**The Status of These Rules**

**1.1** These rules govern the Florida Forensics League (FFL) World Schools competition.

**1.2** The Executive Board of the FFL is empowered to make reasonable and defensible extrapolations of these rules, the bylaws, or official tournament rules to ensure a fair, accurate, efficient, and enjoyable tournament experience consistent with the mission of the FFL. The Executive Board may appoint an Ombudsperson or Chief Adjudication Panel to make initial rulings on their behalf. Decisions of the Executive Board are final.

**2. Eligibility of Participant**

**2.1 Teams**

**2.1.1** A team shall have at least three (3) and no more than five (5) members.

**2.1.2** Each FFL member school may enter up to two teams at their regional tournament**.**

**2.1.3** Each team must furnish one judge per two entries. The judge may not be entered into any other judging pool at the State Tournament. This judge must be available for the entirety of the tournament.

**2.1.4** World Schools will be capped at 24 entries at the FFL Varsity State Championship. Regional allotments will be proportionally reallocated to reach 24 slots. Lottery slots will be allocated to alternates following regionals pursuant the lottery reallocation process. Once all lottery requests have been honored, teams may apply for a third World Schools team to reach the 24 entry cap. Those applicants will be awarded the remaining slots via a random draw.

**3. Format**

**3.1 Teams in a Debate**

**3.1.1** In a debate there are two teams.

**3.1.2** One team proposes the motion for debate; the other team opposes it.

**3.2 Speakers in a Team**

**3.2.1** For each debate, there are three speakers.

**3.2.2** Before a debate begins, each team must inform the chairperson of the names of their three speakers, the Reply speaker, and the order in which they will be speaking.

**3.2.3** The only persons who may speak in a debate are the three speakers for each

team announced by the chairperson at the start of that debate.

**3.2.4** Each speaker gives only one constructive (substantive) speech.

**3.2.5** After each speaker has spoken, the first or second speaker for each team gives a reply speech, with the opposition reply going first and the proposition reply second.

**3.3 Timing of Speeches**

**3.3.1** The speaking time for substantive speeches is 8 minutes and for reply speeches

is 4 minutes.

**3.3.2** The judge shall provide time signals for each speech.

**3.3.3** In addition to the time signals provided by the judge, team members may give

time signals to a speaker provided that the signals are discreet and unobtrusive.

**3.3.4** Speakers may also keep their own time, but the timing of the judge is the official time.

**3.4 Interruptions**

**3.4.1** During a substantive speech (an 8-minute speech) a competitor from the

opposite team may rise or verbally interrupt that they wish to offer a Point of Information.

**3.4.2** A Point of Information may be a question or a statement.

**3.4.3** The first full minute of a substantive speech and the last full minute of a substantive speech are considered protected time. No Points of Information may be given during this time.

**3.4.4** The speaker may choose to accept a Point of Information or to reject or waive

down a Point of Information.

**3.4.4.1** Rejection can take the form of an obvious hand gesture or a verbal

comment from the speaker.

**3.4.5** Speakers are discouraged, though not prohibited from:

**3.4.5.1** Offering Points of Information that exceed 15 seconds.

**3.4.5.2** Rising more frequently than every 20 seconds during unprotected time to

offer Points of Information.

**3.4.6** There are no other interruptions in the flow of debate. Teams have no preparation time once the debate begins, nor is there any time dedicated to questioning speakers or providing cross-examination.

**3.5 Communication**

**3.5.1** During a debate, speakers may not communicate with their coach, other team

members who are not speaking in that debate, or any person in the audience.

**3.5.2** Debaters who are speaking in that debate may communicate with one another quietly.

**4. The Schematic**

**4.1 Preliminary Rounds**

**4.1.1** There will be 6 preliminary rounds. Debaters will not debate the same team twice in preliminary rounds. **4.1.2** The first two of these six preliminary debates shall be randomly paired by a computer program. In the first two rounds, teams will avoid debating members from their same region.

**4.1.3** The remaining three preliminary debates shall be determined by a computer program using a traditional high/low pairing procedure system.

**4.1.4** If there are an odd number of teams, a team may receive a bye.

**4.1.4.1** In the preset rounds, the bye is randomly assigned by the

computer.

**4.1.4.2** In the powermatched preliminary rounds, the bye is awarded to the

lowest ranked team that has not already received the bye.

**4.2 Alterations to the Draw**

**4.2.1** All teams who would have debated against a team that has withdrawn are

taken to have won the debate by forfeit.

**4.2.2** Where a team has either won or lost a debate by forfeit, the team will be taken

to have received speaking points equivalent to the average of their speaking points

in all other rounds.

**5. The Break**

**5.1 Preliminary Round Break  
5.1.1**. The elimination round sounding will follow FFL rules for advancing in debate.   
**5.2 Elimination Debates   
5.2.1** Bracket   
**5.2.1.1** The teams ranked according to rule 5.1 shall debate using a traditional bracketing system.

**5.2.1.2** Brackets will not be broken to avoid conflicts.

**5.2.2** Type of Debate

**5.2.2.1** Preliminary and elimination rounds will be a mix of impromptu and prepared motions pursuant the following schedule:

Round 1 – Impromptu

Round 2 – Prepared   
Round 3 – Impromptu  
Round 4 – Prepared

Round 5 – Prepared

Round 6 - Impromptu  
Quarters – Prepared

Semis – Impromptu  
Finals – Prepared (Florida motion)

Proposed Schedule to make this work:  
Round 1 (Impromptu) Prep – 9 AM   
Round 1 Round – 10 AM  
Round 2 (Prepared) Round 11:00 AM  
Round 3 (Impromptu) Prep - 1 PM  
Round 3 Round – 2 PM  
Round 4 (Prepared) Round 2:30 PM  
Round 5 (Prepared) Round – 4:00 PM  
Round 6 (Impromptu) Prep – 8 AM  
Round 6 Round – 9 AM  
Quarters (Prepared) Round – 10:30 AM  
Semis (Impromptu) Prep – 1 PM  
Semis Round – 2 PM  
Finals (Prepared-Florida Motion)– 3:30 PM

**6. Motions**

**6.1 Motion Format**

**6.1.1** Motions shall take the format befitting debate in a House of Parliament, will often begin with the phrase “This House,” which will often—but not exclusively—be followed by the verbs “would,” “believes that,” or “regrets.” In the final round “This House” will be replaced with appropriate Florida verbiage.  **7. Implicit Bias**

(insert FFL implicit bias statement here)

**8. Prepared Debates**

**8.1 Prepared Debates Definition**

**8.1.1** This part of the rules applies to any prepared debates.

**8.2 Preparation**

**8.2.1** All team members may participate in preparation of prepared motions.

**8.2.2** Coaches, team managers, parents, fellow students, and other interested

parties may assist in preparing for prepared motions.

**8.3 Materials**

**8.3.1** During preparation, any materials may be used that are conducive to the entry’s

education and preparation.

**8.3.2** During the debate, students may bring prepared notes with them into the round. However, **no electronic retrieval devices** (except the use of cellular phones for timing outlined in 8.3.3), including tablet and laptop computers, are permitted in the round. **Notes should be in paper form.**

**8.3.3** The use of hand-held cellular phones is permitted as a timing device only. The cellular phone must be kept in airplane mode during the debate. Use for any purpose other than timing may result in the loss of a round.

**8.3.4** During the debate, students are permitted to bring with them an English language dictionary or a bilingual dictionary and a single-volume encyclopedia or almanac.

**9. Impromptu Debates**

**9.1 Impromptu Debates Definition**

**9.1.1** This part of the rules applies to any impromptu debates.

**9.2 Preliminary Rounds**

**9.2.1** If impromptu debates are included in the preliminary rounds, every team must have the same number of impromptu debates as every other team, with the exception of byes.

**9.3 Preparation Time and Procedure  
9.3.1** Both the team supporting the motion and the team opposing the motion shall have one hour from the time the motion is released until the beginning of the impromptu round.

**9.3.2** All members of the team—both those who will be speaking in the round and

any other members who may speak in other rounds—may participate in

preparation. Up to five members of a team may participate. Team members may not

consult coaches or anyone other than the five members.

**9.4 Materials**

**9.4.1** Teams may **not** bring any handwritten, printed, or published materials with them into their preparation room (or area) for impromptu debates, with the exception of a published English language dictionary or a published bilingual dictionary and a published single-volume encyclopedia or almanac per team. No digital resources are permitted.

**9.4.2** Teams may **not** use any electronic storage and retrieval devices, including

tablet or laptop computers or hand-held cellular telephones in the preparation room (or area) for impromptu debates (except the use of cellular phones for timing—see 9.4.3 below.) **Notes should be in paper form.**

**9.4.3** The use of hand-held cellular phones is permitted as a timing device only. The cellular phone must be kept in airplane mode during preparation and the debate. Use for any purpose other than timing may result in the loss of a round.

**9.4.4** During the debate, students are permitted to bring with them hand-written notes prepared during the preparation period, an English language dictionary or a bilingual dictionary and a single-volume encyclopedia or almanac. **No other** printed or published materials are permitted. No digital resources are permitted.

**9.4.5** Use of the Internet or any communication with anyone who is not one of the

five team members during preparation may result in the loss of the round.

**10. Judging**

**10.1** Number of Judges

**10.1.1** All preliminary rounds shall be judged by a single judge.

**10.1.2** Elimination rounds through semifinals shall be judged by a panel of three judges per debate who shall make their decision independently of one another.

**10.1.3** Finals shall be judged by a panel of five judges who shall make their

decision independently of one another.

**10.3 Judging Repetition**

**10.3.1** A judge will not judge the same team more than once during preliminary

rounds.

**10.3.2** A judge who has judged a team in the preliminary rounds may judge that team during elimination rounds but preference will be given to judges who have not yet judged the team.

**10.4 Winning a Debate**

**10.4.1** In preliminary rounds, a debate is won by the team who receives the highest

team score from the judge. There are no low-point wins or tied team points.

**10.4.2** In elimination rounds or any rounds with a panel of judges, the debate is won by the team who receives a winning ballot from a majority of judges in the round. The sum of team scores determines a winning ballot. There are no low-point wins or tied team points.

**10.5** Judging Criteria

**10.5.1** The decision of who won a debate shall be the sole discretion of the judge(s)

of the debate.

**10.5.2** Judges will use electronic ballots available through Speechwire.com.

**10.5.3** Judges will use the following scoring criteria as outlined on the official ballot:

a. Style: 40% of total score. Speakers should communicate clearly using effective rate, pitch, tone, hand gestures, facial expressions, etc. The use of notes should not be penalized unless it hinders delivery; however, speakers should not read their speeches. Notes are to be used only for reference.

b. Content: 40% of total score. This portion of the score should focus on the argumentation used by the speaker, divorced from the style. Weak arguments should be marked accordingly, even if the other team does not expose a weak argument. Judges should not be influenced by their own personal beliefs or specialized knowledge when making this decision.

c. Strategy: 20% of total score. Strategy consists of whether or not the speaker understands the importance of the issues in the debate and the structure/timing of the speech. Debaters should identify the most substantive issues and allocate their time to covering issues based on the relative importance. Strategy may also consider answers to points of information and choosing when/how to address them. Strategy is not content: a speaker who answers the critical issues with weak responses should get poor marks for content but good marks for strategy.

**10.5.4** A judge’s scoring decisions using the above criteria are at the sole discretion

of the judge(s) in the round and cannot be protested.

**11. Evidence and Argumentation**

**11.1** Use of Evidence  
**11.1.1** The assessment of the quality and appropriate use of evidence as it relates to the scoring of the debate is the sole discretion of the judge(s) in the round. This assessment cannot be protested.

**11.2** Validity of Evidence and Argumentation

**11.2.1** The adjudication of the validity of evidence and argumentation used in a debate and its effect on scoring is the sole responsibility of the judge(s) in the round. This assessment by the judge cannot be protested.

**12. Protests/Complaints**

**12.1** All complaints and/or protests should be made through the official protest form process.

**12.2 No protests will be adjudicated until a formal protest form has been completed and filed. Filed protests must enumerate a specific rule violation in order to be a valid protest.**

**12.3** Protests must be filed within 15 minutes of the end of the round in which the

proposed violation occurred to be considered.

**13. Penalties**

**13.1** Failure to arrive within 10 minutes of the stated start time of a debate round may

result in forfeiture of the round.

**13.2** Penalties for violations of any rules will be determined by the Chief Adjudication Panel and/or Executive Board. This decision shall be final.