

Thumper's Early Halloween Invitational Best Practices Guide

System requirements

- Conduct a speed test <https://www.speakeasy.net/speedtest/>. Recommended download speed is at or above 12mbps and upload speed is at or above 8mbps.
- Each laptop/desktop should be using the Chrome browser.
- All mobile devices should download and install the 8x8 Video Meetings app.
- All devices should be plugged into a power supply. The battery is drained rapidly when using video conferencing software.
- Each device should allow the browser/app to use the microphone and camera.
- Due to the unpredictable nature of the Internet, every competitor is required to have an on-screen guardian. This guardian should be visible during the entirety of the round and also know how to end the call, should a situation arise that warrants it. Middle school students are permitted to waive this requirement if the parental consent form is completed and delivered to the league before the beginning of the tournament in question.

Recommended Devices

- Laptop
 - Laptop is the best option since most of them have built in microphone and webcam. Tilting the laptop screen can easily adjust the the position of the webcam. **We highly recommend that all judges use laptop or desktops.**
- Desktop with microphone & webcam
 - Make sure the microphone is working & webcam can be adjusted easily.
- Tablet & Phone
 - Tablets and phones are the least preferred options for a few reasons: positioning the camera can be a little tricky; the connection might be less robust; it requires a few more steps when using the 8x8 Video Meetings app; moving the device creates a lot of movement on the screen.
- Microphones & webcams
 - If the system allows for an external microphone or webcam, please consider using it. Headphones work great, as well.

Improve Connectivity

- Wired Internet connection

- Plug the computer into the router (i.e. the network device that provides Internet connection) with a network cable. The computer may need an adapter to make this possible.



- Move closer to the router
 - If wired is not an option, the next best option is to place the computer in the same room as the router. The closer the device is to the router, the better the signal quality. The video/audio could freeze if the device is too far away.
- Reboot the router
 - If the device has repeated connection issues, reboot the router to reset all connections
- Minimize interference
 - Remove any solid objects between the WiFi antenna and the router. Avoid using microwaves, washing machines, furnaces and other electrical appliances while online.
- Don't crowd the router
 - Reduce other Internet usage while online (e.g. don't stream Netflix in the other room).
- Go Dual-band
 - Many routers can operate in 2.4GHz and 5GHz. 2.4GHz is more commonly used so more prone for interference. Switch to 5GHz.

Tournament Expectation as a Competitor

IMPORTANT: PARENT/GUARDIAN PRESENCE

All competitors must have a parent/guardian present in the room and also **visible** in the background. Middle school students are permitted to waive this requirement if the parental consent form is completed and delivered to the league before the beginning of the tournament in question.

1. Before the round
 - a. Competitors should test their connections and devices to make sure they function properly. They should encourage family members to stop using the Internet during the round (disable Wi-Fi on other devices).

- b. When postings are released, the tournament director will send an automatic message to everyone who has verified their cell/e-mail. This message will have a button that links them to their virtual room (competitors should ensure that they are using Chrome or have downloaded the 8x8 Video Meetings app).
- 2. During the round
 - a. Competitors should sign into the room using the name they are competing with (no nicknames or call signs). If they have trouble, they can check with the help desk. The link will be: 8x8.vc/TEHHelp
 - b. Competitors should leave their cameras and microphones on, even when they are not presenting (unless they are in a noisy room). This allows for audience participation and livens the entire experience! This is also especially true for events that require prep such as SPAR or Impromptu; competitors should leave their camera and their microphone on during their prep time.
 - c. Competitors should not adjust the camera once the speech has begun (they may move the camera into position before beginning the speech).
 - d. Double-Entry: Just like an in-person competition, competitors who are double-entered will go to their round in one event, present, and leave the round to compete in their second event. Competitors who are double-entered must take extra precaution when leaving/entering rounds in order to not disturb other speakers. When leaving a round, the competitor should let the judge know that they are double-entered before exiting. When entering their next round, competitors should ensure that they enter quietly or have their microphone muted.
- 3. After the round

Competitors are dismissed and may leave the room. They should be on the lookout for another text/e-mail for the next round.

Tournament Expectation as a Coach

- 1. Submit Contact Info for all competitors & judges

Coaches need to submit contact information for each competitor and judge to their rosters on ForensicsTournament.net (login, click school, click student roster & judge roster). This can be either a cell number or an e-mail (please keep in mind that some e-mails, such as those distributed by public school districts, may block incoming mail). The posting/ballot preference should also be entered so that the website can contact the competitor/judge through their preferred method (if the default setting of "paper" is not changed, then competitors/judges will not be able to receive their room assignments. This contact information is not directly shared with the tournament director or anyone else using ForensicsTournament.net. Only

coaches with approved access are able to view competitor and judge contact information.

2. Verify Contact Info

Once coaches have entered the competitor/judge contact information, the coach will need to verify that the website can send messages. The roster has a button labeled VERIFY next to each competitor/judge's name. Coaches need to click this and have the competitor/judge click the button that was sent to them. This lets the website know that they received the message.

3. Coaches should create a practice virtual room for their team to try before the tournament. By creating a practice room, coaches are ensuring that their competitors and judges are able to check in and ask questions if they have any. While it might be a good idea to try this a few days before the tournament, teams can also use these practice rooms to hang out in between rounds. Each team has 26 practice rooms available. Coaches can access these rooms by logging into ForensicsTournament.net, then clicking the name of their school in the upper right corner of the screen. Once in the room, coaches can share the URL directly with their competitors.
4. During the tournament, coaches will be sent a summary e-mail listing all of their competitors at the tournament, their speaking order, competitor code, and a link to their virtual room. Coaches should communicate this information with their competitors and judges if they are not receiving links during rounds.
5. Coaches should try to pay attention to their competitors who are double-entered. It is helpful to remind them to leave the first room once they finish their speech, and open the link for the second event. The tournament will not re-run rounds for competitors who are late because of double-entries.

Tournament Expectation as a Judge

IMPORTANT: PARENT/GUARDIAN PRESENCE FOR JUDGES WHO ARE MINORS

All judges who are minors must have a parent/guardian present in the room and also **visible** in the background. Middle school students are permitted to waive this requirement if the parental consent form is completed and delivered to the league before the beginning of the tournament in question.

1. Judges should use a computer (not a mobile device) for the tournament. They will need a lot of room. The tournament recommends opening one Chrome tab to watch videos and another to fill out the eBallots. It is also possible to use a mobile device to view the round while using a computer to fill out the eBallot. Alternatively, judges may wish to write notes on paper while observing the round and then transcribe their notes to the eBallot at the end of the round.
2. When postings are released, the tournament director will send an automatic message to everyone who has verified their cell/e-mail. When judges click the link in

the email, it will open an eBallot. This eBallot will then have another button that takes them to their virtual room. Most judges find it helpful to leave the ballot visible on the screen while also looking at the virtual room. This allows the judge to write comments on the eBallot while also being able to watch the speech.

3. All Internet connectivity is the responsibility of the competitor. For memorized events, multiple attempts to restart the speech may be made, but the round should not be significantly delayed because of it. It may be necessary to skip a speaker and move on to another competitor. In debate events, prep time should begin when the competitor disconnects. Once prep time has been exhausted, the competitor's speech time should begin. If a competitor is disconnected more than 5 minutes in a debate round, it is considered a forfeit. In limited prep events, a grace period of :30 may be added due to connectivity problems. If a competitor's connection fails multiple times, she can use the dial-in service to access the virtual room through an audio-only phone call. The phone number to call is (888)-633-0347. When the competitor calls, the voice on the other end will ask for a PIN that connects the competitor to the room. The PIN is unique to each room, and is available by clicking on the information icon in the lower right corner of the screen. Judges may need to copy and paste the PIN into the chat window for the competitor to use.
4. Judges should click the 'Toggle Tile View' button so that the competitor who is speaking is taking up the majority of the screen. Judges can also press the 'F' button to hide the other competitor screens, which avoids distractions.
5. Judges should stay in the virtual room until they finish filling out the eBallot and submit them promptly. All tournaments depend on prompt responses from judges, and these delays are what cause 95% of the delays at tournaments.
6. If judges have trouble with their eBallots, they can check in with the help desk. Which is: 8x8.vc/TEHHelp. Many times, the problem is that judges are trying to use a browser other than Chrome.
7. For Final Rounds, judges should make sure they wait for all three judges before starting the round. Since the room can be rather large with so many people, one judge will be selected as the chair. The chair judge should be the one to call role before the round begins to make sure all competitors are present. The chair should also check that all three judges have finished writing their feedback before moving on to the next speaker.
8. Final round judges are expected to rank their round independently from the other judges in the room. Judges should never confer about their scoring of the round.
9. We encourage judges to approach the activity with the understanding that online norms have not been thoroughly established. Comments such as, "Competitors always perform this way," might be better phrased as, "I think it might look/sound better for you to perform in this way..."

Tournament Expectation as a Spectator

1. Spectators may observe any rounds. The links to the virtual rooms are available by contacting the coach(es) of the school. For security and liability reasons, these rooms are not published publicly. Spectators should mute their video and microphone, and take extra precaution when entering and leaving the virtual room.

Event-Specific Information

All memorized events - For memorized events, multiple attempts to restart the speech may be made, but the round should not be significantly delayed because of it. It may be necessary to skip a speaker and move on to another competitor.

Debate (LD, Public Forum, Policy) - All evidence should be shared through the chat window. Debaters should create a Google Doc with their evidence cards in it. Debaters can either create a separate Doc for each piece of evidence, or they can make one giant Doc with all the evidence they use, and tell the opposing side to, "Go to page 14," for example. If a competitor disconnects in the middle of the round, that side's prep time should begin. Once prep time has been exhausted, the disconnected competitor's speech (or his/her partner's) time should begin. If a competitor is disconnected more than 5 minutes in a debate round, it is considered a forfeit.

Duo - This event probably has the most difficult transition to the online medium. We do not endorse competitors being in the same room, however, we do not forbid it. We understand that some Duos may consist of competitors who are siblings; asking such competitors to use different devices would actually create more problems than it would solve. We leave the decision to perform together in the hands of the competitors, coaches, and parents.

Extemp - Each student will be given a prompt in a virtual room. Thirty minutes after receiving their prompt, the competitor should go to their competition room to perform their speech. We fully understand that during their prep, competitors might take advantage of the opportunity to contact coaches/others to help with their speech. We hope that teams will encourage integrity for their speakers. This is still against rules and by-laws, so we are asking that everyone act with honesty.

Impromptu - Speakers will receive their prompts through the chat window of the virtual room. Judges will have the prompts loaded onto their eBallot. They should copy and paste these prompts into the chat window for the competitors. Time should begin once the prompts have been sent. Students are encouraged to time themselves with a timer that is visible at a distance.

SPAR - Speakers will receive their prompts through the chat window of the virtual room. Judges will have the prompts loaded onto their eBallot. They should copy and paste these prompts into the chat window for the competitors. Time should begin once the prompts have been sent. Students are encouraged to time themselves with a timer that is visible at a distance.