

2018-19 Debate

Team Informational Packet

Coaches

Courtney Bassett bcforensics@gmail.com

Brad Meloche bradgmu@gmail.com

How to Stay Connected

- **Email** - email any coach with questions/concerns
- **Monthly eBlast Newsletter** - all parents will receive a monthly (at minimum) eBlast newsletter that covers current team happenings, more sent out when there are upcoming tournaments
- **Parent Meetings** - make sure to attend all if possible
- **Website** - www.covingtonproductions.com, all necessary information, forms, etc will be online
- **Remind** - Sign up for the team text alerts via “remind.” We will be using this for deadline reminders, schedule changes, emergency information, tournament updates, etc. Please see the attached sheet for information on how to subscribe.

Debate General Information

Public Forum involves opposing teams of two, debating a topic concerning a current event. Proceeding a coin toss, the winners choose which side to debate (PRO or CON) or which speaker position they prefer (1st or 2nd), and the other team receives the remaining option. Students present cases, engage in rebuttal and refutation, and also participate in a “crossfire” (similar to a cross examination) with the opportunity to question the opposing team. Often times community members are recruited to judge this event. The debate season runs from September-December. 5th and 6th Graders will compete on an exhibition team. 7th and 8th Graders will compete on a MIFA sanctioned team.

Spirit of Competition

Debate is a competitive activity similar to a sport. While the overall goal is to foster effective and confident communication, there is a competitive element. At BCS we are committed to focusing on our performance message and working towards ways to improve throughout the season. Competition is meant to help teach students to effectively receive constructive criticism and learn to adapt, should they choose, as a result. Unlike sports, Debate has a very subjective judging element that can be hard to grasp and get used to. However, learning to appeal to varying audiences helps set students up for real life challenges and interactions. Our teams competes under MIFA - The Michigan Interscholastic Forensic Association. This is the organization that runs speech and debate in the state of Michigan. Their website is www.themifa.org. We are also members of the National Speech and Debate Association that organizes speech and debate across the country. Their website is www.speechanddebate.org.

Benefits of Activity

- Learn to argue effectively
- Learn about research based argumentation
- Learn researching skills
- Broaden knowledge of real life issues
- Learn crucial listening skills
- Learn the art of accepting and giving constructive criticism AND praise
- Boost confidence
- Learn vocal and physical performing techniques
- Have fun and be given a stage through which to express a voice!

Operations Breakdown

Partner Selection - *In debate, students participate in pairs. Partners are chosen and assigned by the coaching staff. This policy is meant to benefit the students and the team as a whole. Student preference and requests are taken into account.*

Schedule

- **Choice Hour** - Choice hour meets Thursdays Q1
- **Tournaments** - Tournaments take place on Saturdays and typically take up the majority of the day (8am-5pm). Students perform at various and multiple times throughout a tournament day. Students are expected to participate in at least **two of the three** offered tournaments that run from September - November.
- **Long Practices** - In addition to choice hour, there are **three** after school practices throughout the school year. These take place usually on Tuesdays and are from 4:10-6pm. A snack is served.
- **States Tournaments** - Some of the debaters will be asked to represent the team at the State Debate tournament. These decisions will be based on tournament record, dedication, and availability. These decisions will be made at the beginning of November.
- **State Tournament Practices** - Students that are participating in the State Tournament will be expected to attend practices outside of school leading up to the State Tournament.

Attendance Expectations - *Below you will find the attendance expectations outlined for our team. These expectations will be enforced by the coaching staff in order to determine whether a student is eligible to compete at tournaments and, if necessary, remain on the team. **It is heavily suggested that all conflicts be communicated to bcsoforensics@gmail.com in advance.***

- **Choice Hour** - Students are expected to be enrolled and regularly choice hour. Students are expected to miss no more than 1 choice hour during quarter 1.
- **Additional Practices**

- **Long Practices** - Students are expected to miss no more than **one** long practice
 - **Tournaments**
 - **Debate** - Students are expected to attend no less than **two** debate tournaments. It is preferred that every student attends at least one of the September/October tournaments and then the November tournament.

Permission Slips - *Permission slips will be distributed for every tournament and after school event (excluding long practices). These will be distributed approx. 2-3 weeks before each event. Failure to turn in a permission slip on time will result in a student not being eligible to compete in the upcoming tournament.*

Transportation - *Transportation to and from practices and tournaments is to be handled and coordinated by individual families. We will not be utilizing a bus for any tournament. There will be some parent driving volunteers that the coaches will help coordinate in advance of each tournament. A separate permission slip will be necessary for this. Drop off and pick up times for practices are tournaments should be considered **exact**. Repeated failure to pick up a student on time from a practice or tournament may result in additional fees.*

Parent Involvement Expectation - *we encourage and expect our parents to be involved in the success of our forensics and debate team! We ask that each family give a minimum amount of service to our cause. Please take advantage of one the family volunteer options in order to fulfill your volunteer quota:*

- Donate items for one donation spot sometime throughout the year
 - Options include: long practices & tournament concessions
- Complete Judge Training and judge once during the school year.
 - Judges are still guaranteed to be able to watch their student perform at least once during a tournament day. If your student is on both the Debate and Forensics team - you can choose one activity to become a judge for.
 - If you can not fulfill the judging expectation, families are asked to contribute an additional \$75 to make up for the extra cost to the team to hire a judge.

Fees

- **Pay to Participate** - Similar to athletics and other extra-curricular activities at BCS, we do have a pay-to-participate fee. The fee for this year's team is \$75. Please see below for a rough budget in order to better understand the need for your support. This fee can be paid by cash or check (made payable to BCS) and is due no later than Friday, September 14, 2018. The fee can be submitted in the main office in an envelope labeled "BCS Debate" in the turn in bin. No one will be precluded from participation for financial reasons. Please contact Mr. Morawski or Mr. Hill to inquire about financial support.

Average Individual Tournament Cost: \$250-\$400

MIFA Membership Cost: \$175

NSDA Membership Cost: \$275

Research Materials: \$500

Assistant Coaches & Guest Speakers: \$1200

- **Drop Fees** - Once the deadline to sign up for a tournament has passed, students are expected to compete in the tournament if they are signed up. Any drops after the deadline will result in a \$30 drop fee.
- **Food** - Students are typically responsible for their own food on tournament days. There are usually concessions available to students with lunch options that range from \$5-\$8. Students are always allowed to bring their own lunch. We will provide a snack at each tournament. Sometimes, boxed lunches are offered and these arrangements and payments will be made in advance, accordingly through the coaching staff.
- **Late Pick Up** - Habitual tardiness of a parent or guardian to pick up a student after a long practice, tournament, or individual coaching appointment (if it is the last appointment of the evening) will result in an additional fee. The fee will be \$10 for pick up within the first 15 minutes and \$1 a minute after 15 minutes. There will be **one** warning given to a family via email before this fee structure kicks in.

Outside of School Practice Expectations - *Similar to academics, sports, reading, and music, your student's success in this activity is contingent on their time and effort at home AND at school. Please encourage your student to practice their speeches at home as well as engage in out of class research. This can be done on their own or in front of friends and family.*

Tournament Etiquette

- **Spectators** - Parents and family members are encouraged to attend tournaments. However, please keep in mind that students are being ranked and judged from the minute that they walk into a tournament room and their family's audience behavior CAN affect their score. A typical "round" of competition is approx. 1 hour. Therefore, spectators should only attend if they believe they can sit in one room, quietly, without the use of any electronics, for that time period.
- **Team Policies** - Although students may be with their parents on the days of tournaments, they are there as representatives of BCS and therefore are expected to adhere to the following policies:
 - Following the schedule set by the coach
 - Staying on the premises of the tournament for the entire day (no leaving early, we stay through the end of awards)
 - Watching a round if the coach insists, even if it is past an individual student's elimination

- No devices during the tournament, except between rounds. Devices must be TURNED OFF (NOT ON SILENT) during a round
- No “tacky talk” of other performers at any point throughout the tournament day

- **Dress Code** - Debate employs a “business casual” dress code. During the debate season, students are expected to be in business attire. For boys, this means dress pants or khakis, a polo or button up shirt (jacket and tie optional), and dress shoes. For girls, they can wear the same thing as the boys or wear a dress or skirt with flats (slight heels are ok). **Absolutely no:** jeans, heavily logo’d shirts (stay away from BCS attire, also), leggings (unless paired with a LONG dress or tunic), UGG style boots, flip flops, tennis shoes. Excessive jewelry is also not suggested as it can be loud. Girls should plan to have their hair pulled back out of their face, if possible.

- **Food** - Students are responsible to bring their own lunch or money for lunch to tournaments unless otherwise arranged through the coach prior to the tournaments. Water only is the preferred beverage on tournament days.

- **Transportation** - Students and families are responsible for their own transportation to and from tournaments unless otherwise arranged through the coach.