

# **NATIONAL CATHOLIC FORENSIC LEAGUE CONSTITUTION**

Updated by R. Burdett, After Fall Executive Committee Meeting, 2023

## **ARTICLE I - NAME**

The name of this organization shall be the NATIONAL CATHOLIC FORENSIC LEAGUE. It shall be referred to herein as the LEAGUE.

## **ARTICLE II - PURPOSES**

The National Catholic Forensic League is an organization originating from the Catholic secondary school community in the United States for the purpose of providing a service to all secondary school students. In imitation of the example of Jesus Christ, who gave both humble service and articulate leadership, we seek the truth spoken in charity. All of the following regulations are inspired by and seek to further these fundamental human values.

The purposes of the LEAGUE shall be

- to encourage and to assist in the development of articulate leaders through whose skills truth may be widely spread and become an influence in the life of the nation,
- to promote curricular and cocurricular speech and debate activities in Catholic, private, and public secondary schools throughout the nation,
- to establish, to maintain, and to coordinate a system of Diocesan Leagues with the purpose of administering schedules of interscholastic speech and debate activities,
- to assist individual schools in speech and debate activities where no Diocesan League has been established,
- to sponsor and to administer the annual Grand National Tournament of the LEAGUE.

## **ARTICLE III - MEMBERSHIP**

### **Section A - Eligibility**

Any high school located within the geographical boundaries of the United States of America and Canada shall be eligible for membership in the LEAGUE.

### **Section B - Application and Certification**

1. Application for membership shall be made to the Secretary/Treasurer of the LEAGUE through the Diocesan League where such a League exists. Exceptions may be granted by the Executive Council as necessary to conform to state requirements. Local Diocesan Leagues may exclude from membership a school within its geographical boundaries only for just cause. Such exclusion from a local Diocesan League shall result in loss of membership in the LEAGUE.
2. An individual school within a diocese where there is no established League will be permitted to join the nearest neighboring Diocesan League which accepts its membership.
3. An individual school within a diocese where the diocese does not have an established Diocesan League, and which can not join a neighboring Diocesan League may make application directly to the LEAGUE for Independent School membership. The deadlines for Independent School membership forms and fees shall be the same as for all member schools, with none admitted after January 31.

4. The NCFL Executive Council, after consultation with the League Director(s) of the affected League or Leagues and all interested member moderators, must sanction the formation of new Leagues from existing Leagues. All schools within the diocesan boundaries must join the League in their own diocese. A school will be given an option to remain in the original League to which it previously belonged and in which it previously competed. If said school opts to move back to the League in its own diocese, it will, from then on, have to remain in that League as long as that League continues to exist.
5. Application for membership in the LEAGUE shall be made with the written consent of the appropriate administrator of each school on the LEAGUE membership form.
6. The membership rosters of a Diocesan League shall contain at least one Catholic school to be considered for membership in the LEAGUE. Exceptions to this may be granted by the Executive Council in areas where no Catholic school exists or is active in forensics.
7. Membership shall become effective upon receipt of the form and annual dues by the Secretary/Treasurer of the LEAGUE. All applications for membership shall be subject to the review of the Executive Council. The Council must also sanction the shift of a given school or schools from one League to an adjacent League.
8. Membership forms and annual dues should be postmarked no later than December 20 of each academic year. The NCFL Annual School Membership Dues shall be \$60 (sixty dollars) per school with at least \$5 (five dollars) of the Dues going into an NCFL Savings Account. A ten percent (10%) penalty on dues will be levied against schools and Leagues which submit same after December 20 but before January 15. A twenty percent (20%) penalty on dues will be levied against schools and Leagues which submit same after January 15. Failure of a League to submit forms and dues postmarked by January 31 will result in the League's not being permitted to enter the Grand National Tournament for that academic year. Contestant quotas for the Tournament will be based upon forms and dues received by January 31.
9. The Executive Council shall have the authority to extend the dates for submission of forms and dues for good and valid reasons. Such an extension shall not be later than January 31.

#### **ARTICLE IV - DUES**

Each member school of the LEAGUE shall be required to pay an annual dues. The amount of the annual dues shall be prescribed by the Executive Committee of the LEAGUE within the By-Laws of the LEAGUE.

#### **ARTICLE V - EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**

##### **Section A - Membership**

The Executive Committee of the LEAGUE shall comprise the Directors of the Diocesan Leagues, the LEAGUE officers, the Grand Tournament Director, and the Assistant Grand Director(s).

##### **Section B - Voting**

1. Constitutional Amendments/Election of Officers: each Diocesan League shall have one vote.

2. By-Laws Amendments/Procedural Matters/General Business: each Diocesan League shall vote as a unit in proportion to its individual school membership total. The proportional vote shall be as follows:
 

2-5	schools:	1 vote
6-10	schools:	2 votes
11-15	schools:	3 votes
16-20	schools:	4 votes
21-25	schools:	5 votes
26 and over	schools:	6 votes
3. On all matters, the vote of each Diocesan League shall be cast by the Director of the League or by an authorized representative. The vote of a League shall be vested in the same individual for the duration of the Fall Executive Committee Meeting or the Spring Executive Committee Meeting.
4. In Executive Committee meetings, each Diocesan League may have one representative: the League moderator or an authorized representative. Observers do not generally have voice; they may speak only with the permission of the LEAGUE President.
5. Individual schools shall have no vote in the Executive Committee.
6. Mail votes on certain procedural matters may be authorized by the Executive Council.

### **Section C - Powers**

The Executive Committee shall have the power to:

1. Schedule all LEAGUE events and activities.
2. Provide for the administration of all LEAGUE activities.
3. Prescribe all rules and regulations for the conduct and judging of the Grand National Tournament of the LEAGUE.
4. Adopt and, when necessary, revise the uniform evaluation forms/ballots for LEAGUE contests.
5. Establish a uniform annual LEAGUE dues and authorize the assessment and collection of other fees necessary to the proper conduct of LEAGUE activities.

### **Section D - Meetings**

1. Fall Executive Committee Meeting. There shall be a meeting of the Executive Committee of the LEAGUE on the last Friday and Saturday of September of each year. This shall be considered the NCFL Annual Business Meeting of the LEAGUE. The agenda for this meeting will comprise topics submitted by the members of the Executive Committee. Topics must be submitted to the Executive Secretary not later than September 1<sup>st</sup> before each meeting. Amendments to the By-Laws and/or Constitution can only be made at this meeting if they have been published by the Executive Secretary prior to this meeting. The agenda may also include the selection of a site for the next Fall Executive Committee Meeting. At this meeting in odd-numbered years, the Executive Committee shall review the biennial operational, tournament, and cost-of-living changes for the purpose of making adjustments in membership dues and/or tournament registration fees.
2. Spring Executive Meeting. There shall be a meeting of the Executive Committee of the LEAGUE in conjunction with the Grand National Tournament. This meeting shall be held prior to the start of competition. The agenda of the Spring Executive Committee Meeting shall be limited to the selection of

a site for the Fall Executive Committee Meeting (if not already determined), the selection of future sites for the Grand National Tournament, and the biennial election of LEAGUE officers.

3. Special Meetings. Special and emergency meetings of the Executive Committee may be called at the discretion of the LEAGUE president.
4. The National Tournament Director and/or NCFL Event Planner shall conduct at least one site visit to the city hosting that year's Grand National Tournament.

### **Section E - LEAGUE Officers**

The LEAGUE officers, who shall comprise the Executive Council of the LEAGUE, shall be President, First Vice President, Second Vice President, Secretary/Treasurer, and Publicity Director.

1. Eligibility: All qualified adult members of the LEAGUE shall be eligible for nomination and election to the Executive Council.
2. Nomination:
  - a. The President shall appoint a Nominating Committee at the Fall Executive Committee Meeting preceding the biennial election. The committee will consist of 5 members from a wide geographical distribution with no more than 1 current NCFL officer on the committee. At least 1 of the members will represent a League with 26 or more member schools. Members of the Nominating Committee shall not be permitted to be on the slate presented by the Nominating Committee to the Executive Committee at the Spring Meeting.
  - b. No later than January 1 of an election year, those interested in being placed on the nomination slate for any office should notify the President of the LEAGUE and submit the completed information form provided by the President.
  - c. The President will type up and sent all information forms to local League directors no later than January 15.
  - d. The President will assign to each member of the committee 1/5 of the member Leagues to poll for suggestions and each member of the committee will then submit a slate of officers, one for each office, to the Chairperson.
  - e. The local League Directors will make their nominations based on those who have filled out forms and they will send their choices to the appropriate member of the Nominating Committee no later than January 31.
  - f. The members of the Nominating Committee will tabulate the results of those voting within their area. The person receiving the plurality for each office will be the nominee for that committee member. The slate is then sent to the Chairperson of the Nominating Committee no later than February 12. Each committee member sends all forms to the Chairperson at this time.
  - g. The Chairperson of the Nominating Committee assembles the five slates from the members of the committee. If any person is named by TWO committee members for a particular office, that person is automatically on the official slate (thus two people could be nominated). If no one person receives two

votes from committee members, then all five names are sent back to the committee members for a vote. The committee members are then free to vote for whomever they wish (they are not bound by the original choice of their area). They return their votes to the Chairperson no later than March 10. Any person receiving at least two votes will be a nominee. If each person receives one vote, the Chairperson breaks the deadlock.

- h. The Chairperson informs the nominees and the LEAGUE President of the results no later than March 20. At this time, the Chairperson sends all nomination forms to the LEAGUE President. These forms remain confidential. The President communicates the results to the local League Directors immediately.
- i. Nominations may be made from the floor at the Spring Meeting, provided that such nominations have a 1/3 second from the League Directors (or their representatives) present. The 1/3 second may be made by 1) petition, 2) secret ballot, or 3) voice vote.
- j. There will be no speeches made at the time of election.
- 3. Election: Votes will be cast for each officer individually. When a nominee receives an absolute majority, the person is declared elected.
- 4. Term: All officers of the LEAGUE shall be elected to serve a two-year term of office. No officer may succeed in the same office after a two-year term except the Secretary/Treasurer.
- 5. Powers, Duties, Responsibilities: The Executive Council of the LEAGUE shall be empowered to enforce any and all existing Constitution, By-Laws, and Rules of Procedure throughout the member Leagues and to act in behalf of the Executive Committee as required by circumstances. If a school or Diocesan League violates the Constitution or By-Laws of the LEAGUE, the Executive Council may impose sanctions, including, but not limited to, fines, probation, suspension or expulsion from the LEAGUE.
  - a. The President of the LEAGUE shall
    - 1) serve as the chief administrative and executive officer of the LEAGUE,
    - 2) be responsible for the adherence of all member schools and Diocesan Leagues to the rules and regulations enacted by the Executive Committee, including but not limited to the Constitution and By-Laws of the LEAGUE,
    - 3) serve as the final arbiter and interpreter of all policy and procedural questions regarding LEAGUE activities,
    - 4) call and preside over all regular and special meetings of the Executive Committee, the Executive Council, and the LEAGUE in general,
    - 5) appoint any and all committees specifically required by this Constitution and the By-Laws of the LEAGUE as well as those established from time to time by the Executive Committee.
  - b. The First Vice President of the LEAGUE shall
    - 1) assume the duties of the President in the event of absence or incapacity,

- 2) solicit scholarship awards for the Grand National Tournament and administer the awarding of same,
- 3) assist the President in any and all activities delegated by the LEAGUE President or the Executive Committee,
- 4) choose the topic for Lincoln-Douglas Debate and for Public Forum Debate for the Grand National Tournament and publish them.
- 5) work with the Second Vice President in the preparation of topic areas and topics for Extemporaneous Speaking at the Grand National Tournament.

c. The Second Vice President of the LEAGUE shall

- 1) be responsible for encouraging new member schools and the establishment of new diocesan Leagues,
- 2) be responsible, along with the First Vice President, for the preparation of topic areas and topics for Extemporaneous Speaking at the Grand National Tournament; publish in the March Newsletter the 9 general topic areas selected for use in each round of competition at the tournament,
- 3) assist the President in any and all activities delegated by the LEAGUE President or the Executive Committee.

d. The Executive Secretary/Treasurer of the LEAGUE shall

- 1) be responsible for notifying all member schools and Diocesan Leagues of a regular meeting of the Executive Committee,
- 2) be responsible for the preparation of the proposed budget of the LEAGUE and the meeting agendas of the Executive Committee of the LEAGUE,
- 3) receive the annual dues and membership forms of each Diocesan League and of each school requesting individual membership in the LEAGUE,
- 4) be responsible for maintaining communication with the member schools and Diocesan Leagues, care for all LEAGUE correspondence with extra-LEAGUE individuals, groups, or associations except as specifically delegated to another officer or representative of the LEAGUE,
- 5) consult with the President of the LEAGUE, the Grand Tournament Director, and the Host Director of the Tournament no later than January 31 to review Diocesan League quotas for the Grand National Tournament, publish and distribute to the member schools and Diocesan Leagues a report of the quota determinations,
- 6) maintain the financial receipts of the LEAGUE in an established financial institution and receive and deposit all LEAGUE monies in same, disburse those amounts authorized and/or necessary to the operation of the LEAGUE,
- 7) prepare and present an Annual Financial Statement to the Executive Committee at the Fall Meeting,
- 8) receive and disburse monies for the Grand National Tournament,

- 9) assist the President in any and all activities delegated by the LEAGUE President or the Executive Committee.
- e. The Publicity Director / Recording Secretary of the LEAGUE shall
  - 1) record and report the minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Executive Committee and arrange for the distribution of same to all LEAGUE members,
  - 2) prepare and arrange for the publication and distribution of the LEAGUE NEWSLETTER to the member schools and Diocesan Leagues at least 3 times a year; namely Fall, Winter, and Spring,
  - 3) establish and maintain an effectual liaison between the LEAGUE and all appropriate press and electronic media,
  - 4) work with the Host Committee of the Grand National Tournament to secure appropriate and widespread coverage of the event,
  - 5) provide assistance, as requested, to all Diocesan Leagues in the development and maintenance of effectual local public relations and information programs,
  - 6) assist the Second Vice President in the encouragement of new member schools and the organization of new Diocesan Leagues,
  - 7) assist the President in any and all activities delegated by the LEAGUE President or the Executive Committee.
6. Expenses: Payment of regular operational expenses of the LEAGUE incurred by any of the officers and the Grand Tournament Director shall be made by the Secretary/Treasurer from the LEAGUE treasury upon presentation of invoices for same. Personal expenses of the officers shall be the responsibility of the individual officer.

## **ARTICLE VI - GRAND NATIONAL TOURNAMENT DIRECTORATE**

### **Section A - Membership**

The general planning and execution of the annual Grand National Tournament of the LEAGUE shall be the collaborative responsibility of the Grand National Tournament Directorate, which shall include the Executive Council of the LEAGUE, the Host Director of the Tournament, and the Grand Tournament Director of the LEAGUE.

### **Section B - Selection**

1. The Executive Council shall comprise the LEAGUE officers elected biennially.
2. The Host Director of the Tournament shall be chosen by the Host Diocesan League to serve as the coordinator of the Tournament.

3. Concurrent with every second biennial LEAGUE election, the nominating committee shall also submit nomination(s) for the position of Grand Tournament Director. (See Article V, Sec. E, 1-3 for procedures.) The Grand Tournament Director will be elected to a four-year term of office with no limit to the number of terms s/he may serve. The LEAGUE may, from time to time, select an Assistant Grand Tournament Director to collaborate and work with the Grand Tournament Director at the pleasure of the LEAGUE.

### **Section C - Powers, Duties, and Responsibilities**

1. The members of the Executive Council shall have those powers, duties, and responsibilities in planning and executing the Grand National Tournament as defined within their roles as LEAGUE officers in the Constitution, By-Laws, and Tournament Manual. In addition, the Executive Council and the Grand Tournament Director of the LEAGUE shall propose guidelines for the submission of bids for the Grand National Tournament, subject to the approval of the Executive Committee.
2. The Host Director of the Tournament shall be empowered to make and be responsible for all appropriate and necessary local preparation for the execution of the Grand National Tournament in accord with the policies and procedures of the LEAGUE. The Host Director of the Tournament shall regularly consult the Executive Council and the Grand Tournament Director in preparing for the Grand National Tournament. The Host Director shall, with the assistance of the Secretary/Treasurer of the LEAGUE, provide the appropriate and necessary pre-registration information and materials to the LEAGUE members no later than 45 days prior to the Grand National Tournament. The Host Director shall prepare and present to the LEAGUE a Financial Statement of the Grand National Tournament at the Fall Executive Committee Meeting immediately following the event. This statement shall be made in conjunction with the National Secretary/Treasurer and filed with both the Secretary/Treasurer and the Grand Tournament Director.
3. The Grand Tournament Director of the LEAGUE shall
  - a. oversee the efficient operation of the Grand National Tournament;
  - b. serve as the principal liaison and technical advisor for the LEAGUE to and with the Host Director and the Host Committee of the Grand National Tournament;
  - c. serve as the arbiter of procedural conflicts and rules arising during the Grand National Tournament;
  - d. appoint and be responsible for the operation of the staff of the Tab Room of the Grand National Tournament;
  - e. regularly consult with the Host Director and the Executive Council in the planning for and the execution of the Grand National Tournament;
  - f. attend all meetings of the Executive Council in the capacity of a consultant;
  - g. be responsible for the ordering of supplies and awards for the Grand National Tournament;
  - h. function as a liaison between the LEAGUE and other national forensic associations;



- i. seek annual approval from the National Association of Secondary School Principals for the Grand National Tournament;
- j. seek the input of the diocesan directors for the selection of the annual debate topic and be responsible for LEAGUE representation of the selection committee meeting;
- k. review the extemp questions prepared by the Second Vice-President;
- l. review the pre-set round schematics and assignments in all events.

#### **Section D - Grand National Tournament Manual**

The Executive Committee of the LEAGUE shall establish and revise, when necessary, a Grand Tournament Manual which shall have as its purpose the specific and detailed procedures to be used in the planning and execution of the events of the Grand National Tournament.

### **ARTICLE VII - AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to this Constitution may be proposed by any member of the Executive Committee at the Fall Meeting of the LEAGUE. Printed copies of the proposed amendment shall be distributed with the agenda of the meeting. A two-thirds vote of the Diocesan Leagues present shall be necessary for the ratification of the proposed amendment.