



# THE AMERICAN LEGION



## DEPARTMENT OF GEORGIA HIGH SCHOOL ORATORICAL SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM *“A Constitutional Speech Contest”*

### **Contest Procedures & Regulations**

#### **Before the Contest Starts**

It is the goal of the Department of Georgia that each level of the contest: Post, Area, District, and Department, work to conduct their contests in a manner equal to that of the National contest. Such consistency of program aids the participants as they progress from one level to the next and reduces confusion. For further information about the Department (State) of Georgia contest, please contact the Department Chair or Vice-Chairs. As well, for further information about procedures before, during, and after the contest can be found at

<http://www.legion.org/oratorical/contests>.

The official in charge of the contest conducts a drawing to determine the order by which contestants will appear. The contest chair introduces each contestant and then announces the title of the contestant's prepared oration. The audience must refrain from applause until the judges make a decision.

#### **Stage, Lectern, or Podium**

A room, which can be closed off from distractions behind doors, is needed however, a raised platform is not mandatory; but it is **strongly recommended**. Contestants are not permitted to use notes during their presentations. In addition, the use of amplification, a lectern, a speaker's stand, or any manner of prompting is not permitted. Props are not permitted in any form.

#### **Electronic or Digital Recording/Gathering**

Contestants and audience members may not use any form of electronic/digital data gathering, receiving, and/or transmitting equipment. Please wait until the conclusion of the contest to take any pictures of your contestant.



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#### The Contest

##### Time Limits and Announcements

Contestants will be announced by number and may not announce their names or any group affiliation at any time during the contest. Contestants must deliver their prepared oration in no fewer than 8 minutes and no more than 10 minutes. The assigned topic runs no fewer than 3 minutes and no more than 3 minutes.

##### Order of Delivery

Contestants will arrive no less than one (1) hour prior to the contest. Upon arrival, they shall be escorted to a private contestant waiting room behind closed doors. No visitors other than parents, coaches, chairs, or contest waiting room supervisor are permitted in the room once the contest begins.

##### Waiting Room

Until their turn to speak, contestants must remain in the private waiting room where other speakers' discourses cannot be heard. The contest chair will appoint an individual to supervise the contestants in the waiting room. Discussion of the contest *or any related* contest information is prohibited while contestants are in the waiting room once contestants have been escorted to the waiting room.

##### Procedural Notes

##### Timer

The contest chair names an official timekeeper who keeps an accurate time record of each contestant and an added timer will also be keep time in the event of mechanical failure. In the event of a dispute the primary official timekeeper's record is the primary and be used. The timekeepers will be located on the main floor, in full view of the contestants, and will begin



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timing for each contestant at the start of their prepared oration.

#### **Tabulators**

The contest chair will appoint no fewer than three tabulators for the department finals contest. It is their responsibility to review the judges' scorecards to be certain they are fully tabulated and signed before being submitted for final tabulation.

#### **Display and Tracking of Time**

The timekeepers should have a stopwatch and 8-1/2 x 11 time cards displaying the numbers 8, 9, and 10 for the prepared oration. When eight minutes have gone by, the time warning card with the number 8 is placed at timer shoulder level in full view of the speaker and then laid face up on the table before the timer. The procedure is followed for times reaching 9 and 10 accordingly. The same procedure is used during the assigned topic discourse with cards bearing the number 3, 4 and 5 on a 8-1/2 x 11 card.

The contest chair will announce the time each contestant uses for the prepared oration and the assigned topic immediately after each contestant speaks in front of the judges.

#### **Topic Draw**

Approximately five minutes before the start of the assigned topic discourse, the first contestant will be informed of the assigned topic drawn. He or she retires to privacy (preferably a separate room) under the direction of an individual appointed by the contest chair; it is this individual's duty to see that the contestant does not consult any text matter or notes with any connection to the subject. Contestants may only reference the actual words of the topic provided on the card drawn.

Each succeeding contestant will be called upon in the order that he or she previously appeared. He or she will also be informed in turn of the topic of



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the assigned topic discourse and then escorted to the same privacy room provided for the first contestant. Contestants must give both their prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse to receive the scholarship monies to which they may be entitled.

#### **Stage Escort**

As each of the contestants are called to present their prepared orations, they will be escorted to the stage by an individual assigned by the chair. While not mandatory, it is highly recommended that a member of a local High School JROTC program be utilized as escorts in full dress uniform. Upon conclusion of their prepared orations, they must return to a soundproof waiting room with their escort. If not taken to a separate waiting room, speakers who conclude their assigned topic discourse **may not** associate with contestants who have not finished speaking.

#### **What to Wear**

Uniforms of any type are not permitted attire for the contestants. Appropriate business attire is required for all contestants. Contestants may not wear awards and medals from previous competitions.

#### **Television and Radio**

Live television and radio broadcasts are permitted in all contests but the chair of the contest must be notified prior to the contest start. As well as live television or radio broadcasts, filming, taping or other types of media for later showing, provided:

- Lighting and other site conditions are the same for all contestants.
- Camera or recording equipment must be on a tripod and stationary during the contest as a whole.
- Filming or broadcasts in no way may distract the contestants or



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interfere with the pre-announced scheduled time of the contest.

- The normal speaking voice of the contestant is not interfered with or amplified within the auditorium.
- The American Legion is in no way financially obligated without prior approval and prior notification of recording is required to the chair.

### Scorecards

Judges' scorecards for Department finals and the National Contest **will not be** divulged to anyone at the site of the contest. It is recommended as well that such cards not be presented at Area or District contests as well. All Department contest judges' scorecards become the property of the acknowledged Department and the National contest judges' scorecards become property of The American Legion National Headquarters.

### Judges

Judges are an important part of the oratorical contest. Their qualifications are carefully considered, as their decisions are final and must be reached without bias. Impartial judging is the key to fairness and success of the program, which selects a national champion. Judges should be instructed using the National contest procedures and sequestered before the contest.

Judges and contestants should have no contact during or before the contest. As well to avoid any conflict of interest, no judge should have prior knowledge or experience in relation to the contestant.

It is highly suggested that only as a last resort at the Area and District contest levels that Legion family not be utilized as judges

All Area, District, and Department finals and the National contest have five judges, who are not allowed to receive any publicity before the event.



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During the contest, judges sit in different locations, and each renders his or her final decision without any sort of consultation in an unbiased manner. A reminder to potential judges that 70% of the scoring is on content related to the constitution and 30% to quality and style of delivery.

### **Contest Violations and Penalties**

Judges are advised to downgrade contestants who fail to emphasize the prepared oration and the assigned topic discourse on a citizen's duties and obligations to our government. Judges can downgrade a contestant up to 10 points for failure to speak about the Constitution. The contest chair will announce any time violations for contestants. A penalty of one point for each minute, or fraction thereof, shall be assessed toward the contestant's total score.

Following the last assigned topic discourse, the judges, timekeepers, tabulators and contest chair may proceed to a private room for final review and tabulation.

### **National Contest Travel Expenses**

The American Legion pays travel and lodging expenses for Department winner and their chaperone to the National contest. A chaperone may be a coach, parent, or designated sponsor over 21 years of age and must accompany each contestant.

The American Legion does not assume liability for personal injury, property damage or loss sustained by any contestant or chaperone en route to or from the contests. For the National contest, however, The American Legion does carry a nominal group accident insurance policy on contestants accepted into the national competition. The American Legion selects an air carrier for contestants' travel.