NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ETHICS BOWL

Expanded Guidelines for Online Competitions

As announced in the Fall, all events associated with the National High School Ethics Bowl will be conducted online in 2020-2021 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Regionals will make use of *either* the Parr Center's new [NHSEBOne platform](#) or an approved platform of the Regional Organizer's choice. The following are expansions of our guidelines for conducting successful online events, which have been approved by the NHSEB Executive Committee. These will be adopted for the 2021 National High School Ethics Bowl and should be implemented for NHSEB Regional Competitions at the discretion of their Organizers.

Importantly, it is the responsibility of the Organizer to communicate with Coaches, Teams, and Volunteers any and all changes to standard formatting and/or rules (particularly, any deviations from the 2020-2021 Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines, published in September 2020).

Social Distancing Among Participants

In the interest of the health and safety of all participants, and in accordance with CDC guidelines for social distancing, it is the strong recommendation of the NHSEB Executive Committee that all participants join matches from separate locations, using their own individual devices (e.g., one student, one computer).

Regional Organizers should **under no circumstances require** students to gather indoors unnecessarily for an Ethics Bowl practice or competition, even in cases where students are already gathering for classes or clubs on their own.

Rule Clarifications for Online Matches: Notes, Materials, and Communications

In accordance with the 2020-2021 *Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines*, the following are **prohibited** in all circumstances, and shall be enforced on an honor system and in the spirit of the Ethics Bowl activity. If coaches become aware of violations of these rules by their own team, they are expected to self-report the violation.

1. Communication between students and coaches during a match in progress, including verbal, visual, or written communications.
2. Communication between students seated in a match and alternate or non-participating students not seated in the same match, including verbal, visual, or written communications.
3. Communication between students seated in a match and any external observers, including verbal, visual, or written communications.
4. The usage of pre-written notes, cues, or other external materials during a match in progress.
5. The usage of communications devices (e.g., smartphones) beyond those tools offered in the match platform (e.g., the chat or notifications function in NHSEBOne, Zoom, etc.). Students using NHSEBOne should not make use of their own timing devices, as an integrated timer will be available.

Student participants **may** make use of the following tools during a match:

1. Pre-printed copies of the case packet (though this is *not necessary* for NHSEBOne users, as cases are integrated into the platform). In cases where pre-printed copies are used, Moderators should check to verify pages are blank, insofar as is feasible.
2. Scratch paper to take notes. In cases where scratch paper is used, Moderators should check to verify pages are blank, insofar as is feasible.
3. NHSEBOne/Zoom private chat, in order to "pass" notes among team members during a match in progress.

Extendable Conferral Times for Participants

To aid in the transition to an online format, conferral times across all match stages may be increased to 3 minutes. This adjustment is built into the Moderator Script in NHSEBOne as a system default. Regional Organizers not making use of the NHSEBOne platform may elect to extend conferral times, and are encouraged to do so.

Changes to Moderator Script

The Executive Committee has authorized a variety of small changes to the NHSEB Moderator Script in light of the online format for the 2020-2021 season. An updated Moderator Script for online matches is now available on the NHSEB website under "Official Rules and Documents," (here) and has been built into the NHSEBOne Moderator interface. Regional Organizers who are *not* making use of the NHSEBOne platform are strongly encouraged to adopt the adjusted Moderator Script for their events. A brief summary of changes:

1. The script now includes staging instructions to remind coaches of their observational role when a match begins. To prevent communication between coaches and students, coaches should have their cameras and microphones disabled throughout matches in progress.
2. The Moderator's coin flip to determine presenting order has been eliminated from the script. NHSEBOne will automatically randomize the presenting order, and thus designations as "Team A" and "Team B".
3. Staging instructions have been updated to reflect the extended conferral times above by default.
4. Timing reminders during student presentations, commentaries, and responses may be offered either verbally or visually using the NHSEBOne notification system and/or the chat function in Zoom.

In-Match Troubleshooting and Contingency Tools

While every possible step is being taken to ensure the stability of the NHSEBOne platform, the Executive Committee recognizes that, as in any online event, connectivity issues may arise. The following are policy recommendations to troubleshoot connectivity issues in individual matches.

1. **Moderator Time-Out**: The Moderator may, at their discretion, call a "time-out" during a match to deal with any issues affecting the ability of participants to be seen/heard/understood. In such cases, the Moderator may stop the timer and work with participants to remedy any connectivity problems that arise. Moderators are encouraged to remain as flexible as possible, and to use this tool whenever necessary.
2. **Camera Permissions**: In general, participants' cameras should be active (with the exception of coaches during matches in progress) in order to facilitate collaboration and conversation, which lies at the heart of the Ethics Bowl. However, in cases where serious bandwidth issues arise, a Moderator may grant permission to a participant to disable their camera in order to proceed with

audio-only access. This permission should only be granted in cases where access would be prohibitive without it.

3. **Match Suspension**: If serious technical issues arise which affect the integrity or competitive/conversational experience of the match, a Moderator may use their discretion to officially suspend the match, in consultation with the Regional Organizer. In such cases, a match may be rescheduled with different cases, or excluded from score calculations at the discretion of the Regional Organizer. Issues justifying a match suspension may include, e.g., the loss of more than one Judge, the loss of a Moderator, the loss of multiple members of either team, or platform technical failure.

4. **Score Averaging Contingency**: In the event that a *Judge* experiences connectivity issues or drops out of the match, a Moderator Time-Out should be called. If the Judge is unable to regain connectivity after multiple attempts, the Moderator may either suspend the match or, with explicit permission from the Regional Organizer, implement a Score Averaging Contingency. In this case, the final scores of the two remaining Judges should be averaged to devise a third Judge's score which is representative of the evaluations of the panel that remains. *Organizers: This scoring adjustment is optional and should only be implemented as a last resort. It will need to be calculated and included in results manually; NHSEBOne will* not *automatically account for this contingency if implemented.*

Additionally, all participants should be encouraged, insofar as possible, to optimize their match experience and connectivity (e.g., by ensuring a strong connection, a well lit area free of distractions, optimal camera/microphone placement, etc.)

General Recommendations for Regional Organizers

- Wherever feasible, Organizers should provide for testing environments and "dress rehearsals" in NHSEBOne or another approved platform to allow students/coaches/volunteers to acclimate in advance of official matches. NHSEB HQ will provide documentation and walkthroughs of basic tasks for each user type (Student, Coach, Judge, Moderator) in NHSEBOne.
- Wherever feasible, Organizers should work with Moderators for their events to familiarize them not only with the official NHSEB *Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines*, but with the various troubleshooting recommendations enumerated above. Moderators should be prepared and empowered to "run the room" as well as possible.
- On the day of the event, NHSEB recommends keeping an "HQ" or "Help Desk" room open using Zoom (or your conferencing platform of choice, to give participants a place to go for beginning/end of day event information, as well as troubleshooting during the course of the competition.
- Given the allowance for an increase in conferral times and the possibility that technical difficulties may occur, NHSEB recommends extending match times (typically 60 minutes) to 75 minutes, as well as leaving sufficient breaks between matches.
- It is not unlikely that contingencies which have gone unplanned-for may arise during the course of a Regional Competition. In cases where the above troubleshooting recommendations are insufficient, please contact NHSEB leadership with any questions or concerns. We are here to help you run successful events!