

Volunteer Frequently Asked Questions:

New Volunteers:

How do I register for tournaments?

For the '22-23 season all volunteers will need to complete a volunteer application on our new volunteer platform. The application can be found [here](#). Both new and returning volunteers will need to complete this questionnaire before they can register for a tournament.

After completing the application, new volunteers will need to complete a background check with Sterling Volunteers. Volunteers can follow [this link to submit](#) their background check with Sterling Volunteers. Chicago Debates will cover the cost unless you'd like to donate this back to the organization. New volunteers without previous debate experience are also encouraged to attend volunteer training. Training dates can be found on our new [Google Classrooms page](#).

What platform do you use and do I need an account?

We will be running our virtual tournament on Zoom. You will need some type of Zoom account to access our tournaments. Both in-person and virtual tournaments will run the tournament on tabroom.com. This allows us to send virtual ballots. You will need to create a Tabroom account prior to the tournament. For help creating your account please review our [setup guide](#).

Is there a dress code?

There is no formal dress code but you should be dressed for public view. Our students also do not have a dress code and comments should not be made on their appearance.

Do I need to have my camera on? Will debaters have their cameras on? (*Virtual Only*)

We strongly encourage you to have your camera on for the debate except in cases of connectivity issues. Having your camera on ensures the debaters have someone to present to and can measure your level of engagement with their arguments. We encourage debaters to have their cameras on but do not enforce this practice. Many students have unstable internet or busy home environments which may distract or inhibit the debate round. Allowing debaters to keep their cameras off ensures the debate can continue.

Will I be judging alone?

Typically volunteers will be the sole judge in a room. At some tournaments there will be elimination rounds which require a judging panel. If rounds are paneled that means three or more volunteers would be judging one debate. If you are placed on a panel, you cannot confer with your fellow volunteers and must make your decision independently. If you are nervous about judging alone for your first time, talk to the Volunteer and Outreach Manager about shadowing another volunteer's round.

How do I know when I've been assigned a debate round?

There are multiple ways you will be notified that you have a round to judge

1. You receive an email from Tabroom

2. You see the assignment on your personal Tabroom homepage. To access your personal homepage, click on your email in the top right corner.
3. If you've opted into text messaging on your Tabroom account, you'll also receive a text
4. You can check the pairings sheet for your name. This will be provided on tournament day by the tournament staff

What if I don't see my name or didn't receive a notification?

Debate tournaments are a delicate balance between teams and volunteers. Sometimes teams drop which prevents a round from happening. If you were not assigned a debate round then you may be off for that round. You should stay in the judges lounge until ten minutes after the round has started. In some instances we may have to swap you into another room and will need you close by to communicate any changes.

Tournaments

Am I allowed to disclose?

No, we do not allow disclosure in our league. You may provide feedback to the students once your ballot is submitted but you may not reveal who won the round.

What is tag team cross-x and is it allowed?

Tag team cross-x is when either partner is able to question during the cross examination period. Typically when a speaker finishes their constructive one debater from the other side will directly question them. If debaters want to share their cross-x with their partner that is ultimately at the judge's discretion. A typical judge's response is, "sure, however, one debater asking and answering all questions will obviously affect speaker points."

Do you have any rules about disclosure?

The only rule about disclosing includes preview Affs. Those have to be submitted to a specific folder before the tournament. In terms of pre-round disclosure, the affirmative should disclose the aff they are reading. The negative should disclose what off-case positions they went for in previous debates. Both of these actions are courtesies and not enforced by the judge or tournament.

Where should I post my paradigm?

If you have your paradigm on Tabroom already that's great, but most of our debaters don't know to check for paradigms. This season we are working with the students on judge adaptation. If you have a paradigm feel free to share it at the beginning of the round. If you are new to debate please also share that with the students and request they make adjustments i.e. "This is my first round of judging. Please make sure to speak slowly and summarize your points."

Can I talk to the students during the round?

You should avoid disrupting the students once the debate has begun. There are two instances when you may interrupt the round. One, if a debater is speaking too fast you can say "clear" or "slow." Two, if a debater is speaking over their allotted time you can say, "time." Other than that, sit back and enjoy the debate.

What should I do if one of the debaters has to go maverick (solo)?

In some cases a debater's partner may have to drop out of the round. If this happens the remaining debater from the team can continue debating and take over their partner's speeches. You will still need to enter speaker points for the dropped/missing debater in order to submit your ballot. You will also need to inform the tournament staff. Loop in the Volunteer and Outreach Manager and/or Judge Captain after submitting your ballot.

What's that decision timer I see on my ballot?

Don't panic, your ballot will not self-destruct by the time the timer on your ballot reaches zero. The decision timer starts the moment you open your ballot on Tabroom. The timer is a tool to help keep you on track and make sure the tournament does not get delayed. Do your best to follow this timer but it's ok if you need a few more minutes.

How long do I have to submit a ballot?

To keep our tournaments running smoothly we ask ballots to be submitted within 15 minutes of round endtime. It is important to submit your ballot before providing feedback to the students. If your round is running long and we need your response you can submit your ballot with just the winner and speakers points. Once the winner is submitted you have until the end of the tournament to enter written feedback. For further instructions on how to do this check out our [tabroom training video](#).