

# Wisconsin Forensic Coaches Association Tournament Practices & Procedures Committee

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## Report for the WFCFA Spring Convention Saturday, May 3, 2008

### Membership and Constitutional Bylaws

As chair of the WFCFA Tournament Practices and Procedures Committee, I am grateful to the members who agreed to serve on this committee. As usual, an attempt was made to form a committee that represented the general membership — large and small schools, public and private, WHSFA members and NFL or NCFL members.

According to the WFCFA Constitutional Bylaws “The Tournament Practices and Procedures Committee shall oversee judging procedures and ethical standards. The committee shall audit the tabulation of sweepstakes awards at the state tournament. Members of this committee shall advise tournament and festival directors in resolving judging complaints and at the state tournament the TPP Committee shall have power to disqualify a contestant per the Operating Bylaws.”

### Committee Actions in the 2008 Season

The following questions were raised during the 2008 season:

1. Is it OK for a student to use latex balloons to make balloon animals for a demonstration speech? Yes, provided no one else has to touch them, and a reminder to not have any tanks of helium. The contestant should make it clear that they have latex.
2. What provisions do we make for people who have their “Sabbath” on Saturday? The WFCFA response was the we do not foresee schools rescheduling tournaments to accommodate that.
3. Another coach received the following note from a parent:  
My daughter has an orthopedic impairment (caused by a genetic defect) which subjects her to undue critique from judges in forensics. She is physically unable to rotate her hands, causing some of her gestures to be awkward. She has been accepted for treatment at Shriner’s Hospital for Children in Chicago and has her first appointment is scheduled for Feb. 20, where they will chart a course of action, which will likely include major surgery. This indicates the severity of her condition, designated by her doctors as “life impacting.”  
The parent can clearly provide medical documentation for this condition; we are wondering if a notice can be presented to judges prior to each round, asking them to evaluate her

presentation beyond her disability. Last year, several of her critiques noted the lack of movement of her hands, and her mother feels this unduly impacted her daughters' ratings.

4. Another coach raised the following question: "There are frequently times when little questions pop up and it would be nice to have someone to ask. For example, yesterday a student asked for a piece of poetry. I went back to my files and found something another student performed years ago. She brought it in the day of state, practiced on the bus and did very well. I have no idea where it came from (the kid graduated that year) and would think it "original" but it's a tad too sophisticated. So I can't prove it's published (can't use it for OIL) but can it be used for poetry?"

On behalf of the TPP, I responded with my take on the question: "Original poetry" is allowed. I suppose the question remains as to whether it must be either "published" or "original" to the one using it. In other words, can a student use original unpublished poetry written by another student. I believe the intent of the rules is to have the student identify the source of the material and neither claim something as their own when it is not or change a published piece in a manner that is unacceptable. However, I think our rule about not attributing lines to another character seems odd in this category.

5. At the Alverno Tournament, there were a number of students who used their scripts as props or in "prop-like" ways. For example, a student in poetry whose final poem was about a rose had a rose on the back of her script. A group with a patriotic theme used red, white and blue binders. Another group passed the scripts from one to another as the reading dealt with passing notes, etc. Students were given an admonition at the end of the tournament that the use of scripts in this way could result in being disqualified later on.

### **Committee Actions at State Tournament**

At the State Tournament, Danielle Richardson served as the TPP liaison at the high school during the morning sessions. Sue Luterbach, Joe Meinecke and Gary Wegner served as the TPP Committee on the Ripon College campus throughout the day. Once again, Deb Weier-Traas and Lyn Luce were very helpful with fielding questions at the college and high school TAB tables respectively. Joe Meinecke's lap top computer came in very handy for verifying the source of challenged selections, etc. I recommend that we always have at least one lap top with internet connection available to the TPP Committee at the State Tournament.

I believe that the TPP Committee followed the operating bylaws of the WFCA at the State Tournament. This year there were more challenges. Thankfully, it can again be noted that all coaches and judges involved in the situations that arose were gracious and professional.

The TPP Committee dealt with the following issues at the State Tournament:

1. There was a question raised by a judge regarding a Solo Acting: Serious selection as to whether it was original as the student identified it as by "author unknown." The coach was able to present the script.
2. A question was raised as to whether a speech by a Four Minute speaker was given earlier in the season by another student. It was not.
3. A student was disqualified for having the manuscript of a prepared speech in Extemporaneous Speaking.
4. The annual question arose as to whether a particular poetry selection was prose or poetry. The selection in question was poetry.
5. Two students were disqualified for having selections in prose that were not from published sources but transcribed from audio presentations.
6. A Group Interpretive Reading group believed that they were being harassed by another group. We were able to contact the coaches in question. They handled it very professionally and it was ascertained that there was a misunderstanding. I believe that apologies were made and accepted.

Respectfully submitted,

Gary J. Wegner  
Chair – WFCA Tournament Practices and Procedures Committee