

WELLINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

COMPETITIVE DEBATE AND FORENSIC TEAM CONTRACT

2007-08

As a nationally competitive Debate and Forensic team, certain standards and regulations must be followed in order to ensure continued success. Each member of the team has an obligation to adhere to the stipulated guidelines. It is the responsibility of each individual member, as well as coaches, officers, parents, and school administrators to understand and uphold these provisions in order to ensure a positive learning environment where everyone is safe, responsible, and successful. The goal of the Wellington High School Debate and Forensic Team is to provide all active members an opportunity to succeed; this can only be accomplished if everyone acts in the best interests of the school and the team.

This contract will be used to provide the best atmosphere for our team to succeed in the upcoming year. By agreeing to the provisions of this document, our team may have the best year ever. However, this is only possible if everyone abides by, and adheres to, our team rules and regulations. These rules, punishments and obligations were not created to restrict the team members, but they are necessary to maintain order and consistency.

The following provisions have been considered with respect of specific league bylaws to which we owe prior obligation.

General Rules

Section 1. All necessary papers requested by the coach and administration must be completed and returned by the *assigned* date before a team member can participate in any school-related activity. Failure to turn in all necessary paperwork by the designated date will result in the student being restricted from tournament or team activity. Students must also be clear of any financial obligations owed to Wellington High School.

Section 2. Debate is a co-curricular activity that necessitates student participation in interscholastic competition. Students enrolled in Debate Honors are required to earn at least four "practical application credits" (PAC) per semester; students enrolled in the Debate I "novice" course are required to earn three PACs per semester. At least one "PAC" must be earned every marking period. Each tournament counts as one "practical application credit," as outlined in the course syllabus.

a. Competition at Palm Beach Catholic Forensic League tournaments is required for consideration when reviewing out-of-area "overnight" tournaments.

b. **All students competing at a specific tournament must attend an after-school informational meeting and practice session the day prior to the tournament.** For most tournaments, this will take place the Friday before the competition. Specific dates will be announced in advance.

Section 3. All team members are expected to recruit judges for tournaments. We understand that this may be difficult for some individuals, and we will work with students on an individual basis for parents or others to be involved in alternative events (such as fundraising). Judges can be parents, adults, siblings, adult friends of the family, former high school or current college debaters, etc. Our team is required to provide a certain number of judges per tournament in order to be eligible to compete. Failure to provide judges may result in forced drops from competition; therefore, it is imperative that we provide a certain number of judges per tournament in order to be eligible to compete.

Section 4. Due to the costs of team maintenance and tournament competition (i.e., entry fees, travel costs, hotels, etc.), it is the responsibility of team members to help raise needed funds, as well as to pay tournament costs where applicable.

Section 5. Maintaining academic superiority is crucial in Debate. Each member is required to maintain a minimum 2.0 grade point average in order to qualify for competitions.

Section 6. **A \$125 competition/dues donation is expected from each student competitor by a date specified by the Coach.** These dues cover tournament registration fees and meals for all "local" Palm Beach Catholic Forensic League tournaments (which take place one Saturday a month in September, October, November, December, January and February) during the current school year, individual and program membership fees in the National Forensic League, National Catholic Forensic League, and Florida Forensic League, and subscriptions to magazines, newspapers, script purchases, literature, and other materials needed for the program. If payment arrangements are needed, accommodations will be made.

Section 7. **Varsity students must attend after-school practices at least once per week.** If you cannot attend a practice you should bring a written note from your parent/guardian as soon as possible, or should notify the coach in advance.

Section 8. If a student is absent from school they will not be allowed to attend practices, with the exception of students who are on school related field trips. If you are absent from school you are still required to follow all procedures for a missed practice.

Section 9. Students must obtain written approval by the Coach and a parent or guardian for any interpretive script they wish to perform at a tournament or any other Wellington Debate function.

Section 10. Seniors who are in good standing and are active as of March 1 of their senior year and have earned at least 75 National Forensic League points ("Degree of Honor") will be eligible to wear NFL Honor Cords during commencement ceremonies. Seniors who are either not in good standing or are inactive as of this date and have earned their NFL "Degree of Honor" can purchase NFL Honor Cords at the cost dictated by the NFL, plus any additional fees deemed acceptable by the team.

Fundraising

Section 1. Fundraising activities support team expenses. Students must participate in fundraising activities when possible to demonstrate team commitment and to provide opportunities for team and personal growth. Funds will be used to subsidize travel and tournament costs, purchase necessary materials for the team, and pay any costs that may be incurred throughout the year. If a student chooses not to participate, that student may elect to donate a targeted profit in its place. Fundraising is not factored into grades.

Section 2. Certain fundraising activities may be designated as “individual” fundraisers, whereby a student may earn money for his/her individual speech and debate account and apply it to his/her individual cost of tournament participation. Wellington Debate offers a 50/50 fundraiser “credit line” opportunity to each member of the program. Any credit earned can be applied to debate-related expenses during tenure in the program.

Section 3. **Debate V Honors students and varsity members not in the class are expected to participate in fundraising activities.** Specific activities will be announced during the school year. Varsity members are required to either raise money (\$50 per quarter minimum/\$200 for the year minimum) or send in donations to meet his or her minimum. This is above and beyond the \$125 cited earlier.

Section 4. Eligibility for travel and tournament competition depends upon, in addition to other requirements, participation in fundraising activities. This shows team commitment and support.

Section 5. Participation in fundraising is required in order to apply for team officer positions for the upcoming school year. This is to ensure that members considered for these positions have shown their dedication and commitment to the success of the team.

Section 6. All monies due from fundraising activities must be given to the coach by the assigned date. If a student has an outstanding balance owed to the team, that student will be placed on the school’s “obligation list,” and he/she will be suspended from further tournaments or activity participation until all obligations are met.

Officers

Section 1. The instructor shall announce a Student Executive Board before the school year begins. Applications for these positions will be available to all members of the Wellington Debate and Forensic Team by a deadline established by the Coach.

Section 2. Individuals interested in being on the Student Executive Board shall fill out and turn in all paperwork by the deadline established by the Coach. Specifics on officer positions, duties, etc. will be distributed prior to the campaign or interview process.

Section 3. Officers are team leaders; therefore, they are expected to participate in fundraisers, work with novices and other debate students as mentors, and follow all team rules. This includes meeting deadlines for tournament participation, monies due, paperwork, and other aspects of the program.

a. Officers shall also serve as “room captains” at overnight tournaments, and shall help coordinate group dinners during overnight tournaments or post-tournament afterglows following one-day tournaments.

b. The Student Executive Board shall meet after school with the Coach at least once every two weeks to discuss program issues, upcoming tournaments, fundraisers, etc.

Section 4. An officer may be removed from office for violation of team, school, district, community, state, or federal statutes or guidelines.

Section 5. If at any time there is a vacancy in an office, the Coach may either appoint an eligible member to the office or waive the office and divide its duties among the officers.

General Tournament Guidelines

Section 1. Every student competing in or observing a tournament is expected to be on his or her best behavior at all times, and must obey all rules, regulations, guidelines and policies for the tournament in question. Students should follow rules and instructions given by coaches, assistant coaches and chaperones. Appropriate behavior on planes, buses, at airports, hotels, tournaments, etc. must be displayed. Each student is representing his/her school and team; therefore, negative or derogatory comments about judges, other schools, other students or coaches, loud outbursts or “scenes,” insolent and immature attitudes, arguments with tournament officials, judges, coaches, or fellow students, will not be tolerated and will result in appropriate consequences that may include suspension from competition and/or travel. If there is a problem or a concern, it is expected that you speak with the team coach directly in a private setting. Professional and appropriate behavior and attitude befitting your team is expected to be maintained at all times.

Section 2. Any action that violates policies, rules, or laws established by Wellington High School, the School District of Palm Beach County, the National Forensic League, the National Catholic Forensic League, the Palm Beach Catholic Forensic League, the Florida Forensic League, any independent tournament, or any local, state or federal laws, will result in appropriate consequences, which can include immediate dismissal from the tournament (with all associated expenses being assumed by the student and his/her family), suspension from team activities including tournament participation and traveling, and a discipline referral. Wellington High School has a reputation for forensic excellence, and each member is expected to uphold that reputation to the fullest.

Section 3. Tournaments will be coordinated and planned by the officers or parents, under the advisement of the coach.

Section 4. Proper attire must be worn at each tournament competition. No jeans or excessive jewelry should be worn. No Mohawks, multi-colored hair, dangling walled chains, spikes, etc. are allowed. Nothing should detract from your speech or

performance. Maintain a *professional* competitive image at all times. The student understands that if he/she is in violation of dress code guidelines, he/she will *not* be allowed to participate in competition.

Section 5. Male attire should be as follows:

- a. Collared, button down dress shirt (short sleeves or long) is to be worn
- b. Tie (with regular collared shirt)
- c. Shirts must be tucked in
- d. Pants must be worn at waist level with a belt
- e. Dress slacks or khakis are acceptable
- f. Suit jacket or sport coat must be worn.
- g. Dark socks are to be worn
- h. Dress shoes or loafers are acceptable
- i. No jeans
- j. No tennis shoes or flip flops
- k. No baseball caps or hats of any kind

Section 6. Female attire should be as follows:

- a. Skirts with blouses, suits with slacks or skirts, or dresses are acceptable
- b. Shoes should be closed
- c. Shirts or blouses should not be sheer or low cut (no cleavage or bra should be visible)
- d. Pants and skirts must be worn at waist
- e. Pantyhose are optional but encouraged
- f. No shirts or slacks which are too tight or too revealing
- g. No halter or spaghetti strap or strapless tops
- h. No bare-midribs
- i. No jeans
- j. No mini skirts (must be at least 2 inches above knee or longer)
- k. No flip flops, tennis shoes, sandals, spiked heels, or stilettos
- l. No hats
- m. Accessories should be professional and should not distract from performance (ex. bracelets that make noise, large hoop or dangling earrings, oversize belt buckles)

Section 7. Each tournament is organized differently and student participation will be considered according to the individual competition. Whenever possible, all students interested, provided all eligibility requirements have been met, will be encouraged to participate. If entry positions for specific events are limited, they will be awarded with consideration to the following:

- a. Enrollment in debate class.
- b. Seniority of the student (number of years in debate, grade level, course level, team officer).
- c. Participation in fundraising activities, after school practices, local tournaments, and team mentoring.
- d. Attendance in academic classes.
- e. Preparation of student performance and/or research.
- f. Behavior and attitude in classes, school, and tournaments.
- g. Presence on school obligation list.
- h. Maintenance of a minimum 2.0 grade point average.

Section 8. Some tournaments have special circumstances and not every student interested will be able to compete. Since we are a competitive team, there are times that limited positions in specific events will be awarded based on merit and recent competitive record, provided that the above listed criteria are met. These decisions will be made at the discretion of the coach. Auditions may also be necessary to determine participation at certain tournaments/activities.

Section 9. Every competitor must be prepared in order to compete in all scheduled rounds of a tournament that he or she has registered to attend. If it is deemed that the individual is not ready or has not met all eligibility requirements, then he or she may be dropped from competition as late as the morning of the actual tournament. Final decisions on this matter are to be made by the instructor. No credit will be given for a tournament from which a student is dropped, and the individual will pay any drop fee imposed by the host school. Leaving a tournament before completion will result in a lower grade for the tournament (for those students in class), and may result in suspension from competition from a subsequent tournament.

Section 10. If a student is unable to attend a tournament for which he or she is registered, the coach must be notified as soon as possible. Emergencies arise so it is understood that it is sometimes necessary to withdraw from competition. In this case, a note from a parent or guardian is necessary explaining the reason for the student's absence from the tournament. If no prior notice is given and a student does not check in by the specified time, the student will be dropped from competition, the student must pay a drop fee, and the student may be suspended from one subsequent tournament.

Section 11. Students that compete in any qualifying tournament must be certain they will attend the district, state, or national tournament if he/she qualifies. If ability to attend the resulting tournament is uncertain, the student should not compete in the qualifying tournament.

Section 12. When deemed necessary by Wellington Debate and Forensic Team officers and/or the coach, non-refundable deposits will be required in advance to participate in a tournament.

Section 13. All tournament fees owed for a specific tournament shall be paid in full as of the final registration date of the tournament. This is generally 10 days in advance of the tournament date.

Section 14. **Good sportsmanship and team unity shall be displayed at all times by all members of the Wellington Debate and Forensic Team.** Tournaments are meant to be learning experiences for our team members, regardless of individual results. Once out of a tournament, all Wellington team members are to go and cheer on other team members, regardless of how you finish. Our team's worth is greater than the sums of its parts. The Wellington High School Debate and Forensic Team is more than just a group of students thrown together on the weekends; it is a family, and we look out for each other and give our support to one another whenever needed.

Section 15. Unless otherwise specified by tournament officials, it is understood that tournaments are “closed campus,” meaning that students may not leave the tournament location while the tournament is in session. Violation of this will result in *immediate* disqualification from the tournament, a parent conference, suspension of traveling privileges, and written referral upon return to school.

Section 16. **Students are required to stay throughout the entire awards assembly.** Team members should sit with fellow team members, coaches, and parents, and should behave appropriately. Failure to attend will result in a lower grade for the tournament (for those students in class) and may result in suspension from competition from a subsequent tournament. Attendance is mandatory in order to show team support and sportsmanship. It is disrespectful to the tournament host, fellow debaters, and team members, to leave prior to the awards ceremony. In an emergency (illness, etc.), the student’s parent(s) must contact the coach and permission must be given to miss this event.

Palm Beach Catholic Forensic League “Guidelines for Behavior”

Section 1. The purpose of the PBCFL behavior guidelines is to ensure that all students maintain a level of professionalism and decorum in accordance with forensics, league activities, and school events. Since speech and debate tournaments are school-sponsored events, all school rules and regulations apply. Any infraction of these rules will result in consequences outlined by the student handbook. Additionally, the locations of our competitions are on school campuses and, therefore, all areas and materials must be respected and maintained accordingly. The following guidelines are to be adhered to by both competitors and observers.

- a. No plagiarism (as outlined in PBCFL guidelines)
- b. Students must have a copy of their piece with the ISBN information on them
- c. Cell phones, game boys, PDA’s or electronic devices may not be used in any round or session
- d. No sleeping during competition
- e. Students should be on task during competition rounds and sessions (ex. using cell phone, brushing hair, playing games, etc. are not acceptable)
- f. No gum, food or drinks (other than water) in competition areas
- g. Students may not leave the round/session for any reason other than an emergency (A student may not leave to socialize, make phone calls, etc.)
- h. “Visiting” other rooms during competition is prohibited
- i. No unnecessary talking or socializing during competition or awards ceremony
- j. Adhere to “one clap” rule during the awards ceremony
- k. No outbursts, inappropriate or offensive comments/remarks about competition, schools, coaches or judges during the tournament at any time.
- l. Students should not be at the check in table during morning registration; coaches or designated school representative only at check in
- m. Students should be picked up or leave promptly after the tournament
- n. Students must remain in one central location with coach or school designated adult when waiting to be picked up after tournament
- o. No profanity
- p. No excessive public displays of affection
- q. **Students may not leave the tournament site/campus during the tournament.** Each PBCFL tournament is a closed campus. Leaving for any reason (lunch, etc.) during the course of the tournament day will result in disqualification from the tournament and consequences at their respective schools. Remember that local PBCFL tournaments are considered a school function – all school rules still apply.

Section 2. The student agrees to adhere to the behavior guidelines of the Palm Beach Catholic Forensic League. The student understands that if he or she is in violation of the guidelines, he or she will not be allowed to participate in competition.

Traveling

Section 1. Always remember that being on an away tournament is a privilege, not a right given to every member of the team.

Section 2. It is the responsibility of each student to be sure that all necessary forms are completed and given to the coach by the set deadline, that his or her parents or guardians are notified of departure and arrival times, and that all information providing location of the team and itinerary information of the tournament is given to the student’s parents or guardian. Each student is responsible for arranging for parents or guardians to drop them off and pick them up at designated times. Prior arrangements for drop off and pick up of students is the responsibility of the student and his or her parent(s)/guardian(s) since we often return from trips late at night and want to ensure safety of all students, chaperones, and coaches.

Section 3. Just as if students were attending classes at Wellington High School, rules set by the administration, coach or debate officials must be followed. Again, any action that violates policies, rules, or laws established by Wellington High School, the School District of Palm Beach County, or any local, state or federal laws, will result in appropriate consequences, which may include suspension from the team. If there is a problem or concern, it is expected that you speak with the instructor regarding the situation.

Section 4. Supervision will be provided by the coach or a duly appointed teacher/school board employee in charge of the activity during the designated times of the school-related activity. Before or after these designated supervision times, the

parent or guardian of the student is responsible for the safety and supervision of the student. Because of activities that take place at night or in locations that are not secured, parents, guardians and students must be responsible for knowing the activity schedule and arranging supervision and transportation. In addition, transportation to or from tournament/activity sites or drop-off/pick-up locations (for out-of-county activities) must be provided by parents or guardians. Many tournaments require automobile transportation. In this case, **it is the policy of our team and school that only parents or teachers drive to out-of-county tournaments.** Individuals that will be transporting students must complete all necessary insurance, permission and liability release forms. Students may not drive to any out-of-county tournament, nor may another student transport them. If bus transportation is provided, every student is expected to ride the bus, unless prior arrangement has been made and agreed to by the coach.

Section 5. Students will be assigned to hotel rooms, and room captains will be designated to ensure that rules are enforced, information is dispersed, and order is kept. If a room captain does not adhere to his/her responsibilities, he/she will be suspended from travel for at least one tournament. Any concerns about room assignments should be discussed with the coach. The coach has final word on any rules, curfews, etc. it is the coach's or coach's designee's responsibility to ensure the safety and supervision of students and, therefore, his/her instructions are to be followed without question.

Section 6. Reasonable curfews will be set and enforced while on away trips. All students must adhere to any curfew imposed by the coach, any other supervising adult(s), or a school-board employee (in the coach's absence). Violation of curfew (which includes being in hotel common areas, other hotel rooms, or anywhere other than the assigned room) will result in suspension of travel privileges and a written referral upon return to school. It may also result in the student being dropped from tournament competition. Violation of curfew will be taken seriously.

Section 7. **A female may never enter a hotel room assigned to males, and a male may never enter a hotel room assigned to females.** If any student is found staying in a room *other than the one assigned*, he/she will be suspended from travel indefinitely and receive a written referral upon return to school. All students involved (including other students in the room aware of the situation) will receive referrals, will have parents notified, and will be suspended from travel with the team indefinitely. This risks our team privilege to travel and will not be tolerated.

Section 8. Students must return to assigned rooms by curfew and remain in said room until preparing to leave for the tournament the next morning.

Section 9. Appropriate behavior (mandated by the school) is expected in hotel rooms and common areas at all times.

Section 10. Students are responsible for all fees charged by the hotel to their room. Whenever possible, pay-per-view and long distance telephone access will be suspended during our stay at the hotel. Long distance calls can be made from the coach's room or the hotel pay phone using a calling card, by calling collect, or by cellular phone. Team officials or officers will scan rooms before departure. Any destruction of hotel property will be charged to the individual team member responsible for the damage; the team will not be held responsible for such charges. Behavior of this kind may result in suspension from further team travel.

Section 11. While away from school, all adults (including coaches, chaperones, judges, officials, or other supervising adults) will be treated with the utmost respect. No arguments with adults will be tolerated, and proper language must be used at all times. Also, respect should be shown to fellow competitors regardless of their behavior. If a team member feels competing schools or competitors are acting in an offensive or unsportsmanlike manner, the coach should be notified immediately so that the situation may be addressed. Appropriate and respectful competitive behavior should be maintained throughout the tournament, during competition, at the hotel, at the tournament site, and during and after the awards ceremony. Unnecessary talking as well as using derogatory comments is considered disrespectful and is to be avoided.

Section 12. If a team member leaves the group, he/she must never go alone and must attain advance permission from the coach or an adult chaperone with the team. Students may not leave the tournament site, the rest of the team, or the hotel without being accompanied by a chaperone or without informing the coach in person and receiving permission. Violation of this will result in a parent conference, suspension of traveling privileges, and written referral upon return to school.

Section 13. Having a parent chaperone at the tournament is to ensure the safety of the entire group. No student is permitted to leave the tournament site with his/her parent unless given permission by the coach.

Section 14. Seniors who qualify for a tournament that will take place after graduation must have a parent accompany them as a chaperone at that tournament in order to compete, as they are no longer officially students at Wellington High School. A letter must be signed by both the parent and student acknowledging that the district, Wellington High School, its administration, and its coach, are not liable for the debater, as legally this individual is no longer considered a student in the School District of Palm Beach County.

Ethics

Section 1. Debate and forensic competition is an intellectual "game" between friends, with the mutual goal of bettering each individual's cognitive skills. If we lose sight of this, we could very well destroy the enjoyment of debate and possibly the activity itself. While the work and level of competition is often intense, we can never let our desire to win overwhelm our willingness to play fair.

Section 2. If a debater cheats, three things happen: First, the game loses its intellectual and educational value. Falsifying evidence, misusing quotations, or any other intellectually dishonest practice makes the act of debate meaningless. Secondly, all trust and collegiality built through debate is destroyed. Intellectual honesty is a foundation of the debate community; if that is destroyed, the friendships and mutual interests are destroyed with it. Thirdly, in academia integrity is oftentimes the most valuable attribute a person can possess. If that is lost, your respect in the forensics community will be lost as well.

Section 3. Hopefully, the implications of cheating will discourage you from even considering it. However, if that isn't enough, we make this guarantee: If any Wellington Debate and Forensic Team member is ever caught engaging in unethical practices that do harm to the activity or our team, they will be removed from the debate program *immediately*, and all school policies concerning academic dishonesty will be enforced to the fullest extent.

Section 4. Intellectual dishonesty is a serious offense in any context, but its ramifications for forensics are especially severe. Additionally, the damage such practices would do to the reputation of this squad and Wellington High School is immeasurable. Too many people have put too much time into this program to allow any one person to destroy it.

General Internet Guidelines

Section 1. With the advent of the Internet, debate-focused web sites have allowed students to "instant message" and e-mail other students, as well as post messages and frequent "chat rooms." The coaching staff of Wellington Debate understands this is allowed as "free speech" under the U.S. Constitution, and cannot prohibit it from taking place.

Section 2. Equally, each student and parent/guardian agrees that it is not the responsibility of the coaching staff or school administration to monitor students outside of the classroom or tournament structure.

Section 3. While this falls under the guidelines of "free speech," each student is representing his/her school and team; therefore, negative or derogatory comments about judges, other schools, or other students or coaches are to be avoided. It is expected that, as with tournament and travel guidelines, every student representing the Wellington Debate Team will be on his or her best behavior at all times, and practice "free *responsible* speech."

All rules and guidelines are imposed in order to ensure the safety of each student, the ability of our team to travel, and the most positive learning experience possible at each tournament and team-related activity. It is the responsibility of each student and parent to read and follow the above guidelines. Infractions of these rules will be taken seriously and consequences will be enforced without exception. All guidelines must be adhered to for the success of the Wellington High School Debate and Forensic Team to continue!

This contract shall be in effect from 12:01 a.m. July 1, 2007 through 12:01 a.m. July 1, 2008.

I have read the 2007-08 Wellington High School Competitive Debate and Forensic Team Contract and I understand, support, and agree to abide by all guidelines and standards included in this document without exception.

Student Signature

Date

Student Name (print neatly)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Wellington Debate Team Coach Signature

Date