

Forest Lake High School

Debate

Team Handbook

Dear Forest Lake Ranger Debate Team Member,

It is my pleasure to welcome you to the Forest Lake High School debate team. Our team has a tradition of hard work, professionalism, and success. We will continue to build upon this foundation

In this team handbook you will find information that I hope will be useful to you all season long. You will also find a set of team rules and policies. I try to keep our list of rules short and meaningful. They are here to enhance the debate experience for all team members. Please be generally familiar with them and always feel free to ask for clarification.

Most importantly, remember that you are a valuable member of the team. Your participation, opinion, and achievement all count. If at any time I can help make this a better experience, please talk with me.

Sincerely,

Robyn Madson
Head Debate Coach

To contact Ms. Madson

Home Phone (cell):	see roster on GoogleDocs	Team Website:	flakedebate.weebly.com
School Phone:	651-982-8569	Text Reminders:	www.remind.com
E-Mail:	rmadson@flaschools.org		Text @flakedb8 to 81010 for text msgs.

INTRODUCTORY INFORMATION

Joining the Team

Any student at Forest Lake High School is eligible to join the debate team. We do not hold auditions to join the team. Being on the debate team does not guarantee that you will be able to debate at each tournament.

To officially become a team member, you need to do the following:

- Pay your Activity Fee in the main office
- Sign & turn in your MSHSL Eligibility Form (available in main office)
- Give Ms. Madson your card from the main office as proof of payment

You must pay your activity fee before you attend a tournament. We never want the activity fee to be a barrier to participation. If this may be the case for you, please speak with me or e-mail me and we'll work something out.

Costs & Supplies

In addition to your participation fee, there are other costs that you may encounter over the course of the season. All of these costs are possible depending upon your involvement:

Overnights: Occasionally the team will stay overnight at a hotel the weekend of a Tournament that may require a hotel fee.

Meals: Students are responsible for bringing or buying their own meals at tournaments. Concessions like pizza or sandwiches are usually available.

Clothing: Students are asked to dress professionally at tournaments (see dress code section for more detail). For some students, this means purchasing new clothes.

NSDA Membership: Most students will become members of the National Speech and Debate Association (formerly the National Forensics League). This is a nationally recognized debate and speech organization. Cost is \$15.

Supplies: Debaters will need to furnish a few supplies. A good supply kit includes:

- Fine or very fine point pens (preferably in more than one color)
- Legal pads
- Something to time with (cell phone or kitchen timer)
- A three-ring binder and loose-leaf paper

Time Commitment & Scheduling

The amount of time a student spends on debate is largely up to that individual. **All team members are required to attend the weekly meeting on Monday** (barring significant excuses). Tuesday and Thursday are practice days. Debaters may stay later or come earlier, but they are expected to be working between 3 and 4:30. Students who do the best typically compete and practice on a regular basis, often coming for every practice and working on their own. We do not practice on Friday. Tournaments take place on Saturdays and the occasional Friday.

TOURNAMENTS

Signing Up

Tournament registrations are usually due the Monday before the tournament. That means that Ms. Madson needs to know whether or not you are planning on attending upcoming tournaments. Please sign up on the appropriate sheet on the debate bulletin board at least one week in advance. If you would like to attend but your partner can't, please talk to Ms. Madson. If you are unsure for some reason, please talk to Ms. Madson. **Early and clear communication is vital.**

Limitations

For team members, tournament competition is a privilege, not a right. You earn the right to compete by having your case ready, practicing regularly, representing the team well, and being a good Forest Lake student and citizen. **Typed cases are due on the Wednesday before the tournament on GoogleDocs.** Some tournaments may have limited space. Please see "Coaches Decisions" for more information.

Departure & Transportation

For each tournament, a departure time will be posted on the debate wall and handed out at the Monday meeting. For Saturday tournaments, you should meet the team at McDonald's in Forest Lake. On Fridays, you will be expected to be at the South entrance near the cafeteria (student parking lot) and ready to leave at the departure time.

Return Times

Also posted will be an estimated return time. **Please remember that this is always an estimate.** Late running tournaments could always push back return times. Students will always be able to call their parents upon returning from a debate tournament.

Tournament Attire & Etiquette

Students are asked to dress professionally at debate tournaments. Generally this means:

Boys: A dress shirt & tie, and dress pants (Dockers etc. are fine) and shoes. Sport coat/suit is optional, but recommended. Girls: A suit, nice blouse/sweater & knee length or longer-skirt/dress slacks, or professional dress are all appropriate. Please ask if you have any questions.

Students are always expected to be polite, respectful, professional, and courteous at tournaments. All tournament conduct (from the time you get off the bus until you leave) is a reflection on our team.

Canceling

Occasionally, you may need to cancel your commitment to a tournament. If you need to cancel, please communicate this to Ms. Madson as soon as possible. If you need to cancel the morning of the tournament, you must call Ms. Madson at 651-331-9570. Students who fail to notify Ms. Madson in advance of the tournament date may be charged registration and/or judging fees.

TEAM POLICIES & RULES

General Policies

- 1) All school rules are in effect during debate practice and competition.
- 2) Treat all teammates and coaches with respect.
- 3) Treat school, team, and individual property with respect.
- 4) Be responsible...fulfill your commitments and take responsibility for your actions.
- 5) During practice, you should be focused on debate. Please do your relaxing and socializing elsewhere.
- 6) In case disciplinary action is necessary, students may be sent home from practice, suspended from competition, or, in extreme cases be removed from the team. Other school-sanctioned actions may be taken by school administration.
- 7) Please do not play games or do anything non-debate related (e-mail, bulletin boards, etc.) on the computers during practice time. Please log off the computers at the end of your practice session. The computers and lab are off limits to anyone not working with the debate team.
- 8) Leave the spaces you use (computer labs, Ms. Madson's room, other rooms) in better condition than when you entered them. **Don't leave your stuff lying around.**

Lettering Policy

Letters for debate are awarded to team members who prove themselves to be outstanding representatives of Forest Lake High School.

Eligibility: To be eligible for lettering consideration, a student must:

- 1) Maintain a minimum GPA of 2.0, and
- 2) Consistently follow all FLHS school rules and debate team policies, and
- 3) Maintain a positive and constructive attitude.

Once a student has established eligibility, he/she will earn a letter by achieving one or more of the following during the debate season:

- 1) By earning 250 NFL points in debate and debating Varsity at least ½ of the season OR
- 2) By qualifying to the State Tournament OR
- 3) By being a senior and a 3rd year debater
- 4) Coach decision in extenuating circumstances

Selection for the Sections/District/State Team

Forest Lake High School is in a MSHSL section for debate. We will select two Lincoln-Douglas debaters and two Public Forum teams for sections. We are in the Central MN NFL District and we may select a limited number of LD and PF debaters for districts. Being selected to the section/district team is a high honor. It is also a difficult decision for coaches. The Forest Lake debate coaches will select a section/district team based on which debaters will best represent Forest Lake High School (competitively and professionally). There are several factors that we consider:

- Positive Attitude (a belief that you can and want to do well)
- Willingness to prepare (a commitment in both time and in favorably reacting to coaching)
- Demonstration of debate skill (both throughout the season and at practice)
- Demonstration of professionalism (you help build Forest Lake's positive image)
- Potential to benefit from sections competition

Public Communications

When you communicate via public discussion groups on the Internet, you represent Forest Lake Debate. Please do not criticize or evaluate others, discuss any Forest Lake team strategies or arguments, or get involved with debate "politics." If you choose to participate in the discussions, please be positive and respectful of others. This is true of Facebook and Twitter as well. If you are found in violation of this expectation, you may be suspended or removed from the team.

Coaches Decisions

Coaches will make decisions on the following matters:

- 1) What level you will compete at (Novice, JV, Varsity). Who your partner is. You will have some input in these decisions.
- 2) Who will represent Forest Lake at any given tournament. Space and registration limits may limit the number of debaters we can bring to any given tournament. For example, we are only allowed two entries per division at the section tournament. Coaches will make these decisions based on performance, professionalism, effort, potential, preparation and team contributions.
- 3) Coaches have the right to review the arguments you will present. You will be asked to not use arguments deemed inappropriate.