Arkansas Communication and Theatre Arts Association

Tournament of Champions

Qualifying Tournament Guidelines

The Arkansas Communication and Theatre Arts Association (ACTAA) is committed to providing students with a state championship platform in accordance with Arkansas Activities Association (AAA) at the completion of each competitive season. The Arkansas Tournament of Champions (ATOC) is a celebration of excellence. In order to ensure the quality of competition at the ATOC, ACTAA outlines the following guidelines for hosting an ATOC-Qualifying Tournament.

**Qualification Regulations**

**1.** **Students may not attend the ATOC as an unaffiliated entry.** Students must compete at a qualifying tournament (QT) sponsored by an ACTAA member school and/or coach. In the instance of imbalance in an event at a QT, such as policy debate, public forum, or duo/duet acting/improvisation, competitors from different schools may compete together to make a complete team at the discretion of the tournament host/director, however, these blended teams may NOT compete at the ATOC together; they must compete with another qualified individual from the same school.

**2. No student may qualify to the ATOC at his or her own school-sponsored tournament.**

**3. Ninth grade students MAY COMPETE at the ATOC if they have qualified AS A HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT. A student who competes at QT as a junior high student and places within an event level is NOT eligible for the ATOC.**

1. ACTAA ATOC will be compliant with AAA regulation that dictates that junior high/middle school students (6-8th graders) MAY NOT compete at the ATOC, nor may they compete against high school students (9-12th graders) in ANY event.
2. **NINTH GRADE EXCEPTION:** a ninth grade student on a junior high team may, at any point in the competitive season, choose at the discretion of competitor or coach, to compete on their corresponding high school team. Once a junior-high housed ninth grader competes as a member of the high school team, that competitor MAY NOT return to compete on the junior high/middle school level.

4. Qualifying Tournament Directors must apply for and be approved for AAA sanctioning before hosting at QT. Deadlines must be met. All competitors must also be qualified to compete under AAA rules. **A student must have earned a 2.0 GPA for the previous semester and passed their four core classes, or be approved through an SIP program. Seek guidance from your school’s AAA representative and the AAA Handbook if you have questions about a competitor’s eligibility before allowing them to compete.**

**Qualification Levels**

**Level I Events: A Level I Event is one in which ALL Semifinalists-1st Place Winners in the event qualify to the ATOC.** A Level I Event must meet the following criteria:

1. The event must have at least 32 entries.
2. The event must have a diversity of at least two (2) schools.

**Level II Events:** **A Level II Event is one in which ALL Finalists-1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place Winners ONLY in the event qualify to the ATOC.** A Level I Event must meet the following criteria:

1. The event must have at least 16 entries.
2. The event must have a diversity of at least two (2) schools.

**Level III Events: A Level III Event is one in which the 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place Winners ONLY in the event qualifies to the ATOC.** A Level III Event must meet the following criteria:

1. The event must have at least 10 entries.
2. The event must have a diversity of at least two (2) schools.

**Level IV Events: A Level IV Event is one in which the 1st and 2nd Place Winners ONLY in the event qualifies to the ATOC.** A Level IV Event must meet the following criteria:

1. The event has less than 10 entries
2. The event must have a diversity of at least two (2) schools

**Level V Events: A Level V Event is one in which the 1st Winner ONLY in the event qualifies to the ATOC.** A Level V Event must meet the following criteria:

1. The event has less than 10 entries
2. The event must have a diversity of at least two (2) schools

**\*\* If an event does not have two (2) school diversity, regardless of number of entries, only the 1st place winner qualifies\*\***

**ATOC Individual Events**

**Guidelines**:

1. The following events will be held at the ATOC:
   1. Dramatic Interpretation (DI)
   2. Humorous Interpretation (HI)
   3. Original Oratory (OO)
   4. International Extemporaneous Speaking (IX)
   5. Domestic Extemporaneous Speaking (DX)
   6. Informative Speaking (IF)
   7. Program of Oral Interpretation (POI)
   8. Duo Interpretation (DUO)
   9. Poetry (PO)
   10. Prose (PR)
   11. Improvised Duet Acting (IDA)
   12. Storytelling (ST)
2. All events must follow NSDA event rules, guidelines, and time limits with the exception of Prose, Poetry, Storytelling, and IDA.
3. Prose, Poetry, Storytelling, IDA will follow ACTAA event rules, guidelines, and time limits.
4. ATOC qualifying tournaments are responsible for ensuring that all events rules, guidelines, and time limits are communicated to coaches, judges, and competitors.
5. Students may compete with the same selection, regardless of success with that selection. Once a selection is performed at the ATOC, it may not be performed again.
6. The same cutting may NOT be double-entered at ATOC.
7. ATOC qualifying tournaments should conduct IE fields as follows:
   1. If a qualifying tournament holds preliminary rounds, sections should contain no more than 10 competitors.
   2. If a qualifying tournament holds one preliminary round, sections should contain no more than 8 competitors.
   3. Sections should be balanced.
      1. Unbalanced pools should be as balanced as possible.
      2. If diversity of pool allows, sections should contain no more than two (2) competitors from the same school.
   4. Events with ten (10) or less total competitors should go straight to a final round.
   5. Events with eleven (11) or more total competitors should go to a semifinal round.
   6. Events with more than 100 competitors should *consider* a quarterfinal round.
      1. Quarterfinalists do not qualify to the ATOC.
   7. Instructions for breaking IEs can be found in the Tournament Handbook on the ACTAA website.

**Qualification:**

a. Qualification in an IE occurs when a students advances to a semi-final round in a Level I event, or place 1st, 2nd, 3rd in a Level II event, or 1st or 2nd in a Level III event, or 1st in a Level VI event at an ATOC qualifying tournament.

b. Students may compete in as many events in which they are qualified at the ATOC, but the tournament schedule will NOT accommodate multiple-entry competitors. As the ATOC progresses, competitors may have to make choices between events in which they advance.

b. In Duo Interpretation and Mime, the selection and team must remain intact to compete at the ATOC.

c. In Improvised Duet Acting, the *individual competitor* qualifies.

e. Students are limited to one selection in each event. If a competitor qualifies three times in an event with three different selections, ONE selection is allowed at the ATOC.

**ATOC Group Events**

**Guidelines:**

1. Words and Music (WM) and Readers’ Theatre (RT) will be held at the ATOC.
2. It is the responsibility of the coach/sponsor to ensure that pieces performed are done so with the appropriate legal permissions secured. It is the responsibility of the tournament director (with consultation from the ATOC committee) to ensure that pieces are performed within legal parameters, and that judges are thoroughly informed of event rules and selection guidelines.
3. WM and RT should have a three-judge panel in all rounds. Judges should not be recycled round-to-round in the same event.

**Qualification:**

1. If a tournament has 1-2 entries in RT or WM, there is no qualifier to the ATOC.
2. If a tournament has 3-4 entries in RT or WM, only the 1st place winner will qualify to the ATOC.
3. If a tournament has a preliminary round and then a final, those entries placing in the final round will qualify to the ATOC.
4. Any school that trophies in a group event will be allowed to return that performance three (3) times before it must be retired.

**Debate Events**

**Guidelines:**

1. The following events will be held at the ATOC:
2. Novice Policy Debate
3. Varsity Policy Debate
4. Novice Public Forum Debate
5. Varsity Public Forum Debate
6. Novice Lincoln Douglas Debate
7. Varsity Lincoln Douglas Debate
8. Novice IPDA
9. Varsity IPDA
10. Congressional Debate
11. A “novice” debater is one who is in their first year of competition.
12. Novices who compete in a varsity division at any point in the competitive season are still considered novices.
13. Novices who compete in open division at any point in the competitive season are still considered novices.
14. Students who compete in one debate event for more than one year and then compete in a different debate event in the same or subsequent years is a novice for the first year they compete in that new (secondary) event.
15. A qualifying tournament **must** hold at least three (3) preliminary rounds in all debate events. Congressional Debate qualifiers must hold at least two (2) preliminary sessions and then advance to a Super Session (finals). All Congress sessions must allot two (2) hours for consideration and debate, with debate and consideration dictating how much of that time each session is actually used.
16. The current NFHS policy debate resolution must be used.
17. It is the responsibility of the qualifying tournament director to verify the topics used for LD and PF in a timely fashion.
18. The ATOC committee reserves the right to collapse divisions of LD and PF at the Tournament of Champions if there are too few qualifiers to justify a novice and varsity division.
19. Maverick debaters are not permitted at the ATOC.
20. If a debate event has more than 64 entries in the field, a tournament director should consider a quad-, triple-, or double-octafinal round.
21. If a debate event has 32 or more entries in the field, a tournament director should *consider* an octafinal round.
22. If a debate event has 16 or more entries in the field, a quarterfinal **must be held.**
23. If a debate event has 10-15 entries in the field, a semifinal **must be held.**
24. If a debate event has 9 or fewer entries in the field, the event may break straight to a final round **at the discretion of the tournament director**.
25. Qualifying tournaments should not collapse novice and varsity divisions unless it is impossible to pair a division otherwise.
26. Instructions for breaking debate events can be found in the Tournament Handbook located on the ACTAA website.
27. It is the responsibility of the tournament director to ensure that quality, qualified judges are provided for unique debate events.

**Qualification:**

1. Policy Debate, Lincoln Douglas, and Public Forum
2. Five (5) wins at ATOC qualifying tournaments
3. Advancing to semi-finals or finals
4. 1st, 2nd, or 3rd Speaker
5. IPDA Debate
6. Five (5) wins at an ATOC qualifying tournament
7. Advancing to quarterfinals TWICE
8. Advancing to semifinals ONCE
9. Advancing to finals
10. 1st, 2nd, or 3rd Speaker
11. Congressional Debate
12. Advancing to Super Session
13. Placing 1st, 2nd, or 3rd at any ATOC Qualifying Tournament
14. Receiving 28 individual points at the ACTAA Student Congress in November

**Qualifying Tournament Standards:**

While it is important that Tournament Directors have autonomy in certain tournament implementation decisions, some standards must be met. All statements that are specific in direction in the following section are required processes. Exceptions will be determined by the ATOC committee.

1. **Judging**
   1. Schools will bring the number of qualified judges required to cover entries.
   2. Directors may either assess a judging fee or reduce the number of entries a school may bring if judging requirement is not met.
   3. Attending coaches should bring qualified judges only. A qualified judge is a person who is familiar with competition guidelines and event rules. Alumni judges are preferred.
   4. Arkansas speech and debate alumni who have graduated from high school are eligible to judge debate and individual events. It is the responsibility of attending coaches to verify the eligibility and qualifications of judges.
   5. Tournament directors have the right to refuse the services of any judge a coach/sponsor enters.
   6. If a coach or sponsor is aware at registration that they are entering a “lay” or unqualified judge, it is expected that the tournament director be notified.
2. **Ballots**
   1. Official ACTAA ballots must be used for ALL events.
   2. Tournament directors should give ORIGINAL ballots to coaches. Only debate ballots should be duplicated.
   3. Judges should be instructed to provide ample comments on ballots for all events.
   4. Passing of ballots is only allowed with tournament staff approval.
3. **Reporting to the ATOC Committee**
   1. Tournament directors will submit reports within two weeks of the close of a qualifying tournament. A tournament is NOT a Qualifier until the report is submitted.
   2. Directors must use the official ACTAA TOC Document for reporting.
   3. No Qualifying Tournament is official until verified and audited by the TOC Committee, who will release a monthly report on the ACTAA website.
   4. It is the responsibility of the TOC Committee to audit and verify the results in a timely manner.

**Junior High Invitationals**

An ACTAA member school may host a Junior High Invitational for Junior High competitors during ATOC Qualifying Tournaments.

1. Junior High Invitationals may NOT cross over with any qualifying tournament-event.
2. Junior High competitors MAY NOT qualify to the ATOC.
3. Junior High competitors MAY NOT compete against high school students.
4. 9th Graders have the option to compete as high school students, but once they compete on the high school level, they MAY NOT compete as a junior high students.
5. High School students may judge Junior High events at Invitationals, only once they are eliminated from an ATOC qualifying tournament, or if they are non-competing, or if they are from the host school.
6. It is the responsibility of the coach sponsoring a student judge to ensure the quality, maturity, and ethical character of a student judge.
7. Student judges should be up front about potential conflicts with competitors.
8. Junior High Invitationals do not have to offer all events.
9. Junior High Invitationals should only hold one preliminary round and break to appropriate elimination rounds.
10. Qualifying levels do not apply at invitationals.
11. Ribbons or certificates should be given as awards if a host school opts not to give trophies for junior high events.
12. IPDA is the only debate event that can be offered at Junior High Invitationals.