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National Debate Tournament Records

1949-1994
44 boxes (23.25 linear feet)
Call no.: MS 017



- [About SCUA](#)
 - [SCUA home](#)
 - [Credo digital](#)
- [Scope](#)
- [Inventory](#)
 - [Series 1. Audiovisual](#)
 - [Series 2. Ballots and records](#)
- [Admin info](#)
- [Download](#)
 - [xml version](#)
 - [print version \(pdf\)](#)



Read collection overview

The National Debate Tournament is one of the national championships for collegiate debating in the United States, seeking to exemplify excellence in scholarship, research, and argument. Originating at West Point in 1947 with twenty-nine teams, the Tournament now includes over eighty teams, with the site of the finals rotating annually among member schools.

The collections consists mostly of tournament booklets, ballots, correspondence, committee minutes, and tapes of the debates with accompanying transcripts.

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Background on National Debate Tournament



Debaters, 1970

The National Debate Tournament is one of the national championships for collegiate debating in the United States, seeking to exemplify excellence in scholarship, research, and argument. The Tournament originated at the United States Military Academy (West Point) in 1947, where it grew out of a dual desire among the Academy's leadership for extra-curricular activities for the cadets and for expanding offerings in the liberal arts. The concept of a national tournament was greeted avidly outside the Academy, so that when the first tournament was held, it included twenty-nine teams distributed in five seeding rounds and four elimination rounds over a three-day period.

During the early years, debate rules were set largely by West Point administrators -- particularly Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor and Col. G. A. Lincoln -- with input from well-known collegiate coaches such as A. Craig Baird (University of Iowa), G. M. Musgrave (Des Moines), Alan Nichols (Southern California), E. R. Nichols (Redlands), and Joseph O'Brien (Penn State). Since the American Forensic Association took over responsibility for the tournament in 1967, however, a committee elected by member schools has been charged with overseeing development, rules, and procedures. The tournament has grown steadily, reaching nearly eighty teams in 2015, and the debate venue has rotated to a different school each year, with a few sites hosted more than once. The member schools work closely with the national committee to select a single national question or resolution on a matter of current public concern that will be debated for the entire academic year.

Both eligibility to participate and the form of the debate have evolved over the years as the Tournament has grown in size. While teams could originally be admitted either by invitation or by winning a district tournament, qualifying tournaments have been added in most districts, along with both post-district and pre-district at-large bids.

Scope of collection

The collections consists mostly of tournament booklets, ballots, correspondence, committee minutes, and audio or videotapes of the debates with accompanying transcripts.

Inventory

Series 1. Audiovisual

1949-1994

National Debate Tournament final rounds: Audiovisual

Box 1

Audiocassettes

1957-1988

Box 1

Available are tapes of the debate finals for 1957-1984 and 1987-1988, and of several types of speech finals ("After Dinner Speaker," "Informative," Impromptu" and others) from 1986.

Videotapes

1986, 1996

Box 1

Transcripts (lacking 1951, 1953, 1954, 1961-1963)

1949-1966

Box 41

Bibliography of published transcripts

1967-1983

Box 1

National Debate Tournament, other rounds: tapes

1986-

Box 1

Series 2. Ballots and records

1950-1994

Debates for 1950-1966

1950-1966

Post-tournament booklet

1950

Box 2
Pre-tournament booklets
1951-1959
Box 2
Photos
1959
Box 2
Pre-tournament booklets
1960-1966
Box 2
Post-tournament booklets
1964-1966
Box 2
American Forensic Association: 20th anniversary luncheon
undated
Box 2
Debate for 1967
1967
Awards, cards, and certificates of participation
1967
Box 3
Ballots: elimination rounds
1967
Box 3
Booklet with records
1967
Box 3
Correspondence: awards
1967
Box 3
Photos (with negatives)
1967
Box 3
Procedures proposals, memoranda on rules
1967
Box 3
Debate for 1968
1968
Ballots: elimination rounds
1968
Box 3
Booklet with preliminary round summary sheets
1968
Box 3
Correspondence: general
1968
Box 3
Form letters to participating teams
1968
Box 3
Judges lists
1968
Box 3
National Debate Tournament charter and letters on Washington and Lee
1968
Box 3
Certificate of participation
1968
Box 3
Debate for 1969
1969
Ballots: elimination rounds
1969
Box 3
Booklet with preliminary round summary sheets
1969
Box 3
Correspondence: districts 1, 3-6, 8
1969
Box 3
Correspondence: general
1969
Box 3
Form letters to participating teams and judges
1969
Box 3
Mailing lists of schools interested in National Debate Tournament
1969
Box 3
National Debate Tournament minutes
1969
Box 3
Debate for 1970
1970
Ballots: elimination rounds
1970
Box 4
Booklet
1970
Box 4
Budget estimates and final budget
1970
Box 4
Correspondence: districts 2, 7, 8
1970
Box 4
Correspondence: other (letters from Matheny)
1970
Box 4
Form letters and information about Tournament
1970
Box 4
National Debate Tournament Committee minutes

1970
Box 4
Photos: Tournament activities
1970
Box 4
Certificate of participation
1970
Box 4
Debate for 1971
1971
Ballots: elimination rounds
1971
Box 5
Booklet
1971
Box 5
Budget estimates and final budget
1971
Box 5
Correspondence: Budget
1971
Box 5
Correspondence: to Edward Brown regarding Tournament ethics
1971
Box 5
Correspondence: trophies
1971
Box 5
Correspondence: National Debate Tournament trustees
1971
Box 5
National Debate Tournament Committee minutes
1971
Box 5
Certificate of participation
1971
Box 5
Photographs
1971
Box 5
Debate for 1972
1972
Ballots: elimination rounds
1972
Box 6
Bid allocations: committee report
1972
Box 6
Booklet
1972
Box 6
Budget estimates and final budget
1972
Box 6
Correspondence: American Forensic Association grant of \$1,500
1972
Box 6
Correspondence: Districts 1-4 and lists of qualifying teams and tournaments
1972
Box 6
Correspondence: general (includes Lehman's letter of resignation as National Debate Tournament director)
1972
Box 6
Correspondence: Post-tournament
1972
Box 6
Correspondence: National Debate Tournament trustees
1972
Box 6
Form letters to teams and judges
1972
Box 6
Photograph of hotel
1972
Box 6
National Debate Tournament Committee minutes
1972
Box 6
National Debate Tournament Newsletter
1972
Box 6
Certificate of participation
1972
Box 6
Power-matching suggestions
1972
Box 6
Correspondence: trophies
1972
Box 6
Debate for 1973
1973
Ballots: elimination rounds
1973
Box 7
Booklet
1973
Box 8
Budget estimates and final budget
1973
Box 8
Results from Districts 2-6, 9
1973

Box 8
Form letters for teams and judges
1973
Box 8
National Debate Tournament Committee minutes
1973
Box 8
National Debate Tournament judges data sheets
1973
Box 8
National Debate Tournament qualifiers: list of teams and coaches
1973
Box 8
National Debate Tournament subscribers
1973
Box 8
National Debate Tournament judges (candidates)
1973
Box 8
Debate for 1974
1974
Ballots: elimination rounds
1974
Box 9
Booklet
1974
Box 9
National Debate Tournament Committee minutes
1974
Box 9
Debate for 1975
1975
Ballots: elimination rounds
1975
Box 10
Booklet
1975
Box 10
National Debate Tournament Committee minutes
1975
Box 10
Debate for 1976
1976
Ballots: elimination rounds
1976
Box 11
Booklet
1976
Box 11
National Debate Tournament Committee minutes
1976
Box 11
Debate for 1977
1977
Booklet
1977
Box 12
National Debate Tournament Committee minutes
1977
Box 12
Debate for 1978
1978
Ballots: elimination rounds
1978
Box 12
Booklet
1978
Box 12
National Debate Tournament Committee minutes
1978
Box 12
Debate for 1979
1979
Ballots: elimination rounds
1979
Box 12
Booklet
1979
Box 12
National Debate Tournament Committee minutes
1979
Box 12
Debate for 1980
1980
Ballots: elimination rounds
1980
Box 13
Booklet
1980
Box 13
National Debate Tournament Committee minutes
1980
Box 13
Debate for 1981
1981
Ballots: elimination rounds
1981
Box 13
Booklet
1981
Box 13
National Debate Tournament Committee minutes
1981

Box 13
Debate for 1982
1982
Advance information to qualifying teams
1982
Box 14
At-large results: lists first and second round teams
1982
Box 14
Correspondence: awards
1982
Box 14
Booklet revisions and information on elimination
1982
Box 14
Conflict of interest forms for judges
1982
Box 14
Correspondence: Ford Foundation regarding National Debate Tournament alumni
1982
Box 14
District tournament results
1982
Box 14
Elimination round strike sheets
1982
Box 14
First round applications
1982
Box 14
Fund-raising booklet, with memos and letters
1982
Box 14
Guest judge forms and information sheet
1982
Box 14
Host booklet
1982
Box 14
Judge forms
1982
Box 14
National Debate Tournament Committee minutes
1982
Box 14
Newsletter
1982
Box 14
Correspondence: Ownership of final round
1982
Box 14
Schedule drafts
1982
Box 15
Second round bid applications
1982
Box 15
Site information
1982
Box 15
Speaker cards
1982
Box 15
Team and coach information for booklet
1982
Box 15
Tournament evaluation report
1982
Box 15
Team and judge cards
1982
Box 15
Tournament procedures
1982
Box 15
Schedule drafts
1982
Box 15
Second round bid applications
1982
Box 15
Site information
1982
Box 15
Speaker cards
1982
Box 15
Team and coach information for booklet
1982
Box 15
Tournament evaluation report
1982
Box 15
Team and judge cards
1982
Box 15
Tournament procedures
1982
Box 15
Elimination round judge preference sheets
1982
Box 16
Elimination round judge preference sheets

1982
Box 16
Preliminary round judge sheets
1982
Box 16
Debate for 1983
1983
Ballots: elimination rounds
1983
Box 16
Advance information
1983
Box 17
Awards
1983
Box 17
At-large ranking for preliminary rounds
1983
Box 17
Booklet
1983
Box 17
National Debate Tournament charter and by-laws
1983
Box 17
Conflict of interest forms
1983
Box 17
Correspondence: general
1983
Box 17
Development fund brochure
1983
Box 17
Director: search correspondence
1983
Box 17
Elimination round seedings
1983
Box 17
First round applications
1983
Box 17
Guest judge forms
1983
Box 17
Correspondence: IRS and tax status
1983
Box 17
Judging philosophy booklet
1983
Box 17
Legal status
1983
Box 17
National Debate Tournament minutes
1983
Box 17
Newsletters
1982-1983
Box 17
Round-by-round pairings
1983
Box 17
Tournament rules
1983
Box 18
Second round bid applications
1983
Box 18
Speaker cards
1983
Box 18
National Debate Tournament subscribers
1983
Box 18
Tab room forms
1983
Box 18
Tournament evaluation surveys
1983
Box 18
At-large committee rankings
1983
Box 18
Elimination round panels
1983
Box 18
Elimination round preference forms
1983
Box 18
Preliminary round results
1983
Box 18
Debate for 1984
1984
Ballots: elimination rounds
1984
Box 19
Booklet
1984
Box 19
Ballots: elimination rounds (pink ballots)

1984
Box 20
Preliminary round results
1984
Box 20
Advance information packet
1984
Box 21: 1
Assembly announcements
1984
Box 21: 2
At-large composite rankings
1984
Box 21: 3
Awards
1984
Box 21: 4
Booklet insert sheet
1984
Box 21: 5
National Debate Tournament budget
1984
Box 21: 6
National Debate Tournament charter and rules master
1984
Box 21: 7
Correspondence: Church (100 National Debate Tournament)
1984
Box 21: 8
Correspondence: Hazen (130 National Debate Tournament)
1984
Box 21: 9
Correspondence: Johnson
1984
Box 21: 10
Correspondence: McGuire
1984
Box 21: 11
Correspondence: Southworth (110 National Debate Tournament)
1984
Box 21: 12
Correspondence: Other (140 National Debate Tournament)
1984
Box 21: 13
District tournament results
1984
Box 21: 14
Elimination round striking cards
1984
Box 21: 15
Elimination round strike sheets
1984
Box 21: 16
First round at-large bids
1984
Box 21: 17
Guest judge forms
1984
Box 21: 18
Guest judge information packet
1984
Box 21: 19
Hotel facilities for Tournament events
1984
Box 21: 20
Judge cards and speaker cards
1984
Box 21: 21
Judging obligations
1984
Box 22: 22
Master copies of forms
1984
Box 22: 23
Master transparencies for judge assignments
1984
Box 22: 24
Newsletters
1983-1984
Box 22: 25
Newsletter 2
1984
Box 22: 26
Newsletter 3
1983-1984
Box 22: 27
Participant roster
1984
Box 22: 28
Preliminary results sheet
1984
Box 22: 29
Preliminary round pairing copies
1984
Box 22: 30
Preliminary strike sheets
1984
Box 22: 31
Preliminary subscription notice (201 National Debate Tournament)
1984
Box 22: 32
Room assignment data
1984

Box 22: 33
Rosters (010 National Debate Torunament)
1984
Box 22: 34
Schematic for pairing round one
1984
Box 22: 35
Second round at-large bids
1984
Box 22: 36
Site selection: Tennessee (301 National Debate Tournament)
1984
Box 22: 37
Subscription list
1983-1984
Box 22: 38
Team card transparencies
1984
Box 22: 39
Team Coach data forms
1984
Box 22: 40
Booklet
1984
Box 22: 41
Evaluation forms
1984
Box 22: 42
Rules and regulations
1984
Box 22: 43
Debate for 1985
1985
Tournament ballots
1985
Box 23: 44-52
Tournament ballots
1985
Box 24: 53-57
Tournament records
1985
Box 25
Tournament records
1985
Box 26
Debate for 1986
1986
Tournament ballots
1986
Box 27
Tournament records
1986
Box 28
Tournament records
1986
Box 29
Debate for 1987
1987
Tournament ballots
1987
Box 30
Debate for 1988
1988
Tournament ballots
1988
Box 31
Tournament records
1988
Box 32
Tournament records
1988
Box 33
Tournament records
1988
Box 34
Budget statements
1988
Box 35
Finances: recorded
1988
Box 35
Request forms
1988
Box 35
Originals
1988
Box 35
Charter and standing rules
1988
Box 35
Rules and regulations
1988
Box 35
Correspondence: Scott
1988
Box 35
Correspondence: Kauffman
1988
Box 35
Correspondence: Henderson
1988
Box 35
Correspondence: Rhodes

1988
Box 35
Correspondence: Southworth
1988
Box 35
Correspondence: Other
1988
Box 35
Site selection: Weber State
1988
Box 35
Subscription invitation cover letter
1988
Box 35
Current subscribers
1988
Box 35
Master subscription list
1988
Box 35
Newsletter 1
1988
Box 35
Newsletter 2
1988
Box 35
First round at-large bids
1988
Box 35
Second round at-large bids
1988
Box 35
At-large rankings
1988
Box 35
Participant roster
1988
Box 35
Team Coach data
1988
Box 35
Tournament forms (copies)
1988
Box 35
Advance information packet
1988
Box 35
At-large qualification packet
1988
Box 35
District tournament information
1988
Box 36
Guest judges packet
1988
Box 36
Tournament schedule
1988
Box 36
Booklet preparation
1988
Box 36
Booklet
1988
Box 36
Tab room supply
1988
Box 36
Tab room proceedings
1988
Box 36
Hotel facilities
1988
Box 36
Room assignment data
1988
Box 36
Round one schematic
1988
Box 36
Preliminary round strike sheets
1988
Box 36
Team card transparencies
1988
Box 36
Master judge assignment transparencies
1988
Box 36
Preliminary pairing copies
1988
Box 36
Guest judge forms
1988
Box 36
Conflict of interest forms
1988
Box 36
Announcement of assemblies
1988
Box 36
Judge and speaker cards
1988

Box 36
Preliminary results sheet
1988
Box 37
Elimination round strike sheets
1988
Box 37
Elimination bracket
1988
Box 37
Elimination strike cards
1988
Box 37
Tournament evaluation forms
1988
Box 37
National Debate Tournament Committee minutes
1988
Box 37
National Debate Tournament Trustees
1988
Box 37
Alumni newsletter
1988
Box 37
Ballots
1988
Box 37
Ballots
1988
Box 38
Ballots
1988
Box 39
Debates for 1992-1994
1992-1994
Booklet
1992
Box 40
Booklet, results, judges' philosophy booklet
1993
Box 40
Elimination round preference sheets
1993
Box 40
Preliminary strike sheets
1993
Box 40
Preference sheets
1993
Box 40
Booklet, judges' philosophy booklet
1994
Box 40
First round at-large applications
1994
Box 40
Second-round at-large applications
1994
Box 40
Judge preference sheets
1994
Box 40
Judge conflict of interest forms
1994
Box 40
Ballots
1994
Box 40

Administrative information

Access

The collection is open for research.

Provenance

Gift of National Debate Tournament, 1984-1994.

Processing Information

Processed by Rita Miller, 1985, and H. D. Smith, 2015.

Language:

English

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Search terms

Subjects

- American Forensic Association
- Debates and debating

Contributors

- National Debate Tournament [main entry]

Genres and formats

- Photographs
- Sound recordings
- Videotapes

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