



MASSACHUSETTS SPEECH & DEBATE LEAGUE

OCTOBER 2024

Hello MSDL coaches,

Welcome back to another MSDL season! I hope your school year is off to a great start and that you and your team are getting ready for another fun and busy season of tournaments. This newsletter contains a great deal of information I hope will be helpful to you, including highlights of some changes from our annual meeting last May, our MSDL tournament calendar (including an updated date for The Holly Festival), board meeting dates, a call for self-nominations to committees and for next year's board, and more!

Annual Meeting Highlights & Changes

At our annual meeting in May, our league discussed numerous items and made changes to rules that will have a significant impact on our members. I greatly encourage you to read the meeting minutes carefully, but I wanted to share some highlights here with you as well.

- **“Novice Status” aligned across events.** Once a student has competed at any two high school speech and/or debate tournaments, they lose their novice status in subsequent academic years.
- **Overtime rule in speech updated.** The overtime rule in speech events now states, “Judges may not rank a competitor who exceeds the time limit a rank of 1.”
- **Cross-Ex in Varsity Extemp eliminated.** We will no longer have a cross-examination period in the Varsity Extemp final round.
- **Sponsorship Speech in Congressional Debate.** The sponsorship speech (authorship or first affirmative) goes author (present in chamber), someone from school (present in chamber, but if more than one from same school, then use precedence and recency), and then precedence and recency for everyone else.
- **Closing Appeal in Congressional Debate.** We've added an optional Closing Appeal to be given by the sponsor (author or first affirmative) on the legislation after the Previous Question has been successfully moved. The speech can be up to 90 seconds in length. It will not count towards precedence and recency, but it will be scored.
- **Public Forum Novice Topic eliminated.** Novices will no longer have a different topic than Varsity Public Forum.
- **Debate rules updated.** A committee of MSDL debate coaches worked last spring and summer to review the MSDL Debate rules and update them to reflect current practice and align more closely with rules and procedures practiced nationally.

Our annual meeting was full of great discussion and many updates to current practice. A reading of the annual meeting minutes and a review of our current rules manual will greatly benefit you and your team as you move forward into this next season. I strongly encourage you to give both documents a read! As always, if you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out by emailing MSDLBoard@gmail.com.

Looking forward to another great season,
Amanda Parker, MSDL President

THE NOVICE TOURNAMENT

Registration for The MSDL Novice Tournament is now open! The team at **Xaverian** is looking forward to welcoming us to their beautiful Westwood campus on **Saturday, October 19**. We'll offer our novices some friendly competition, informative sessions, and demos by some of our returning members. We hope to see you there!

MSDL BOARD MEETINGS

All coaches are welcome and encouraged to join our MSDL Board meetings. Meetings take place on Zoom at 7:30 PM.

- October 21
- November 18
- January 27
- February 24
- March 24
- April 29

Please email [**MSDLBoard@gmail.com**](mailto:MSDLBoard@gmail.com) to receive a calendar invitation and the meeting link.

JOIN A COMMITTEE!

The MSDL is seeking member coaches interested in getting more involved to join one or more of our active committees. Please email [**MSDLBoard@gmail.com**](mailto:MSDLBoard@gmail.com) if you are interested in volunteering for or learning more about any of these opportunities.

- Belonging & Inclusion
- Impromptu, Group, or Extemp Topic Writing
- Disaster Planning
- States Experience
- Debate Operations

CONSIDER RUNNING FOR OFFICE

It is an election year, and not just for the United States! We are looking for coaches willing to serve the MSDL for the 2025-2027 term in one of the following roles:

- President
- VP/Secretary
- Treasurer
- Chair of Congressional Debate
- Chair of Debate Events
- Chair of Speech Events

Our elections will take place in the Spring, right around the time of our State Tournaments. Once the board positions above have been elected, the new board will put a call out for At-Large self-nominations.

Our league is extremely lucky that we have had some dedicated coaches serve in their MSDL Board positions for many years. The expertise and knowledge they bring to their roles has helped us navigate some challenging times and create a consistent experience for our members. I know I am grateful for their guidance and service over the years.

While I hope they continue to serve the MSDL in various capacities, I also want to encourage coaches who have not served on the board in recent years to consider running in our upcoming election. The MSDL benefits immensely from new voices, new ideas, and different perspectives joining in the conversation. The more coaches actively involved in League operations, the more equitable the speech & debate experience can be for all of our members, and more we can ensure that the MSDL will continue to thrive for years to come.

In the coming months we'll be forming an election committee and will continue to share information about the role of an MSDL Board member, as well as the election process. I hope you'll consider running for a position on the MSDL Board for the 2025-2027 term.

2024 - 2025 MSDL TOURNAMENT CALENDAR

October 19, 2024 - MSDL Novice Tournament @ Xaverian

- Events offered: MSDL Speech Events, Congressional Debate, Big Questions, Lincoln Douglas, Policy, and Public Forum Debate (Note: PSAT conflict)

October 25-26 - Tim Averill Invitational (Online)

- Events offered: Big Questions, Lincoln Douglas, Policy, and Public Forum Debate

November 2 - Fall Fest @ Revere

- Events offered: MSDL Speech Events, Congressional Debate, Big Questions, Lincoln Douglas, Policy, and Public Forum Debate, Specials

November 16 - Gracia Burkill @ Natick

- Events offered: MSDL Speech Events, Congressional Debate, Public Forum Debate

November 23 - Little Lex @ Lexington

- Events offered: Lincoln Douglas, Policy, and Public Forum Debate

December 7 - St Nick's Showdown @ Arlington

- Events offered: MSDL Speech Events, Congressional Debate, Big Questions, Lincoln Douglas, and Public Forum Debate

December 21 - The Holly Festival @ Natick (UPDATED DATE!)

- Events offered: MSDL Speech Events, Congressional Debate, Public Forum Debate, Specials

January 11, 2025 - Winter Festival @ Newton South

- Events offered: MSDL Speech Events, Congressional Debate, Public Forum Debate, Specials

January 18-20 - Lexington Winter Invitational (Big Lex)

- Events offered: Lincoln Douglas, Policy, and Public Forum Debate

January 18 - NSDA District Congress Qualifier @ Lexington (non MSDL tournament)

January 31 - Feb 1 - NSDA District Quals @ Online & Concord Carlisle (non MSDL tournament)

February 8 - NCFL Quals @ Shrewsbury (non MSDL tournament)

March 1 - Mardi Gras @ Shrewsbury

- Events offered: MSDL Speech Events, Congressional Debate, Lincoln Douglas, and Public Forum Debate, Specials

March 15 - March Merryness @ Needham

- Events offered: MSDL Speech Events, Congressional Debate, Big Questions, Lincoln Douglas, and Public Forum Debate, Specials

March 22 - Lincoln Sudbury Showdown

- Events offered: TBD (Note: private school spring break conflict)

March 28 - 30 - MSDL State Debate (hybrid) Online & Location TBA (HOST NEEDED!)

- Events offered: Big Questions, Lincoln Douglas, Policy, and Public Forum Debate (Note: private school spring break conflict)

April 5 - MSDL State Speech & Congressional Debate @ Walpole

- Events offered: MSDL Speech Events, Congressional Debate (Note: ACT & MICCA conflict)