# WHSFA Rule Change Proposals – Liu

### Introduction

Friends and colleagues,

I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know all of you this year, and especially during the State Championship. I’m overjoyed to find myself in a state with such a vibrant speech and debate culture. Your students are brilliant and hardworking. I look forward to seeing all the successes I’m certain your students will achieve at NSDA Nationals. However, I do think that there are a few rules in Wyoming debate that are creating roadblocks to the magnitude of success that Wyoming could enjoy. The primary rules I’m describing are the tournament cap and current limitation on season length. I’ve proposed changes to those rules below, with specific rationales spelled out in detail, however I’d like to propose them from a broader point of view with three larger ideas in mind:

1) Changes in this area could bolster our student’s chances of success when they compete on a national scale.

2) We can make these changes without requiring coaches to do more if they don’t want to, while creating more opportunities for students.

3) The 2020-2021 season offers a unique opportunity for our students at virtually no cost, if these rule changes are embraced.

I want to start with a simple thesis: every debater in Wyoming should be able to dream of being a national champion, and we should clear every roadblock we can standing in between them and making that dream a reality. Similarly, every student in Wyoming should have a shot at the highly competitive, full ride debate scholarships to schools like Emory University or Wake Forest, and we should promote a culture of excellence that gives them the best chance at earning those. This is not to say that Wyoming does not have amazing success stories now. However, I believe our students are succeeding in spite of these rules, not because of them. More opportunities for competition allow students to refine their skills and grow as competitors and intellectuals: practice makes perfect. This is especially true in a comparative light. If students from other states are allowed more opportunities to compete than Wyoming students, than the playing field is not level.

I also believe these goals can be accomplished without changing the culture of local and regional debate. I would not ask anyone to vote for a rule that mandated that Wyoming coaches do more than they already are, merely one that enables opportunities for those interested in exploring them. Although my recent background is college debate, I grew up in a debate circuit indistinguishable from Wyoming. I have great respect for all the educators that taught me what debate was and set me on my path. But I also strived for years in high school to grasp at the dreams of national success that always seemed to just barely elude me. As I close in on my 20th year in debate, I now have a much better picture of the structural changes that would catapult students further along a trajectory of national success, without fundamentally changing local circuits like the one that I grew up in. I’ve coached multiple high school and college national champions, and I know that there are several key enabling factors that can supercharge success. I also believe these changes can make debate a more educational and productive experience, even for those whose aspirations don’t lie in national championships.

This post also comes at a time of unprecedented opportunity for Wyoming students. More and more fall tournaments are announcing every day that their tournaments will be held online. While no one is happy about the temporary interruption of brick-and-mortar tournaments, the silver lining is that tournaments that were once economically exclusive because of travel costs like the Kentucky Season Opener, Grapevine, St. Marks, and many others are now much, much more accessible. At virtually no cost, Wyoming students could now compete at Yale or Harvard. It’s possible that as COVID-19 recedes, this silver lining of increased accessibility may stick around for the long haul in the form of hybrid tournaments that offer the benefits of brick and mortar tournaments to those who can attend, and the access of online to those who can’t.

Before submitting these ideas for public review, I sought out conversations with those that I thought might disagree. As a result of these conversations, I’m also submitting a separate rule change to allow exceptions to the tournament cap and season schedule for only online tournaments. I believe this rule represents a middle ground between the concerns I’ve outlined and the equity concerns raised in conversations with those opposed to the rule changes. As online tournaments have virtually no costs, the equity concern with online tournaments would be negligible. Although not perfect, I believe this is a true middle ground: not merely a compromise for the sake of compromise, but a middle ground that allows both opportunity and equity to be advanced.

I’m offering these rules changes up for discussion as early as possible because I certainly understand there may be those that disagree. I’ve also proposed changes in three other areas, although I believe those to be less controversial. I would love to dialogue with anyone in the community about any of these ideas, in the spirit of deliberation that our activities are so excellent at fostering.

Best,

Matt Liu

University of Wyoming Director of Forensics

### Online Tournaments

#### Current rule: 8.3.2 A-B

A. The Number of Allowable Speech and Debate Tournaments:

High School competitors are allowed ten preliminary meets a year, plus the State Speech and Debate Tournament and National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) National Qualifying Tournament (Districts). Competing as a novice (a novice competitor is similar to a junior varsity competitor in other activities) counts toward this total. Out-of-state tournaments count toward this total.

1. This means each individual varsity competitor is allowed to attend ten varsity tournaments, plus the State Tournament and NSDA National Qualifying Tournament. Out-of-state tournaments also count toward these totals.

2. Novice competitors are those students who have competed at 4 or fewer tournaments. See section E below for further clarification.

3. Schools that violate this rule will not be allowed to compete for team Sweepstakes awards at the season's State Tournament and will be reported to the WHSAA for appropriate actions.

B. The Speech and Debate Tournament Season:

The speech and debate tournament season will run from the Saturday of WHSAA calendar week 17 through the NSDA National Qualifying Tournament or the State Tournament, whichever is later. Workshop events may be held at any time. A “workshop” is an event primarily educational in nature, intended to give students a feel for how tournaments are run, and where no final individual or team placings are tabulated or NSDA points entered for the student, other than service points.

#### Proposed change: allow online tournaments to be attended at any time, and not to count against the tournament cap

A. The Number of Allowable Speech and Debate Tournaments:

High School competitors are allowed ten preliminary meets a year, plus the State Speech and Debate Tournament and National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) National Qualifying Tournament (Districts). Competing as a novice (a novice competitor is similar to a junior varsity competitor in other activities) counts toward this total. Out-of-state tournaments count toward this total. Tournaments held online do not count toward this total.

1. This means each individual varsity competitor is allowed to attend ten varsity tournaments, plus the State Tournament and NSDA National Qualifying Tournament. Out-of-state tournaments also count toward these totals.

2. Novice competitors are those students who have competed at 4 or fewer tournaments. See section E below for further clarification.

3. Schools that violate this rule will not be allowed to compete for team Sweepstakes awards at the season's State Tournament and will be reported to the WHSAA for appropriate actions.

B. The Speech and Debate Tournament Season:

The speech and debate tournament season will run from the Saturday of WHSAA calendar week 17 through the NSDA National Qualifying Tournament or the State Tournament, whichever is later. Tournaments held online may be held and/or attended at any time. Workshop events may be held at any time. A “workshop” is an event primarily educational in nature, intended to give students a feel for how tournaments are run, and where no final individual or team placings are tabulated or NSDA points entered for the student, other than service points.

#### Rationale

The rule change suggestions below make a more complete case for why the tournament cap and schedule limitations limit the education of Wyoming students. However, after seeking out and speaking to several coaches who I believed would disagree with those rule changes, I am proffering this amendment as a middle ground. I believe this is not only a middle ground between leaving the cap in place and eliminating it, but a middle ground that truly addresses the concerns of both sides of this issue: increasing educational opportunities on the one hand, and addressing equity concerns on the other.

Allowing students to attend online tournaments beyond the cap and outside of the traditional season resolves the equity concern with eliminating the tournament cap: online tournaments are virtually free, the total lack of travel costs allows small schools and big schools to compete on a level playing field.

COVID-19 has been devastating in countless ways. Countless opportunities for our students will be lost because of it. The increased accessibility of normally impossible to attend tournaments is a silver lining we should allow students to take advantage of.

### Tournament Cap

#### Current rule: 8.3.2 A

A. The Number of Allowable Speech and Debate Tournaments:

High School competitors are allowed ten preliminary meets a year, plus the State Speech and Debate Tournament and National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) National Qualifying Tournament (Districts). Competing as a novice (a novice competitor is similar to a junior varsity competitor in other activities) counts toward this total. Out-of-state tournaments count toward this total.

1. This means each individual varsity competitor is allowed to attend ten varsity tournaments, plus the State Tournament and NSDA National Qualifying Tournament. Out-of-state tournaments also count toward these totals.

2. Novice competitors are those students who have competed at 4 or fewer tournaments. See section E below for further clarification.

3. Schools that violate this rule will not be allowed to compete for team Sweepstakes awards at the season's State Tournament and will be reported to the WHSAA for appropriate actions.

#### Proposed change: eliminate the tournament cap

~~A. The Number of Allowable Speech and Debate Tournaments:~~

~~High School competitors are allowed ten preliminary meets a year, plus the State Speech and Debate Tournament and National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) National Qualifying Tournament (Districts). Competing as a novice (a novice competitor is similar to a junior varsity competitor in other activities) counts toward this total. Out-of-state tournaments count toward this total.~~

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~~2. Novice competitors are those students who have competed at 4 or fewer tournaments. See section E below for further clarification.~~

~~3. Schools that violate this rule will not be allowed to compete for team Sweepstakes awards at the season's State Tournament and will be reported to the WHSAA for appropriate actions.~~

#### Alternative proposal 1: increase the number

A. The Number of Allowable Speech and Debate Tournaments:

High School competitors are allowed fifteen ~~ten~~ preliminary meets a year, plus the State Speech and Debate Tournament and National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) National Qualifying Tournament (Districts). Competing as a novice (a novice competitor is similar to a junior varsity competitor in other activities) counts toward this total. Out-of-state tournaments count toward this total.

1. This means each individual varsity competitor is allowed to attend ten varsity tournaments, plus the State Tournament and NSDA National Qualifying Tournament. Out-of-state tournaments also count toward these totals.

2. Novice competitors are those students who have competed at 4 or fewer tournaments. See section E below for further clarification.

3. Schools that violate this rule will not be allowed to compete for team Sweepstakes awards at the season's State Tournament and will be reported to the WHSAA for appropriate actions.

#### Alternative proposal 2: lessen the consequences

A. The Number of Allowable Speech and Debate Tournaments:

High School competitors are allowed ten preliminary meets a year, plus the State Speech and Debate Tournament and National Speech and Debate Association (NSDA) National Qualifying Tournament (Districts). Competing as a novice (a novice competitor is similar to a junior varsity competitor in other activities) counts toward this total. Out-of-state tournaments count toward this total.

1. This means each individual varsity competitor is allowed to attend ten varsity tournaments, plus the State Tournament and NSDA National Qualifying Tournament. Out-of-state tournaments also count toward these totals.

2. Novice competitors are those students who have competed at 4 or fewer tournaments. See section E below for further clarification.

3. ~~Schools~~ Individuals that violate this rule will not ~~be allowed to compete for~~ count toward team Sweepstakes awards at the season's State Tournament ~~and will be reported to the WHSAA for appropriate actions~~.

#### Rationale

The tournament cap places an artificial limit on every Wyoming student’s education. Tournament competition is where students learn and improve, it is vital to competitive success and intellectual growth. We wouldn’t limit the number of books a student may read a semester, or the number of math problems a student may attempt to solve. In the same way, we should not have a one-size-fits-all limit on the amount of tournaments a student can attend. Individual coaches and teachers are in the best position to determine the number of tournaments that are best for their students.

A state-wide limit undermines the ability of Wyoming students to compete on a national stage, putting Wyoming students at a competitive disadvantage against most of the country. I researched the speech and debate handbooks of every state that I could find, and found that only Colorado, Idaho, Missouri, Montana, South Dakota, Utah, and Virginia placed tournament limitations on their students. Forty-three of fifty, or 86% of states place no limits on the amount of tournaments their high school speech and debate students may attend. Moreover, several of those tournament limits are substantially larger than ours. For example, Virginia allows students to attend sixteen tournaments, and our neighbor to the south, Colorado, allows schools to attend twenty-two tournaments. It is notable that no state in the country has a more limited tournament cap than Wyoming. Forty-seven states allow their students to start with an advantage over Wyoming. In national competition, Wyoming students are competing with their hands tied behind their back.

Road blocks to national success also undermine the chances of Wyoming students earning scholarships. Over 200 colleges and universities offer scholarships for speech and debate. The most prestigious and valuable of these scholarships are highly competitive. For example, the Emory University debate scholarship covers "full tuition, fees, and on-campus room, and board, renewable for up to 4 years of undergraduate study." Annual tuition at Emory University alone is $51,306, meaning the value of that scholarship is well over $200,000. Wake Forest University’s debate team awards four Presidential Scholarships for debate every year for $16,000 a year ($64,000 over four years). For at least the past four years they have also awarded at least one full ride a year, valued at over $213,000 over four years. Their scholarships have always been awarded to students that travel frequently. These scholarships are feasible for Rocky Mountain area students to pursue: a Colorado student earned the full ride to Emory just two years ago. However, the current rule in Wyoming places an obstacle in the path of students who might otherwise have a chance at earning those scholarships by limiting their competitive opportunities. The rule pulls opportunities – real, significant financial opportunities – out of the hands of Wyoming students.

There are two potential objections to this proposal I would like to respond to: resource inequity and overstretched coaches.

The resource inequity argument would be that the ability to go to more tournaments is not equally available to all students and schools. This is true and regrettable, but the tournament cap does nothing to solve the problem. A school that can afford to attend more tournaments could still use their resources to advantage their students by attending more national circuit tournaments and less local tournaments, by hiring more coaches, etc. I would also note that this rationale is demonstrative of the very case for expanding competition opportunities: the idea that students who have more experience will excel at states is demonstrative of the basic idea that these rules make it harder to succeed at debate. Additionally, the notion of restricting a student’s education because the best opportunities aren’t available to all strikes a note of central planning that seems out of place in Wyoming, and inconsistent with our overall educational philosophy. We would not ban hockey because some students cannot afford the equipment. In the same way, we should not limit access to debate.

The second potential objection is that allowing students to attend more tournaments will overstretch coaches. I have vast sympathy for our speech and debate coaches and the work they do (after all, I am one). However, allowing students to attend more than 10 tournaments does not mandate that coaches must send their students to 10+ tournaments. The buck stops with coaches, and if they do not want to attend a tournament they are under no obligation to do so. In the say way, individual coaches and teachers are the best attuned to their student’s availability, and are the best managers of how many tournaments a student should go to. This rule change proposal would keep coaches comfortable with the status quo empowered to keep things the same, while enabling coaches who would like to travel more to do so. No coach will have to attend a single extra tournament if they do not want to. This is a win-win proposal that does not force anyone to do anything. This proposal for change best embraces the “marketplace of ideas” that Wyoming stands for: coaches are empowered to choose when they want or don’t want to compete.

If you would not consider this rule change, I urge you to place your support behind the alternative proposal of a temporary pilot project of eliminating the tournament cap for just the 2020-2021 season. Students will have an unprecedented opportunity to participate in national tournaments without travel costs as more and more tournaments declare every day they will host online in the fall of 2020. This also resolves fears of resource inequities and budget constraints.

### Calendar Limits

#### Current rule: 8.3.2. B

B. The Speech and Debate Tournament Season:

The speech and debate tournament season will run from the Saturday of WHSAA calendar week 17 through the NSDA National Qualifying Tournament or the State Tournament, whichever is later. Workshop events may be held at any time. A “workshop” is an event primarily educational in nature, intended to give students a feel for how tournaments are run, and where no final individual or team placings are tabulated or NSDA points entered for the student, other than service points.

#### Proposed change: allow the season to begin in September

B. The Speech and Debate Tournament Season:

The speech and debate tournament season will run from September 1st ~~the Saturday of WHSAA calendar week 17~~ through the NSDA National Qualifying Tournament or the State Tournament, whichever is later. Workshop events may be held at any time. A “workshop” is an event primarily educational in nature, intended to give students a feel for how tournaments are run, and where no final individual or team placings are tabulated or NSDA points entered for the student, other than service points.

#### Rationale

The truncated calendar places an artificial limit on every Wyoming student’s education. A truncated calendar undermines the ability of Wyoming students to compete on a national stage, putting Wyoming students at a competitive disadvantage against most of the country. Students vying to compete on a national stage need to be able to compete against the top competition where and when they travel. For example, in debate, the Grapevine Classic and UK's National Speech and Debate Season Opener mark the start of the season. Both tournaments are held in early September. The winners and late elimination round participants of tournaments like the NSDA, NDCA, and TOC can be found at Grapevine and Kentucky because good competition fosters growth and success. You cannot beat the best teams in the country by avoiding them, and you cannot beat them by competing less than them.

Road blocks to national success also undermine the chances of Wyoming students earning scholarships. Over 200 colleges and universities offer scholarships for speech and debate. The most prestigious and valuable of these scholarships are highly competitive. For example, the Emory University debate scholarship covers "full tuition, fees, and on-campus room, and board, renewable for up to 4 years of undergraduate study." Annual tuition at Emory University alone is $51,306, meaning the value of that scholarship is well over $200,000. Wake Forest University’s debate team awards four Presidential Scholarships for debate every year for $16,000 a year ($64,000 over four years). Their scholarships have always been awarded to students that travel frequently. These scholarships are feasible for Rocky Mountain area students to pursue: a Colorado student earned the full ride to Emory just two years ago. However, current rule in Wyoming places an obstacle in the path of students who might otherwise have a chance at earning those scholarships by limiting their competitive opportunities. The rule pulls opportunities – real, significant financial opportunities – out of the hands of Wyoming students.

I want to anticipate three possible responses to this: resource inequity, competition with other activities, and coach overstretch.

The resource inequity argument would be that the ability to go to more tournaments is not equally available to all students and schools. This is true and regrettable, but the tournament cap does nothing to solve the problem. A school that can afford to attend more tournaments could still use their resources to advantage their students by attending more national circuit tournaments and less local tournaments, by hiring more coaches, etc. I would also note that this rationale is demonstrative of the very case for expanding competition opportunities: the idea that students who have more experience will excel at states is demonstrative of the basic idea that these rules make it harder to succeed at debate. Additionally, the notion of restricting a student’s education because the best opportunities aren’t available to all strikes a note of central planning that seems out of place in Wyoming, and inconsistent with our overall educational philosophy. We would not ban hockey because some students cannot afford the equipment. In the same way, we should not limit access to debate.

I appreciate the idea that students should be able to participate in the activities they want, however, I believe that this proposal accomplishes that better than the status quo. Under an expanded calendar, students who wanted to participate in other fall and spring activities still could make that choice. However, right now, Wyoming students who would like to become a master of their craft in speech and debate have a vastly truncated opportunity compared to other students across the country. They are denied a choice now, a choice to compete with their peers in other states on a level playing field.

I have vast sympathy for our speech and debate coaches and the work they do (after all, I am one). However, allowing students to compete in September and October does not mandate that coaches must send their students to September and October tournaments. The buck stops with coaches, and if they do not want to attend a tournament they are under no obligation to do so. This rule change proposal would keep coaches comfortable with the status quo empowered to keep things the same, while enabling coaches who would like to travel more to do so. No coach will have to attend a single extra tournament if they do not want to. This is a win-win proposal that does not force anyone to do anything. This proposal for change best embraces the “marketplace of ideas” that Wyoming stands for: coaches are empowered to choose when they want or don’t want to compete.

If you would not consider this rule change, I urge you to place your support behind the alternative proposal of a temporary pilot project of allowing the season to begin in September for just the 2020-2021 season. Students will have an unprecedented opportunity to participate in national tournaments without travel costs as more and more tournaments declare every day they will host online in the fall of 2020. This also resolves fears of resource inequities and budget constraints.

### Use of Internet During Rounds

#### Current Rule: 8.3.3 C. Debate

The use of laptop computers shall be allowed in Public Forum, Lincoln Douglas, and Policy debate as outlined in the latest NSDA National Tournament Manual. The use of laptop computers in extemporaneous speaking preparation is permitted as outlined in the most current version of the NSDA National Tournament. Additionally, A. There will be no network usage in rounds, either wired or wireless. It is the responsibility of the contestant to insure that only the resources resident on the computer prior to the beginning of the round are accessed and used for the duration of the entire round.

B. Wired connections (Ethernet or phone) during rounds of competition are not permitted.

C. Computers or other electronic devices may not be used to receive information from any source (coaches or assistants included) inside or outside the room in which the competition occurs. Internet access, use of e-mail, instant messaging, or other means of receiving information from sources inside or outside the competition room are prohibited. (This does not prohibit non-electronic communication between debate partners during prep time.)

D. Sanction: Contestants found to have violated provisions A – B above shall forfeit the round of competition and receive zero points. Contestants found to have violated provision C above shall be disqualified from the tournament and shall forfeit all rounds. At the Wyoming State Tournament the Executive Committee shall make the final decision concerning disqualification. At local tournaments using the state rules, the tournament director may disqualify a team for such violation.

#### Proposed change: allow internet use but not coaching during rounds

The use of laptop computers shall be allowed in Public Forum, Lincoln Douglas, and Policy debate ~~as outlined in the latest NSDA National Tournament Manual~~. The use of laptop computers in extemporaneous speaking preparation is permitted as outlined in the most current version of the NSDA National Tournament. Additionally,

~~A. There will be no network usage in rounds, either wired or wireless. It is the responsibility of the contestant to insure that only the resources resident on the computer prior to the beginning of the round are accessed and used for the duration of the entire round.~~

~~B. Wired connections (Ethernet or phone) during rounds of competition are not permitted.~~

~~C.~~ A. Computers or other electronic devices may not be used to receive information from any person ~~source~~ (coaches or assistants included) inside or outside the room in which the competition occurs. Internet access, use of e-mail, instant messaging, or other means of receiving information from persons ~~sources~~ inside or outside the competition room are prohibited. (This does not prohibit ~~non-electronic~~ communication between debate partners during prep time.)

~~D. Sanction~~: Contestants found to have violated this provision~~s A – B above shall forfeit the round of competition and receive zero points. Contestants found to have violated provision C above~~ shall be disqualified from the tournament and shall forfeit all rounds. At the Wyoming State Tournament the Executive Committee shall make the final decision concerning disqualification. At local tournaments using the state rules, the tournament director may disqualify a team for such violation.

B. The use of internet during rounds shall only be permitted if there is public internet available to all at the competition site. Contestants found to have violated this provision shall forfeit the round of competition and receive zero points.

#### Rationale

Receiving coaching of any kind during a round is obviously cheating and should remain barred, because it is no longer the student participating on their own merits. However, there are other innocent and beneficial uses of the internet during a round that should not be barred.

The use of email chains for transferring evidence before speeches is standard practice across most of the country. It also promotes better debates, as it allows the focus to be on the arguments rather than a tedious use of cross-ex and cross-fire time asking for evidence.

The ability to research during a round is also something that should be rewarded, not punished. In-round research should not be categorized similarly to receiving coaching during a round: a student researching on their own is still having their own mettle tested, not that of an outside party. Furthermore, the ability to do on-the-spot research under the pressure of time is a vital skill that should be rewarded, not punished. In-round research is not easy. Time is a valuable commodity in a round, and a student spending it on research is making a potentially costly decision that trades-off with other many other things the student could be doing (flowing, writing out arguments). Like every strategic decision in a round, it might work out well or it might work out poorly. This is a skill like any other our students should learn. If an argument is so poorly constructed it can be defeated with, at most, a few minutes of research, that argument deserves to lose. An argument that cannot survive against a determined and nimble researcher should be punished. We live in an age where it is easy to pretend to appear to be an expert (think *Plandemic*) and research is necessary to debunk absurdities. A student should be rewarded for suspecting, realizing, and confirming that their opponent has put together a shoddy argument. Sunlight is the best disinfectant.

There is no need to lump these practices together. We can enforce a rule against coaching via the internet but allow practices like email chains and in-round research. In fact, the rules *already* distinguish between these practices by offering different punishments. If we already distinguish the sanction, then there is no reason we cannot decide to approve each practice on the merits. Furthermore, there is no way to block the use of internet during rounds. There is no viable enforcement mechanism that could realistically stop students from breaking this rule. The best way to achieve compliance is to create a culture of rule-following that is enhancing by having rules founded in best practices that all participants see the wisdom of. I believe this change would help with that.

### Expectation of Standing

#### Current Rule: 8.3.3 C. Debate

G. Because public speaking decorum remains an important element of debate, all debaters are expected to stand at the front of the room facing the judge while speaking.

#### Proposed change: eliminate the standing requirement

~~G. Because public speaking decorum remains an important element of debate, all debaters are expected to stand at the front of the room facing the judge while speaking.~~

#### Rationale

This change is in line with the principles of universal design. Not all students can stand. Disabled students, such as wheelchair-bound students, cannot comply with this rule. Although judges and tournament officials would obviously not enforce this rule, having it one the books is an affront to disabled students.

### Computer Privacy

#### Current Rule: 8.3.3 C. Debate

I. By choosing to use computers in the round, debaters are consenting to give tournament officials the right to search their files. Debaters who do not wish to consent should not use computers in the round.

#### Proposed change: eliminate the right to search

~~I. By choosing to use computers in the round, debaters are consenting to give tournament officials the right to search their files. Debaters who do not wish to consent should not use computers in the round.~~

#### Rationale

Laptops are an essential part of modern life and an increasingly essential part of debate, even in Wyoming. The use of everyday technology should not justify abridging the privacy of students. The court case Robbins v. Lower Merion School District is indicative that when home life and school life meet in the nexus point of a student’s laptop, the right of the school district to curtail student privacy can and should be limited (and that schools that do not do so can face financial repercussions).

This rule change would not preclude laptops from being searched for other reasons, it would merely prevent any tournament official from searching any participant’s laptop without cause.