



**MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Shelby Young  
National Speech & Debate Association  
shelby.young@speechanddebate.org  
(515) 272-5141

**2026 National New Coach of the Year**

*New Coach of the Year Awarded to Blackfoot High School Coach*

**West Des Moines, IA (June 3, 2026)** — The National Speech & Debate Association (NSDA) is proud to announce Taylor Clapp from Blackfoot High School is the 2026 NSDA New Coach of the Year!

The New Coach of the Year award is presented annually to a high school coach who reflects outstanding leadership and commitment to speech and debate in their first year of NSDA membership.

“The impact of speech and debate coaches go far beyond the classroom,” said J. Scott Wunn, Executive Director of the National Speech & Debate Association. “They are fostering lifelong skills like critical thinking, effective communication, and leadership. They are empowering students to become engaged citizens and leaders in their communities.”

Studies show that students who participate in speech and debate experience a number of academic benefits including communication skills, reading test scores, analytic thinking, and higher self-esteem. The skills learned through speech and debate will impact students years after graduation.

“Blackfoot is stronger under her leadership, and our circuit is already stronger thanks to her presence, which will only continue to grow in the years to come,” said Jett Smith, Highland High School Head Speech & Debate Coach. “I truly believe that Taylor Clapp is the epitome of what we want our new coaches to be: hard-working leaders with integrity.”

The NSDA New Coach of the Year is selected from 112 NSDA districts. Each District Committee can nominate a District New Coach of the Year. From those nominations, a national winner is selected.

Taylor will be recognized at the 2026 National Speech & Debate Tournament in Richmond, Virginia, where more than 7,000 students will compete at the world's largest academic competition June 14-19, 2026. To learn more about the National Tournament, visit [www.speechanddebate.org/nationals](http://www.speechanddebate.org/nationals).

###

### **About the National Speech & Debate Association**

The National Speech & Debate Association is the authority on public speaking and debate in the United States. The Association builds the infrastructure for speech and debate competitions around the world by providing topics, educational resources, and training for students and coaches. For more than 100 years, the National Speech & Debate Association has built a platform for youth voices that culminates in the National Tournament, the largest academic competition in the world. The National Tournament brings together thousands of students from across the United States and world with different backgrounds and viewpoints to engage in civil discourse. For more information, visit [www.speechanddebate.org](http://www.speechanddebate.org).