

National Catholic Forensic League Grand National Tournament 2018 Student Congress Info Sheet

***** Important Note: The competition at the Grand National Tournament adheres to the content of the NCFL Student Congress Manual. Local rules and those of other debate and speech organizations do not apply. *****

Competitors:

Congratulations on being part of the 2018 NCFL Grand National Tournament, and welcome to Washington, DC! There are a few key points we would like to communicate to you:

- On Saturday, Student Congress competition will be at the Grand Hyatt and the Mt. Vernon Square rooms of the Marriott Renaissance. All Student Congress competition on Sunday will be at the Grand Hyatt.
- Remember the importance of decorum in this event. Please continue the tradition of respect for your colleagues in and outside of the chambers, for the dedicated judges and parliamentarians, and for your chambers.
- We do not use committees to set the agenda for debate; rather, each chamber caucuses its agenda as a “Committee of the Whole” prior to debate beginning for Session 1. Members from the authoring diocesan league have sponsorship rights in preliminary rounds; sponsorship is not guaranteed during elimination rounds.
- While there is no minimum cycle rule for legislation, nor is there a rule that each member must speak on each item of legislation. The chamber should feel comfortable calling the question to avoid one-sided debate.
- During the last few moments of the Opening Meeting, judges will be dismissed to attend a briefing as you move to chambers. Without covering all elements of that briefing it is important to share that we do inform judges on key points that will help to identify candidates for “Best Legislator” in their chamber(s). Included in this briefing:
 - The definition of “Best Legislator”: not only speeches, but also questions, activity, and participation.
 - The role of the Presiding Officer, the value of good Presiding Officers, and the means to evaluate students serving in this capacity.
 - The different types of speeches judges might hear (constructive, rebuttal, extension, crystallization).

Best of luck this weekend!

Judges/Parliamentarians:

Thank you for your efforts this weekend to help students as they demonstrate leadership through speech. Whether you have judged in the Student Congress pool previously or this is your first time, please know that **this event could not happen without you**. There are a few items to bring to your attention.

We will be operating out of the Grand Hyatt, with our Tab Room located in the Washington Boardroom and the Judges’ Lounge (Saturday only) in the Bulfinch & Renwick Rooms. Judges not assigned during a given session should remain in the Bulfinch & Renwick Rooms on standby until released by a member of the tab staff.

At the Opening Meeting, tab staff will be present to check you in. Toward the end of the Opening Meeting, you will be dismissed to the Bulfinch & Renwick Rooms where judge check-in will continue and we will provide an overview of scoring and ranking at the GNT. Even if it is not your first time attending the GNT your presence in the Bulfinch & Renwick Rooms by 7:40 am is **mandatory**; this is the only way we know you are actually present and prepared to judge. Failure to attend all assigned check-ins – even to remain on standby – may result in a missed round fine being assessed.

Though more than one judge is assigned to each chamber at a time, you should not confer with other judges regarding the scores or ranks you assign to a student; these tasks must be completed independently. While you are judging it is important to note that you are not dismissed from a given session until a member of the tab staff has collected your paperwork and dismissed you; instructions regarding end-of-session procedures will be shared in the Judges’ Meeting.

Finally, we request that if you are in the judge pool that you not observe any competition chamber during the Preliminary Sessions unless it is one in which your own student is competing.

Thank you again for all that you do for our students!