

VIRGINIA CATHOLIC FORENSIC LEAGUE

CONSTITUTION

ARTICLE I – NAME

The name of this organization shall be the VIRGINIA CATHOLIC LEAGUE/DIOCESE OF RICHMOND. It shall be referred to herein as the **LEAGUE**.

ARTICLE II – PURPOSE

The purpose of the LEAGUE shall be:

1. To promote curricular and extracurricular speech and debate activities in all secondary Catholic Schools of the Diocese of Richmond.
2. To encourage and to assist in the development of articulate leaders through whose skills truth may be widely spread and become an influence in the life of the individual.

ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

Section A – Eligibility

Any Catholic, independent or public secondary school located within the boundaries of the Diocese of Richmond shall be eligible for membership in the LEAGUE.

Section B – Application and Certification

1. Application for membership shall be made to the Secretary/Treasurer of the LEAGUE.
2. Application for membership in the LEAGUE shall be made with the written consent of the appropriate administrator of each school on the LEAGUE Membership Form.
3. Membership shall become effective upon receipt of the form and annual dues by the Secretary/Treasurer of the LEAGUE. All applications for membership are subject to the review of the Superintendent of Schools/Diocese of Richmond.
4. Membership[applications will be distributed at the fall organizational meeting. Annual dues will be received no later than the date established by the Board. Membership shall run from the receipt of dues and application until June 1 of that school year.
5. The President shall have the authority to extend the dates for submission of Forms and Dues for good and valid reasons. Such an extension shall not be later than December 31st, without the approval of the Superintendent of Schools/Diocese of Richmond.

ARTICLE IV – DUES

Each member school of the LEAGUE shall be required to pay annual dues. The amount of the dues shall be prescribed in the BY-Laws of the LEAGUE. Each school must pay dues at or before the first tournament in which it competes.

ARTICLE V – BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Section A – Composition of the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors will be composed of seven members. Five representatives of the Diocese of Richmond, one public school representative, and one independent school representative.

Section B – Selection and Term of Board Members

1. The five representatives of the Diocese of Richmond will be appointed by the Superintendent of Schools/Diocese of Richmond. The Superintendent of Schools may reappoint Board members to additional two-year terms.
2. Every two years unless an officer resigns, The President and the Secretary/Treasurer are elected from among the representatives of the Diocese of Richmond by the members of the Board by a majority vote. No Officer may succeed himself/herself in the same office after a two (2) year term except the Secretary/Treasurer.
3. Public school moderators will elect one representative at the spring meeting to the Board of Directors by majority vote to serve a term of two years. A Board representative may succeed himself/herself if voted to serve another term.
4. Independent school moderators will elect one representative at the spring meeting to the Board of Directors to serve a term of two years. A Board representative may succeed himself/herself if voted to serve another term.
5. New Board Members will assume duties June 1st of the current academic year.

Section C – Powers, Duties, Responsibilities

The Board of Directors of the LEAGUE shall be empowered to enforce any and all existing Constitution, By-Laws, and Rules of Procedure throughout the member League schools. If a school violates the Constitution or By-Laws of the LEAGUE, The Board of Directors may impose sanctions, including, but not limited to, fines, probation, suspension or expulsion from the LEAGUE.

1. The President of the LEAGUE shall:
 - Serve as the chief administrative and executive officer of the LEAGUE.
 - Be responsible for the adherence of all member schools to the rules and regulations enacted by the Board of Directors, including but not limited to the Constitution and By-Laws of the LEAGUE.
 - Serve as interpreter with the Secretary/Treasurer of all policy and procedural questions regarding the LEAGUE activities.

- Preside over all regular and special meetings of the Board of Directors and the LEAGUE in general.
 - Maintain communication with LEAGUE school members.
 - Serve as a liaison between National and LEAGUE schools.
 - In the event that neither the President nor the Secretary/Treasurer is able to attend a tournament, the President will appoint a Board member to oversee the tournament.
 - Levy appropriate fines if necessary.
 - Represents and reports to the Superintendent of Schools/Diocese of Richmond at the Board of Directors meetings.
 - Submits registration, money and forms for participating schools that attend National Catholic Forensic League Grand National Tournament.
2. The Secretary/Treasurer of the LEAGUE shall:
- Be responsible for notifying all member schools of regular meetings of the LEAGUE.
 - Record and report the minutes of all regular and special meetings of the League and the Board of Directors meetings and the distribution of the same to all LEAGUE members.
 - Prepare and arrange for the publication and distribution of all LEAGUE minutes to the member schools and the Superintendent of Schools/Diocese of Richmond.
 - Request payment of regular operational expenses of the LEAGUE incurred by any of the Officers shall be made to the Secretary/Treasurer upon the presentation of invoices for the same.
 - Collect other fees necessary to the proper conduct of the LEAGUE activities.
 - The Secretary/Treasurer must submit a financial report to the Superintendent of Schools/Diocese of Richmond at the annual June meeting.
 - Distributes and collects registration forms, collects dues, submits school registration forms and dues to the National Catholic Forensic League.
 - Receives all local and state tournament registrations.

Section D – Meetings

1. Fall Meeting

There will be a general meeting of the LEAGUE schools no later than the second Saturday in September each year. This shall be considered the Annual Business Meeting of the LEAGUE. The agenda for this meeting will comprise topics submitted by the members of the LEAGUE. A financial report of the LEAGUE'S status will be given at that time. Following the general meeting, the Board of Directors will meet to discuss and act upon any proposals made at the general meeting. All proposals requiring change need a majority vote of the Board of Directors.

2. Spring Meeting

There shall be a meeting of the LEAGUE schools to be held during the period between the State and the National Tournament to evaluate the previous year's activities and establish a tentative tournament calendar for the following school year. A financial report of the year will be presented by the Secretary/Treasurer at this time. Also a tentative agenda for the fall meeting will be established.

3. The Board of Directors will convene a June meeting.

3. Special meetings

Special and emergency meetings of the Board of Directors may be called at the discretion of the League President in consultation with the Superintendent of Schools/Diocese of Richmond.

ARTICLE VII – AMENDMENTS

Section A – Constitution

1. Amendments to the Constitution may be proposed by any member school.
2. The Board of Directors will consider the amendment and will forward it and their recommendation to the Superintendent of Schools/Diocese of Richmond.
3. Final approval of all constitutional amendments will rest with the Superintendent of Schools/Diocese of Richmond.

Section B – By-Laws

1. Amendments to the By-Laws may be proposed by any member school at the fall meeting.
2. The Board of Directors will consider the amendment. An Amendment will be passed by a majority vote of the Board of Directors.
3. Proposed amendments must be submitted according to Article and Section.
4. By-Laws changes will be submitted to the Superintendent of Schools/Diocese of Richmond for review. The Superintendent retains the power of veto for any By-Law changes.

Section C – Final approval of all constitutional amendments will rest with the Superintendent of Schools/Diocese of Richmond.

**V.C.F.L. BY-LAWS
REVISED 2003**

ARTICLE I – LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP FEES

Section A. The annual membership dues payable to the Secretary/Treasurer of the League shall be determined at the Fall Meeting of the Board of Directors.

The annual membership dues shall be \$140 per school per division of forensic activities, which will include Speech and Student Congress (one division) and Policy Debate and Lincoln-Douglas Debate (one division). If a school belongs to both divisions, the total cost will be \$200. At least one Catholic school must be actively participating (competing) in each division for that division to exist. These dues cover membership in the national Catholic Forensic League as well as participation in the Forensic/Debate divisions of the VCFL. Fees will be evaluated at the end of each year and adjusted based upon need.

Section B. Registration and appropriate fees for local, state and national tournaments must be received by the assigned due date. Schools not meeting a deadline will be ineligible for the tournament.

Section C. The student's school will pay student registration for the National Tournament.

Section D. Any school with outstanding LEAGUE charges as of the first tournament for that year will be suspended from the LEAGUE for that tournament year.

ARTICLE II. QUALIFYING TOURNAMENT REGULATIONS

Section A. Tournaments:

1. The LEAGUE will sponsor local tournaments and a state tournament each year. LEAGUE schools will host tournaments. Dates and locations will be finalized at the fall meeting. League officers will organize and conduct the local and state tournaments.
2. Any tournament host school may be reimbursed up to \$75 for tournament expenses upon application to the LEAGUE treasure and presentation of appropriate receipts.
3. The LEAGUE will use the same tab room personnel for all tournaments. This will be under the direction of a LEAGUE officer or someone appointed by the LEAGUE officers in the case of an emergency. The tab room is for the tab staff only.

Section B. Registration:

1. Coaches must pre-register their contestants no later **than 8:00 p.m. on the Monday** prior to the tournament. All registrations must be made by phone, fax or email. No contestant may be entered in more than one speech event or debate per tournament. LATE REGISTRATION WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.
2. Drop fees: On the day of the tournament, there will be a five-dollar (\$5) drop fee assessed any contestant who does not show for the tournament. This fee is due on site. The assessed school will not be allowed to register for the next tournament if its fees have not been paid. A school may drop contestants up until noon of the Friday before the tournament without incurring a \$5

fine. Schools must notify the registration director using the fax, phone or email numbers listed on the registration form.

3. If a judge fails to show for a tournament, the school will be assessed a **fifty dollars (\$50) fine** for each missing judge. This fee must be paid prior to the next tournament in which the school participates.
4. A school may not drop any judges pre-registered on Monday without incurring the \$50 fine, even though students may have been dropped. Substitution for the original judge(s) may be used but original quotas must remain the same.
5. Coaches must indicate on the registration form which students are 8th graders.
6. The schools must pre-register the proper quota of judges per division. Failure to do so will result in contestants being dropped in respective divisions so that the proper quotas will be met.
7. Schools who register students for Congress must register one of their judges as a potential Congress judge.
8. In preliminary tournaments, schools must provide one judge for every five (5) students in Speech. In Lincoln-Douglas debate there will be one judge for every two (2) entries or fraction thereof. In Policy Debate there will be one judge for every two (2) teams or fraction thereof entered

Section C. Events: Definition and Procedures for Speech and Student Congress:

1. Descriptions of the speech categories will adhere to the National Constitution except in the area of minimum time. All areas of speech will have a minimum time of six (6) minutes except for Extemporaneous Speaking which has a minimum time of five (5) minutes.
2. A thirty (30) second grace period will be maintained for both minimum and maximum times. Students who go beyond the 30second grace period will be dropped one rank in score in that round by the judge.
3. Extemporaneous topics will be chosen from the three months prior to the local tournament.
4. Prose/Poetry category will alternate by the flip of the coin at the first tournament.
5. A category must have a minimum of three contestants pre-registered in speech or debate or that category will be canceled in that particular tournament. Schools will be notified if it is necessary to drop a category.
9. Description for Student Congress will adhere, as closely as possible, to the National Constitution.
10. There must be a minimum of ten (10) entries pre-registered to run a Student Congress session.
11. Each school participating in Student Congress must submit at least one bill prior to each tournament in which they plan to participate. A schedule of submission dates will be published.
12. Procedural updates will be published prior to each tournament.
13. Extemp. The students may use a note card with no more than 50 words. If a student has a card with more than 50 words, the student is dropped one rank.

Section D. Events: Definition and Procedures for Policy Debate

1. The resolution for policy debate will be the national topic for that year.
2. The League will use a single judge per round.
3. No oral critiques will be allowed
4. A school may enter a maximum of four (4) teams per school.
5. Three rounds will be run consecutively without a break.
6. Round 1 & 2 will be pre-set with Round 3 powered from the results of Round 1. Coach's choice will be used if the students must debate from the same school. All side constraints are removed after Round 2.
7. The team with the lowest points receives a Bye. In a bye-round, a team's speaker points are determined by averaging the other two rounds' speaker points.
8. Judges may give a low point win in policy debate.
9. Only whole numbers may be used in scoring.
10. Procedural updates will be published prior to each tournament.

Section E. Events: Definition and Procedures for Lincoln-Douglas Debate.

The **same** as Policy Debate except:

1. The Lincoln-Douglas topic will be the topic announced by the National Forensic League for that month.
2. A school may enter a maximum of four (4) speakers per school.
3. Four straight rounds will be run without a break.
4. Rounds 1 & 2 shall be pre-set with Round 3 powered from the results of Round 1. Round 4 will be powered from the results of Rounds 1 & 2.
5. Judges may not give a low point win or tie in Lincoln-Douglas debate.
6. Only whole numbers may be used in scoring.
7. No oral critiques will be allowed.

Section F. Lateness for Tournaments:

1. Speech: There is no penalty for lateness up to the start of the first round. Late contestants may slip into the first round but cannot be ranked first for that round. The school will be penalized 5 points for sweepstakes in the case of an unexcused tardiness.
2. Debate: Policy Teams/LD speakers who appear more than 10 minutes late for a scheduled round shall forfeit that round, receive a unanimous loss and will not be awarded any speaker points.
3. Student Congress: A contestant who is late for a Congress Session may enter with the permission of the Presiding Officer.

Section G. Tardiness for Rounds:

Students are responsible to be on time for each scheduled round.

1. Speech: A contestant who is late for a round may slip into the round but cannot be ranked first for that round. A contestant who does not appear during the round in which he or she is scheduled to speak shall forfeit that round.
2. Debate: Teams or LD speakers who appear more than 10 minutes late for a scheduled round shall forfeit that round, receiving a unanimous loss and no speaker points.
3. Student Congress: A contestant who is late for a Congress Session may enter with the permission of the Presiding Officer.
4. The Tournament Directorate shall have the authority to suspend the forfeit provisions for good and valid reasons.

Section H. Contestant Rules:

1. 8th grade students may compete and receive awards at the local tournaments but may not compete at the State or National level. No student below the 8th grade level may compete at any level of competition.
2. Jacket/sweater and tie are appropriate dress for boys. Girls must be neatly dressed; skirts and dresses are preferred but not mandatory. A contestant should not wear denim jeans. Appearance should not be distracting from the presentation.
3. Students/Coaches must be prepared to provide publication information on the selection being presented.
4. Students using note cards in Extemporaneous Speaking must turn the card into the judge upon completing his/her presentation. Students who go beyond the 50-word limit on the notecard will be dropped one rank in score by the judge for that round.
5. If a judge has not shown up for the round after ten (10) minutes of the scheduled start of the round, a contestant should notify the tab room.
6. It is the **STUDENT'S RESPONSIBILITY** to communicate his/her Code to the judge prior to speaking.
7. Speaking Order in a Round: Students must speak according to the order listed on the official schematic. Any other changes must be approved by the Tab room. Students who are found to have spoken out of the assigned order without approval of the Tab room will be disqualified from that round.

Section I. Awards:

1. Individual Awards:
 - a. Trophies will be awarded to the top ranked students in each division. The number will be Determined by the Board of Directors.
 - b. Students may also qualify for the State Tournament according to the quota system. Trophy winners automatically are listed as State qualifiers..
2. Sweepstakes Awards: In order to recognize more levels of achievement, trophies for qualifying tournaments will be awarded as follows: 1st, 2nd, 3rd Place for Speech and 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place for Debate. The Tournament Sweepstakes trophy will be eliminated.

Section J. Judging

1. Coaches are responsible to register judges trained in areas of Speech, Debate and/or Student Congress.
2. It is the responsibility of the school moderator to review all rules with judges. Flagrant violation of the judging rules will be subject to review by the Board of Directors. Unqualified Judges: If it is determined by the League officers that a school has brought an unqualified judge to a tournament, the judge will be dropped from the schedule immediately. The school will be fined for a 'no-show' judge. The coach of that school will be asked to adjust the quota of judges/students and if necessary, the school may have to drop a student/students from competition.
3. No judges who have been out of high school fewer than 18 months will be allowed to judge.
4. In preliminary tournaments, schools must provide one judge for every five (5) students in Speech.
5. Judges will write a critique of each contestant in each round. No oral critiques should be made to the students. Results are not to be discussed with the contestants during the tournament.
6. In Speech events, no ties in points or ranks are allowed in judging.
7. Judges must ensure that contestants comply with the proper rules of conduct and procedure.
8. Protests: After meeting with the Superintendent of Schools for the Diocese of Richmond, the final format was established for protests:
 - A. Protests/Appeals may only be submitted by coaches registered with the League.
 - B. If a protest is filed, it must be done in writing before leaving the tournament site.
 - C. The protest should be given to the appropriate representative on the Board. The representative will then turn the protest over to the Executive Board, which will render a decision.
 - D. Any further appeals of decisions should be given in writing to the President of the League, who will then forward them to the Diocese for action.
 - E. All decisions of the Executive Board and/or the Diocese are final. Failure to abide by the decision will result in termination of the relationship between the school and the League.
 - F. Failure to follow the protest/appeal process in its correct order will automatically result in invalidation of the protest/appeal.
9. Judges must be prompt for their scheduled rounds.
10. Judges must judge the round for which they are assigned. Judges may not change a judging assignment without the permission of the League officer in the tab room.
11. Judges will record scores on the Master Ballot. The master Ballot will be used as the only official source for recording scores.

Section K. Tabulation Procedures:

1. The tab room staff will tabulate all events.
2. In Speech, winners are determined by the lowest cumulative ranks. In the case of a tie, the greatest number of speaker points will break tie. If a tie still exists, the reciprocal rule will be used.

3. In Policy debate and Lincoln-Douglas debate, the winners are determined by their win/loss record. If a tie exists, the speaker points are looked at with the debater/team with the higher point total declared the winner. If a tie still exists, one of the following methods may be used: (a) use speaker points to determine the percentage of possible points earned in the rounds completed. In Lincoln-Douglas there are a total of four (4) rounds to equal a possible total score of 200 points. In Policy debate there are a total of three (3) rounds for a total of 180 points. Using the total number of points earned, calculate the percentage of each team's overall points (b) drop the high/low score and add the remaining scores.
4. Judges will record on the Master Ballot. The Master Ballot will be used as the only official source for recording scores.
4. Sweepstakes Awards for tournaments are based upon highest number of sweepstakes points that are awarded for each trophy place.

Section L. State Tournament:

1. The League will sponsor a State Tournament to qualify contestants for the Grand National Tournament.
2. Judges must judge the round for which they are assigned. Judges may not change a judging assignment without the permission of the tab room.
3. At the State Final preliminary rounds of Speech, there will be two judges per room.
4. There will be three judges experienced in Catholic League competition in all events in the final round at the State Tournament. This number may be reduced to two to ensure quality after a consultation of League officers and at least one other Board member. If two judges are used in an event in the final round, an average of the two scores of the judges will be added in to replace the score of the missing judge.
5. After the third round of the State Tournament, students will be ranked highest to lowest. The top six (6) students in rank will compete in the final round. The final scores will be cumulative for all four (4) rounds.
6. At the State Final preliminary rounds of Debate, there will be one (1) judge for Rounds 1 & 2 and a three (3) judge panel for Rounds 3 & 4, when possible.
7. The tournament directorate will determine judging quotas for the State finals in all areas.
8. The pyramid model will be used for both Policy and Lincoln-Douglas at the State Tournament.
9. After two losses, a team/speaker is dropped from the tournament in debate.
10. At the State Tournament an additional Sweepstake trophy will be awarded to the school with the second highest number of sweepstake points.
11. Trophies will be awarded to National qualifiers and medallions will be awarded to alternates. State Finals Trophy: The Sweepstakes Trophy will be a traveling trophy based on the accumulated points during the ENTIRE year plus the State Sweepstakes points. Sweepstakes points in Student Congress will come under the Debate category.
12. Winners at the State will represent the League at the Grand National Tournament. The number of representatives in each category will be based upon the number of schools registered in the League

as outlined in the National Constitution of the N.C.F.L., article 2, sec. B #1.