

Leadership



Competition and Rules Leadership Committee February Meeting Minutes

February 11, 2025

The NSDA Competition and Rules Leadership Committee held their virtual meeting February 11, 2025. In attendance were Byron Arthur, Jamelle Brown, Lori Crews, James Harris, Jyleesa Hampton, David Huston, Adam Jacobi, Kelley Kirkpatrick, Kerry Konda, Kim Lenger, Xavier Liu, Renee Motter, Jay Rye, George Tennison, Elisabeth Venetiou, Chase Williams, and David Yastremski.

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

NATIONAL TOURNAMENT AFFORDABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT – TOURNAMENT SCHEDULE

The National Tournament Affordability Subcommittee's charge was to discuss strategies to reduce the cost of the National Tournament for participants. At this meeting, the subcommittee brought their recommendations to the full Competition and Rules Leadership Committee for discussion. First, the subcommittee considered whether it is desirable to shorten the tournament schedule to reduce schools' hotel and meal costs by eliminating Sunday activities, running longer competition days, and/or shortening the final round schedule by running finals simultaneously. The subcommittee did not recommend a schedule change, finding that it was not possible to meaningfully shorten the schedule for schools while also maintaining competitive integrity and the atmosphere of celebration that attracts schools to the tournament.

NATIONAL TOURNAMENT AFFORDABILITY SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT – HOST CITY ROTATION

The National Tournament Affordability Subcommittee recommended to the CRLC that the National Tournament consider moving to a small rotation of host cities. The Competition and Rules Leadership Committee agreed that the Association should trial a three-year rotation of host cities to determine whether it would reduce costs through the predictability it creates for participants and the Association's ability to negotiate lower hotel fees due to longer-term contracts. The CRLC recommended criteria for host cities, including criteria related to safety, a reasonable school loop, proximity to major airline hubs, and partnership opportunities to keep costs down. The group also discussed the importance of open conversations with caucuses, interest groups, and coach networks. The CRLC's recommendation will be taken to the Board of Directors for consideration.

HONOR SOCIETY/RECOGNITION SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT – MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE

The Honor Society/Recognition Subcommittee's charge was to discuss strategies for simplifying NSDA membership and points structures, based on feedback from focus groups that the varying levels, costs, and caveats make membership and the Honor Society confusing for new schools to consider. At this meeting, the subcommittee brought their recommendations to the full Competition and Rules Leadership Committee for discussion. First, the CRLC discussed the limitations

of the current membership system and various proposals to simplify the way schools pay for membership. CRLC members discussed the importance of the ability to budget for membership in advance and stressed the need to continue program grants that reduce the cost of membership for new schools and schools that cannot pay the cost of membership. The CRLC's feedback will be shared with the Board of Directors for consideration.

HONOR SOCIETY/RECOGNITION SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT – POINTS STRUCTURE

The Honor Society/Recognition Subcommittee also discussed potential strategies to make the Honor Society easier to engage with for new schools and students. The CRLC reviewed their recommendations, noting that while differential point values can motivate students, awarding just one point for a speech round may be discouraging. They also discussed strategies to create point parity across speech, debate, and Congress events, as well as improving engagement for small and rural schools by reducing barriers to earning points. The CRLC's feedback will be presented to the Board of Directors for consideration.

HONOR SOCIETY/RECOGNITION SUBCOMMITTEE REPORT – DISTRICT LEVELS

Lastly, the Honor Society/Recognition Subcommittee discussed potential strategies to make the district levels system easier to understand for coaches and district leaders. Currently, districts can achieve their level by meeting one out of four criteria involving the number of charter chapters, chapters of any type, new individual student memberships, or new degrees in their district. The CRLC reviewed the subcommittee's recommendations and discussed that the current leveling system can feel punitive and difficult to understand. The group was in favor of a revised system that has easy to understand and easy to impact metrics for a district to earn additional national qualifiers. Their feedback will be shared with the Board of Directors for consideration.

EQUITY PAUSE

The Competition and Rules Leadership Committee used the [NSDA Equity Lens](#) to reflect on the nature of their meeting deliberations and whether their decisions and decision-making processes are transparent, accountable, and reflect the organization's core value of equity. The CRLC emphasized the importance of including student voices in the decision-making process and charged the Association with consulting student members on potential changes before recommending these items to the Board of Directors.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m. Tuesday. 

QUESTIONS? CONCERNS? IDEAS?

We want to hear from you! Send your feedback to lauren.burdt@speechanddebate.org.