

So You Want to Sponsor a Tournament...

The CDA schedules tournaments monthly from October through March, with a State Finals tournament in late March or early April. We rely on our member schools to host those tournaments. Most months we need two schools to host, as we regularly have over 300 debaters from over 25 schools on each date.

This paper outlines the things you need to consider as host. The good news is that the CDA will run the actual tournament: registration, scheduling and tab room, judges' workshop, providing the packet, obtaining the trophies. We rely on you and your school for room, board and help getting around.

1. Find Out How Many Classrooms You Can Use

In order to run a tournament we need at least 30 classrooms to use for debates—40 or more would be better. Most schools will not want you to use special purpose classrooms like laboratories or computer rooms, and other rooms may be unavailable for various reasons.

In addition we will need the use of the cafeteria where the teams will gather before the tournament starts, during registration and prep-time, between rounds and during lunch. A microphone system in the cafeteria is useful for announcements during the day.

We will also need a room with a few large tables to use as the tab room, the headquarters for running the tournament. The tab room should have a working copier close by that we can use during the tournament (see below for copier usage).

Finally, we need a space for the final round between the two top varsity teams. The room has to be large enough to accommodate all of the debaters, coaches and judges. First choice would be an auditorium or theatre, but the cafeteria will do. We will need a podium and two tables for the debate. If you can provide three microphones—one for the podium and one for each table for use during cross-ex—that hook into a speaker system that would also be useful.

2. Obtain Permission to Use the School and Certain Resources

Once you have checked the rooms, speak to your principal or headmaster about using the school. Our tournaments are held on Saturday, and we will be in the building from 8AM to 6PM (see the typical schedule below). You and your volunteers will be there a bit longer—early to set up and late to clean up. Someone will need to be available to open rooms and bathrooms both at the start and during the day if they are inadvertently re-locked.

Your school may have regulations about fire and security depending on how many of us there are. Figure four debaters and one judge per room, and an extra person for every two rooms. You are likely to have between 150-200 guests, possibly more for a larger school.

Finally, we will need use of a copier. We will make copies of the packet, ballots, flow charts and handouts for the judges workshop prior to the tournament. However, during the day we may need to make extra copies of ballots, flow charts, schedules and copies of

the finished ballots for the teams to take home. A reasonable estimate of the number of copies we will make is eight per room, or 250-350 copies, depending on size.

3. Obtain Volunteers

You will need a number of volunteers to help during the day: You will need to staff tables for registration and selling lunch tickets at the start of the day. You will need staff to tend the food in the cafeteria at breakfast and lunch. While many of the volunteers can be students, you may need some adults to drive for pickups or run lunch. It is helpful during the day if there are several student volunteers who can direct lost debaters and staff the tab room table to collect ballots. You should line up 10 volunteers, including at least three adults. If your school or Honor Society requires students to put in a number of service hours, this is a good opportunity for them.

Most schools debate in the tournament that they host, so your volunteers should be from outside the debate team. The team can help you plan and prepare for the tournament, they will likely be debating during the day.

4. Find Suppliers for Breakfast and Lunch

It is traditional for the host school to provide donuts, juice and coffee during registration. Similarly lunch has traditionally been pizza at \$1.50 per slice and juice or soda at \$1.00, though someday those prices will have to change. Please don't feel limited to these options. Just remember some high schoolers tend to be picky eaters.

Lunch tickets should be sold at registration in the morning so that you will have a good idea of demand by 9AM. You will need to have some change on hand to begin the day—quarters, singles, fives usually does it—and a cash box

Your supplier for lunch will have to deliver a lot of pizzas in a short time. You will need to arrange this beforehand so they can begin baking in time for lunch. The restaurant will probably want some idea of how many pizzas, and confirmation on the morning of the debate. (We do have a reasonably good formula for estimating the number of pizzas required, but this can only be disclosed to actual tournament sponsors!)

You will also need the basic paper supplies: napkins, coffee/juice cups, pizza plates, coffee/tea/hot chocolate

At many tournaments, a school group will have a bake sale or sell candy. Lunchtime the break between the last round and the final varsity round are good selling times.

You can purchase some of these things beforehand. However, we have had to cancel tournaments due to inclement weather. If you are sponsoring a tournament during the winter months, you will want to arrange to get everything at the last minute.

5. On the Day of the Tournament

As noted, CDA staff will run the tournament itself. We will rely on you to run the school, dealing with any matters that arise: doors will need to be unlocked, your volunteers will want guidance, lost debaters will need to be properly directed. As host you will need to represent the school if any problems arise. You will not be able to judge, but we will ask you to help award the trophies at the end of the day.

The typical tournament day schedule is listed below. We have been fairly successful leaving on time, so we should be finished by 6PM.

6. Frequent Concerns

Your principal may be concerned about possible damage to the school and the liability of having so many guests. To the best of my knowledge, no school has ever complained of damage or hard use after hosting a CDA tournament. This should be understandable given the type of students attracted to debate.

CDA activities are also covered by an insurance policy held by the Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) that insures all activities that are organized under their auspices. CAS can provide verification of that coverage if your principal requires this prior to hosting.

We also require each team be accompanied by an adult responsible for the team members. Each coach is responsible for making sure they have complied with their rules for permission slips and emergency contact information.

7. One for All, and All for One

We would be happy to answer any questions you may have, or put you in touch with an experienced coach so they can tell you about their experiences running a tournament.

The CDA depends on the support of its member schools. We appreciate your interest and effort in hosting.

Tournament Day Schedule

8-9AM	Registration, donuts and coffee
9AM	Resolution and packet distributed
9-10AM	Preparation for debaters Workshop for new judges
10-11:30AM	Round 1 (random pairings)
11:30AM-1PM	Round 2 (random pairings)
1-2PM	Lunch
2-3:30PM	Round 3 (power matched, flip for side)
3:30-5PM	Final Round
5-5:30PM	Awards
5:30PM	Departure

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