Asynchronous Fall Forensics Tournament
Hosted by ProtoCommunications LLC

October 10 - December 12, 2020

On behalf of ProtoCommunications, and in collaboration with ForensicsTournament.net (FTN), we are pleased to invite you and your forensics team to the Asynchronous Fall Forensics Tournament! We are also using this invitation as an opportunity to announce an internship that will be paid by the fees of this very tournament.

At the end of last season, when the Coronavirus swept through the world, we at ProtoCommunications took it up ourselves to host an Individual Events tournament. We registered 85 events, from 13 colleges, and 4 different states. We learned a lot about the hidden labor that makes an asynchronous tournament. We have also been tracking the trajectory of COVID-19, and can conclusively say that we are disappointed, and worried about how this will affect the upcoming forensics season.

In our previous invitation, we advocated that forensics is more than meeting together for tournaments. It is about sharing ideas. Professionalism. Credibility. ProtoCommunications would again like to offer our experience and resources to host a full-service tournament for all speech and debate events. For the first tournament, we reimagined how individual events could be performed, judged, tabbed, and awarded. For this tournament, we are reimagining debate events in an asynchronous environment. We believe that our approach is a unique, and appropriate addition to the world of competitive forensics.

You will find enclosed all of the information needed to enter your team in the tournament. For a complete description of tournament events, please refer to the current Constitution and By-laws of your respective forensics association[1].

Why an asynchronous tournament?

Synchronous communication technology has advanced drastically over the last several years. There were several very successful tournaments that took that approach. We feel that both

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[1] We are accepting submissions from members of all nationally and regionally recognized forensics associations. If you wish to verify if your association is "recognized," please email jared@protocommunications.com and ask. As of the last update to this document, we are accepting entries that meet qualifications for AFA, NFA,NSC, Pi Kappa Delta, and Phi Rho Pi. All events will have to be adapted to an online format. Therefore, there are video submissions restrictions, and altered time allowances for limited-preparation events in order to best utilize our online medium. You will find descriptions of these adaptations in this invitation.

approaches have value, and are interested to see the nuanced differences between the two. In particular, we foresee synchronous tournaments being a great way to test competitors' ability to perform under pressure. This is a valuable skill to hone, and we will continue offering any assistance to those tournaments that we can.

It is our hope that this tournament will foster a high level of artistry due to the ability to carefully prepare videos. We want to celebrate this artistry. Asynchronous tournaments should be considered an addition to online competitions, rather than a replacement. We are excited to see the variety of work that emerges from these different approaches, as well as our role to foster such creative work.

Asynchronous tournaments solve some logistical issues. For instance, not everyone has stable internet connections needed for live video. There may be students who have their connection dropped mid-speech, and others who cannot join at all. I have full faith that tournament directors will have a way to address that issue, but asynchronous tournaments avoid that problem altogether.

There is reason to believe that asynchronous tournaments offer types of access that compliments synchronous tournaments. For some students, it is easier to find a camera than it is to have stable internet access. For others, the flexibility that asynchronous tournaments offer solves scheduling issues like timezones, or work schedules.

There are other interesting differences, but we feel that is a robust discussion beyond the scope of this invitation. Our goal is to offer a forum for competition, not to compete with any other forums.

Ultimately, we wish to recognize what a difficult and uncertain time this is for all coaches and students. This tournament is the work of numerous directors, coaches, and experts that care deeply about this activity. We all believe in the power of forensics to bring us together and give our voices greater meaning. We look forward to starting this journey together.

Sincerely,

Jared Kubicka-Miller, Rita Rafael, Matt Shapiro, and Tim Seavey

TOURNAMENT STAFF[2]

Entries	Tab	Judges
Rita Rafael, CSULB Matthew Shapiro, WSCL	Danny Cantrell, Mt. SAC Jared Kubicka-Miller, SCC	Tim Seavey, SDSU

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[2] Even though not all of the people that are administering the tournament are currently affiliated with a forensics program, we are listing our current, or most recent affiliation for transparency reasons. We will add a number of interns to the tournament staff that is proportionate to the number of entries.

Technical Requirements and Recommendations

- **Requirement** - Video Recording Equipment. Any video recording equipment can be used, and all judging should focus on the performance itself, rather than the quality of video.
  - **Recommendation** - It is impossible to entirely separate a recorded performance from the recording itself. For this reason, we feel it is important to note a 4K video camera has become the standard for professional quality resolution, but 1080p, and 720p should be considered perfectly acceptable when judging. Additionally, the difference between these resolutions are negligible when it comes to tournament purposes. The main difference is the resulting files size, and for that reason it may be best to use a lower resolution.
- **Requirement** - Audio Recording Equipment. Most devices that record video have built-in microphones, and are perfectly capable of recording audio suitable for this tournament.
  - **Recommendation** - We recommend using an external microphone if you have the option. Performers can place external microphones closer to themselves, and can better catch the sound. Lapel, or lavalier microphones are excellent for these purposes. We strongly urge that competitors find a way to minimize, or eliminate the presence of a microphone on camera, while at the same time maximizing the clarity of the verbal performance. Again, it is impossible for judges to ignore certain nonverbal components of a submission, so competitors should be very aware of the audio quality they are submitting.
- **Requirement** - Lighting - Judges must be able to clearly see performers' faces and body movements.
  - **Recommendation** - Your main goal is to avoid shadows being cast on performers' faces due to overhead lights, or back lighting. Well-placed lamps, off camera, can do the job. Generally speaking, the more light the better, so you may need to get creative with light sources and extension cords. If you have access to 2 to 4 Flat panel LED lights, that would be optimal. It is recommended that recording be done indoors, in order to control the light source as much as possible. But, shooting outside, in a quiet environment, late in the day when the sun is low, provides excellent light. DO NOT HAVE A SUNLIT WINDOW BEHIND THE PERFORMER WHEN RECORDING! The "back lighting" will turn the performer into a silhouette.
- **Requirement** - File Format. MP4 or .mov.
  - **Recommendation** - If you have trouble exporting video files in these formats, please look into file conversion applications online. If there are any issues with this requirement that requires special attention, please contact the tournament director.

PROTO COMMUNICATIONS

IMPORTANT DATES AND DEADLINES

Sunday, Oct 4th by 6pm: DEBATE REGISTRATION CUTOFF
Wednesday, Nov 18th by 6pm: INDIVIDUAL EVENT REGISTRATION CUTOFF
Registration is due via FTN. No new entries will be allowed after these dates. Every competitor must have a working email included with registration. Each student will receive a DocuSign Participation Waiver via email within 48 hours of registration. Registration is only complete when that waiver is signed.

Sunday, Nov 22 by 6pm: JUDGING ASSISTANCE REQUESTS
Judging Assistance requests are only for uncovered judging commitments, and are due to Tim Seavey at tim@protocommunications.com. If sent in on time, you will be charged $125.00 per judging commitment. If late, or not turned in at all, you will be charged $150.00 per judging commitment. We would rather have your judges than your money, but please let us know if you are unable to cover your commitment.

Saturday, Nov 21 by 6pm, DEBATE SUBMISSIONS CUTOFF
Monday, Nov 23 by 6pm: INDIVIDUAL EVENT SUBMISSIONS CUTOFF
Once registered for a debate event, we will send debaters an invitation to several Google Drive folders. The titles of the folders will be unique identifiers that will correspond with postings. It is the debater's responsibility to follow the correct schedule, and to submit their videos to the appropriate debate. Once registered for an individual event, we will send the head coach for each team a Google folder, with subfolders that you will use to upload your teams' individual event submissions. These folders will only be accessible to that coach, and ProtoCommunications. To ensure there are no late entries, access to these folders will end after the November 23rd deadline.

Monday, Nov 24: PANELLING BEGINS
We take all videos and organize them into playlists. These playlists represent a single round of competition. This is a fairly labor intensive process, so please be patient.

Monday, Nov 30: JUDGING BEGINS
Final playlists are attached to an eballot and one test round is sent to judges. Once there are no critical issues to address, all other rounds are sent to judges and they have until December 5th, at 6pm to submit all assigned ballots.

Saturday, Dec 12: Awards
We honor students' achievements with a unique award ceremony. Students are encouraged to participate in the ceremony, and are given time to accept awards that they earned. Specific times will be determined as we get closer to the date.

VIDEO SUBMISSION RULES

The choice to accept video files, rather than YouTube links, is based upon a desire to increase competitive equity by separating competitors from any other online presence they may have, like profile information or viewing history. For standard uniformity and fairness for all competitors, here are some guidelines regarding video submissions. Any videos that do not meet these standards will **not** be accepted and uploaded for review in this tournament.

- **All competitors must complete a Participant Waiver for submission to be considered. Competitors under the age of 18 must have parent/guardian approval.** Each competitor will receive a DocuSign Participant Waiver via email within 48 hours of registering. Waivers must be completed by the submission deadline for competitors to be included in the judging stage of the tournament.
- Videos must be unedited from the moment they start, to the moment they stop (trimming the beginning or end of a video will not be considered an edit).
- All videos submitted must be in MP4 or .mov format. You may need to research file conversion options.
- No video animation is allowed
- Video entries can only be submitted once per event
- All debate videos must be submitted with the following naming format:
  - Debate Number - Competitor Full Name - School - Speech Abbreviation (1AC, 2NR, LOC, etc.)
  - Debate Number - Questioner Full Name - Respondent Full Name - CX Number (1CX - 4CX)
- All individual event videos must be submitted with the following naming format:
  - Event - Competitor Full Name - School
- **All videos must be screened by coaches for quality, completeness, and correct content before submission.**
- Competitors are **NOT** allowed to publicize their recorded events until after the tournament has ended (as to not influence the judging pool ahead of time). If the file of the students' recorded event is found posted online, they will be disqualified from the tournament. Please contact the tournament director Jared Kubicka-Miller at jared@protocommunications.com with any questions or concerns.

JUDGING ELIGIBILITY AND COMMITMENTS

In order for competitors to have the best experience it is tremendously important that the tournament and attending schools provide officially eligible and qualified judges. It is strongly encouraged that all schools review these requirements as stipulated by any recognized forensics association. If you don't have direct administrative support from an academic institution, you can register your own "team," but the requisite judging commitments still apply.

Debate Commitments

- You owe one judge for every 2 debate entries, or fraction thereof
- Judges must watch assigned videos from start to finish, and complete ballots, for up to 8 "rounds" of videos. The number of videos per round depends on the type of debate.

Individual Events Commitments

- You owe one (1) judge for every five (5) entries, or fraction thereof
- Judges must watch assigned videos from start to finish, and complete ballots, for up to 6 "rounds" of videos, with 5-6 videos per round (this is the equivalent of 6 hours that can be completed over the 10-day judging window)

TOURNAMENT FEES

Fees

- Registration Fee: $50.00 (per college)
- Debate Team: $70
- Individual Debate: $35
- Individual Events: $12.00
- Uncovered IE Entry: $25.00
- Uncovered Debate Entry: $100
- IE Nuisance Fee (missing or incomplete round): $40 per round
- Debate Nuisance Fee (missing or incomplete round): $125 per round

Every organized event, whether in person or online, requires administration, organization, and management. This tournament relies on a robust entry to support paying a staff of interns to execute the labor intensive portions of hosting this tournament. Here is a list of what the tournament hosts will be responsible for:

- Creating and managing Google folders for every teams' video submissions
- Storage space
- Standardizing all entries (i.e. editing video entries) to include a school and competitor code in an opening title
- Ensuring the privacy of all Google folders and videos by uploading them as "Unlisted" on YouTube
- Pairing judges with video playlists (i.e. rounds) and sending out
- Acquiring paid judges if needed to cover missed ballots or insufficient judges as required per school
- Tabbing ballots for Awards
- Gathering and releasing topics for Extemporaneous and Impromptu events
- Planning and executing awards ceremony
- Distributing awards

One of the tournament staff will send a QuickBooks invoice shortly after the judging period has started. There is a chance that the amount will need to be updated because of nuisance fees and awards options, so we recommend payment after the tournament is over, and you have a final invoice. The invoice accepts electronic payment, but you can also send a check made out to ProtoCommunications. Any incomplete rounds will be treated as an uncovered judge, plus a nuisance fee, and will result in a second invoice after the judging period. Please contact any tournament staff through FTN with questions or concerns. We very much want to make this a pleasant experience.

ASYNCHRONOUS DEBATE GUIDELINES

Asynchronous debate is a new phenomenon, so it is easy for new competitors and coaches to get confused. This method was inspired by online chess, where one player makes a move and sends it to their opponent, then their opponent has a specific window of time to make a move and send it back. This way, a player could engage in several games at once. One major difference is, unlike chess, debates have a predetermined number of turns.

1. There will be 6 rounds of debate for each event. Each debater will have 3 debates where they are the affirmative, and 3 where they are the negative.
2. Debaters must follow the submission schedule for their debate event found in this invite. Each stage of the debates are 3-7 days long.
3. All debate entries (team or individual) must submit 3 separate video files during each constructive and rebuttal stage during the debate. It is the debater's responsibility to know which video belongs to their respective debate. In other words, every single debate entry in the tournament will submit 3 affirmative videos, each in a separate folder, by the cutoff date. Then, after cross-examination, each debater will record and submit 3 separate negative video files that appropriately respond to each of their opponent's affirmative videos.
4. Debate teams must participate in 6 cross-examinations--3 as the affirmative answering questions, and 3 as the negative asking questions. Cross-examinations videos are the only ones that require a synchronous component. The negative team must contact the affirmative to schedule a mutually agreeable time to record a video conference. Debaters can choose any method and application to achieve this goal (Zoom, Skype, FaceTime, etc). If you do not have any access to an appropriate application for video conferencing, we suggest looking into StreamYard. It is incredibly easy to use, and has 20 hours of free video streaming per month. It is up to the teams as to which debaters appear in the video if they want a "tag-team" approach, but we suggest keeping it to 1 debater per side for logistical reasons.
5. Failing to submit a video by the cutoff time will result in a disqualification. If your opponent fails to complete their videos by the cutoff date, the tournament will make every effort to "repair" you with another opponent on an accelerated submission schedule.
6. There is no penalty for early submissions. You and your opponent can mutually decide to complete the stages as early as you wish.

CEDA SUBMISSION SCHEDULE

Cutoff	Day of the Week	Requirement (click for guidelines)
10/4, 6:00 PM PST	Thursday	Registration
10/7, 6:00 PM PST	Wednesday	Waivers due, Postings
10/10, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**First Affirmative Constructive**
10/15, 6:00 PM PST	Thursday	**First Cross-examination**
10/19, 6:00 PM PST	Monday	**First Negative Constructive**
10/24, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**Second Cross-examination**
10/28, 6:00 PM PST	Wednesday	**Second Affirmative Constructive**
11/2, 6:00 PM PST	Monday	**Third Cross-examination**
11/6, 6:00 PM PST	Friday	**Second Negative Constructive**
11/11, 6:00 PM PST	Wednesday	**Fourth Cross-examination**
11/14, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**First Negative Rebuttal**
11/17, 6:00 PM PST	Tuesday	**First Affirmative Rebuttal**
11/19, 6:00 PM PST	Thursday	**Second Negative Rebuttal**
11/21, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**Second Affirmative Rebuttal**

NPDA SUBMISSION SCHEDULE

Cutoff	Day of the Week	Requirement (click for guidelines)
10/4, 6:00 PM PST	**Thursday**	**Registration**
10/7, 6:00 PM PST	**Wednesday**	**Waivers due, Postings with topics**
10/10, 6:00 PM PST	**Saturday**	**Prime Minister Constructive**
10/16, 6:00 PM PST	**Friday**	**First Cross-examination**
10/21, 6:00 PM PST	**Wednesday**	**Leader of Opposition Constructive**
10/27, 6:00 PM PST	**Tuesday**	**Second Cross-examination**
11/1, 6:00 PM PST	**Sunday**	**Member of Government Constructive**
11/7, 6:00 PM PST	**Saturday**	**Third Cross-examination**
11/11, 6:00 PM PST	**Wednesday**	**Member of Opposition Constructive**
11/16, 6:00 PM PST	**Monday**	**Fourth Cross-examination**
11/18, 6:00 PM PST	**Wednesday**	**Leader of Opposition Rebuttal**
11/21, 6:00 PM PST	**Saturday**	**Prime Minister Rebuttal**

NFA-LD SUBMISSION SCHEDULE

Cutoff	Day of the Week	Requirement (click for guidelines)
10/4, 6:00 PM PST	Thursday	Registration
10/7, 6:00 PM PST	Wednesday	Waivers due, Postings
10/10, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**First Affirmative Constructive**
10/17, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**First Cross-examination**
10/24, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**First Negative Constructive**
10/31, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**Second Cross-examination**
11/7, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**First Affirmative Rebuttal**
11/14, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**First Negative Rebuttal**
11/21, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**Second Affirmative Rebuttal**

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IPDA SUBMISSION SCHEDULE

Cutoff	Day of the Week	Requirement (click for guidelines)
10/4, 6:00 PM PST	Thursday	Registration
10/7, 6:00 PM PST	Wednesday	Waivers due, Postings
10/10, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**First Affirmative Constructive**
10/17, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**First Cross-examination**
10/24, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**First Negative Constructive**
10/31, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**Second Cross-examination**
11/7, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**First Affirmative Rebuttal**
11/14, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**First Negative Rebuttal**
11/21, 6:00 PM PST	Saturday	**Second Affirmative Rebuttal**

INDIVIDUAL EVENT SUBMISSION SCHEDULE

All times are pacific standard time.

Wednesday, 11/18, 6:00 PM PST **Registration Cutoff**

- Coaches register individual event entries on FTN
- Each coach receives access to a Google Drive folder, with event subfolders created by the host.
- Students record events, and send them to their coach. Coaches will upload videos to the Google Drive folder up before the submission cutoff.

Sunday, 11/22, 6:00 PM PST **Limited Preparation Topics Announcement**
- Limited-Preparation: these events traditionally require students to think on their feet with minutes to prepare. Our choice to use asynchronous video means that we needed to make unique adjustments to 3 important facets of limited preparation events:
  - Extemporaneous Speaking: competitors will receive 20 current event topics. They will have 24 hours to read through and select only one topic, research and prepare a 7 minute speech, deliver and record the speech, and send the speech to their coach with enough time to allow coaches to review speeches and upload them to the Google folder. All other rules/norms of the event apply including research requirements and limited notes while delivering.
  - Impromptu Speaking: competitors will receive 20 topics. They will have 24 hours to read through and select a concept, research and prepare a 5 minute speech, deliver and record the speech, and send the speech to their coach with enough time to allow coaches to review speeches and upload them to the Google folder. All other rules/norms of the event apply.

Monday, 11/23 6:OO PM PST, INDIVIDUAL EVENT SUBMISSION CUTOFF

PANELLING AND JUDGING SCHEDULE

Monday, 11/23, 6:00 PM PST, PANELLING

Monday 11/30 - 12/6 Judging Period
8:00am on 11/30 - 6:00pm on 12/6
- All individual event judges will have a maximum of 5 Youtube playlists posted on FTN for judging.
- All individual event judges will have a maximum of 8 Google Drive folders posted on FTN for judging.
- Judges have the flexibility to judge rounds at any time during this period and submit ballots through FTN before 6pm on Sunday 12/6.

Sunday, 12/6 - Wednesday 12/9 - Hired Judging Period (Nuisance Judging)
6:00pm on 12/6 - 6:00pm on 12/9
- Any incomplete rounds, as of 6pm on Sunday 12/6, will be assigned to hired judges.
- Hired judges must complete all ballots by 6:00pm, on Wednesday, 12/9.

Saturday, 12/12 - Live Awards Ceremony
6:00pm
- A livestream link will be shared with all coaches via e-mail prior to 6pm, but awards will begin promptly at 6pm
- Coaches should share this link with their team and encourage them to attend!
- Awards sent to winners' teams for distribution

TABBING

Thanks to e-balloting, results will be tabulated as they are submitted. Any ballots not received by the submission deadline will incur a nuisance fee and be passed off to a Hired Judge.

- Preliminary and Final rounds - There are none! After careful consideration, this tournament will only take the results from the judges, and recognize the most highly rated performances for each event.
- Individual event entries will be rated 5 times and awards will be based on those 5 ballots. Standard tournament tie-breakers will be used for individual events
- Debate events will be judged of of the 6 preliminary rounds to determine rankings
- Debate awards will be determined by
    a. the team/debater's win loss record
    b. the team/debater's cumulative speaker points
    c. "Judges Preference" if two tied teams have met each other in competition, the winner of that round will win the tie

      d. Traditional tabbing tie-breaking mechanisms will be employed as well as any additional new techniques to fairly determine a single recipient of each award.

Additional Information

- We would be honored if your students would be interested in being **featured** on our YouTube channel, with appropriate credit given for writing and performance, please have them print out the waiver attached to this invitation, sign it, scan it, and send it back to Jared at jared@protocommunications.com