

2017-18 Forensics

Team Informational Packet

Coaches

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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.

Forensics General Information

Forensics is competitive acting and public speaking. Students compete in one of 13 different categories. The majority of the categories are individual, although there can be an opportunity to compete with a partner or in a group. Categories range from the interpretative performance of a play, short story, or poem, to a student-written speech of a persuasive or informative nature. The Forensics Season runs from December-May. All grades, with the exception of a few categories, compete against each other (5-8).

Spirit of Competition

Forensics 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, Forensics 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, Category, and Piece Selection - *In Forensics, students compete in one category for the season using one performance piece. There are two seasons: a fall season and a spring season. Partners, categories, and pieces/topics 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 Monday, Wednesday, and Friday Q1-Q3. Q4 choice hour will only meet on day (specific day TBD).
- **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. There are **two** forensics tournaments in the fall and **two-three** forensics tournaments in the spring.
- **Long Practices** - In addition to choice hour, there are **five** after school practices throughout the school year. These take place on Mondays or Fridays, typically, and are from 4:10-6:30pm. Dinner is served at these practices.
- **Showcases** - There will be a Forensics Showcase in the winter where family and friends are encouraged to come and watch students showcase their performances. A showcase is often a better environment for many spectators to attend than a tournament. In the spring there will be two Dinner Theatre performance evenings where students will showcase their forensics performances through this fundraising experience.
- **Other**
 - **Individual Coaching** - Choice Hour & Long Practices are full team rehearsals. The coaching staff will also offer individual appointments with students to help nurture their individual performances during the forensics season.
 - **Performance Taping Days** - During the forensics season, students will sign up to have their performance recorded so that they can have a digital

copy (no recording is ever allowed at tournaments) and for self-critique purposes.

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 Mrs. Bassett in advance.*

- **Choice Hour** - During Q1, Q2, and Q3 students are expected to be enrolled and regularly attend 2 out of the 3 choice hour days. Students may be in all 3. Students who wish to participate in Duo or Multiple during the forensics season must be in all three choice hour days. During each quarter, students are expected to miss no more than 3 choice hour periods.
- **Additional Practices**
 - **Long Practices** - Students are expected to miss no more than **one** long practice in the fall and **one** long practice in the spring.
 - **Individual Coaching** - Students are expected to sign up for **two, 30 minute session** during **each** season.
- **Tournaments**
 - **Forensics** - Students are expected to attend no less than **one** of the forensics tournaments offered each season.
- **Other**
 - **Showcase** - Participation is expected in the showcase.
 - **Dinner Theatre** - All students are expected to attend **BOTH** dinner theatre evenings. During the 5/6 Dinner Theatre, the 7/8 students are the servers and vice versa.

Permission Slips - *Permission slips will be distributed for every tournament and after school event (excluding long practices). These will be distributed approx. three 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 (with the exception of possibly Mackinac). 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 and 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 of the family volunteer options in order to fulfill your volunteer quota:*

Option 1 - Parent/Adult Coach/Judge - become a volunteer parent coach or judge by attending a workshop. There are workshops available in Debate and/or Forensics.

- Attend a Forensics Judge/Coach Workshop, then judge at **one** forensics tournament and guest coach at **one** long practice OR judge at **two** forensics tournaments

Option 2 - Chaperone & Food Volunteers

- Sign up to bring a food (or paper product) item at **two** events (tournaments, long practices) **AND** sign up to physically chaperone OR drive at **one** (long practice or tournament).

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 22, 2017. The fee can be submitted in the main office in an envelope labeled "BCS Forensics" in the turn in bin.
 - Average Individual Tournament Cost: \$250-\$400
 - MIFA Membership Cost: \$180
 - NSDA Membership Cost: \$275
 - Scripts & Research Materials: \$500
 - Assistant Coaches & Guest Speakers: \$1200
 - Equipment & Visual Aids: \$700
- **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 pieces and speeches at home. 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. Those who may have trouble with this are encouraged to attend showcases and dinner theaters.
- **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** - Forensics employs a "business casual" dress code. During the forensics season, the dress code will depend on your student's category. Public Address categories will follow the same dress code as debate. Interpretation (acting categories) should dress in "nice attire." For boys, khakis or black pants, polo shirt or button down, nice shoes. For girls, khakis or black pants, nice sweater or blouse, or dress/skirt that is easy to move in, with nice flats.
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.

Student/Parent Team Contract - Forensics

By signing this form, student and parent are certifying that they have read the informational packet and understand:

- The schedule
- The attendance expectations
- Team policies

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Pay - to - Participate Form

In addition to submitting your pay to participate form, please make sure you update the **PARENT/STUDENT Contact Form** online at <https://goo.gl/forms/CZirpfdtehF3dCp2> (link is also available online at www.covingtonproductions.com)

Student Name: _____

Please remit payment of \$75 in cash or check (made payable to BCS) no later than Friday, September 22, 2017. This form and payment can be turned in to the front office turn in bin in an envelope labeled "BCS Debate"

_____ Check _____ Cash