitate to select that person. It makes everyone look good if we qualify people to nationals, so we will do what we can to make that happen.
3. If we still feel the race is too close to call, we may institute a challenge night which will be judged by qualified outside judges. We will listen to their recommendations, but the **FINAL DECISION WILL BE THE COACHES’ ALONE**.

**Officers**

 Important team functions will be completed by the following persons, to be nominated by the team and/or selected by the captains.

 The officers together form a committee that help run all aspects of the team, including but not limited to such items as fundraising, recruiting, goal setting, coordinating club functions, and weekly meetings.

##### Fundraising

 We expect our team to grow and prosper, even in the face of historically tightening school budgets. Consequently, we, as well as many other programs in the district, must fundraise to cover costs of competing. Our budget primarily goes for transportation, judging, and entry fees – almost in equal thirds. Our largest fundraiser is hosting tournaments, which can only be successful with parental help in many capacities. In addition, we will run two team fundraisers this year – wreath sales and frozen food. Students can meet their fundraising obligation (which is $125 this year) by any of the following:

1. Participating in team fundraising. 2. Parent volunteer judging. 3. Buyout.

More information specific to each of these fundraisers will be distributed to students and/or parents prior to their start.

**Parental Involvement**

 LSE Forensics welcomes and encourages parents to take an active role in our program. We simply need your help! The most successful speech and debate schools rely on outstanding parental involvement to foster the growth of a dynamic team. It’s never truly been official, but the LSE Parent Boosters do so much to make everything go smoothly. The four main areas of help are: concessions, fundraising, judging, and hospitality. Our parents have been stellar in the past, and we look forward to working with you this year as well!

**Supporting Classes**

 There are three different classes available to support the forensics team. The first two are **Oral Comm D** (Debate), and **Oral Comm F** (Forensics). Both of these classes meet the LPS graduation requirements for Oral Communication, with a slant towards their respective fields. The third class available is **Competitive Forensics**, which is an elective class that focuses specifically on Forensics competition. The availability of these classes is based on interest, so all team members are encouraged to sign up. Most successful teams we compete against start with the curriculum in the classroom.

**Forensic Organizations**

**National Speech and Debate Association**: The National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) is an organization dedicated to recognizing students who participate in the forensic arts. All members of the squad will become members simply by going to tournaments and accumulating “NSDA” points. The number of students our team is allowed to take to the NSDA National Qualifying Tournament depends upon the number of NSDA points and degrees the team earns during the course of the year. Additionally, squad members may qualify for the NSDA National Championships which are held in June at different sites around the country. This year, the tournament is in Dallas, TX. You can look up more information about the NSDA at <http://debate.uvm.edu/nfl.html> and <http://www.nflonline.org/> .

**National Catholic Forensic League**: Like the NFL, the NCFL is an organization dedicated to forensic excellence. Despite the name, your religious affiliation is irrelevant, as the primary purpose of the organization is to sponsor a national tournament. Interested students may be nominated to represent Nebraska at the Grand National Tournament. If selected, you will join approximately 2000 other students from around the country in a two-day competition. This year, the Grand National Tournament is in????. You can look up more information about the NCFL at <http://www.ncfl.org> .

**NIETOC:** The National Individual Events Tournament of Champions is a relatively new organization, which hosts a National Tournament of which students can qualify by getting “legs” or great finishes at designated tournaments which meet certain criteria. We’re proud to announce our speech tournament this year is an NIETOC qualifier! This year the tournament is in LINCOLN, NE!!!!

In addition to the two national organizations, there are two in-state organizations. The Nebraska State Activities Association, or **NSAA** is a sanctioning body we’re all familiar with. Look up speech information on their website at <http://www.nsaahome.org/speech.html> . The other organization is the Nebraska Speech Communication and Theatre Association (NSCTA) which hosts a State Debate tournament.

**Important contacts**

 Coach Cell Home Email

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