



**2017-18 National High School Ethics Bowl  
Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines**



UNC

PARR CENTER FOR ETHICS

## Table of Contents

<b>I.</b>	<b>Organizational Structure.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>II.</b>	<b>National High School Ethics Bowl.....</b>	<b>1</b>
	<b>a. Event Format</b>	
	<b>b. Match Format</b>	
	<b>c. Match Rules</b>	
	<b>d. Case Questions</b>	
<b>III.</b>	<b>Regional Qualifying Ethics Bowls.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>IV.</b>	<b>Teams—Rules and Guidelines.....</b>	<b>9</b>
	<b>a. Rules</b>	
	<b>b. Guidelines</b>	
<b>V.</b>	<b>Judges—Rules and Guidelines.....</b>	<b>13</b>
	<b>a. Rules</b>	
	<b>b. Guidelines</b>	
<b>VI.</b>	<b>Moderators—Procedures.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>VII.</b>	<b>Virtual Bowl Playoffs.....</b>	<b>18</b>

## I. ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

The National High School Ethics Bowl (NHSEB) is dedicated to hosting, nurturing, and promoting high school ethics bowls across North America. NHSEB's day-to-day operations are overseen by a Director and Executive Committee and advised by a Steering Committee. As needed, topic-specific advisory committees and work groups may be formed by the Executive Committee. When the NHSEB Executive Committee contact is referenced below, please email [ethicsbowl@unc.edu](mailto:ethicsbowl@unc.edu).

## II. NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ETHICS BOWL

The NHSEB hosts and organizes a National High School Ethics Bowl competition ("the Nationals") each April. Invitations to the Nationals are extended to teams based on their performance at a Regional Ethics Bowl Competition ("regional competition") in accordance with the procedures in Section III. The 2017-18 Nationals will take place April 20-22, 2018 at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

### A. Event Format

The cases used at the Nationals will be released to the participating teams approximately during the first week in March. The Nationals will begin on the evening of April 20, 2018 with a Welcome Reception followed on Saturday, April 21st with a Plenary Session required for all participating teams (students and coaches). The Nationals will field 24 teams.

At the Nationals, teams will be provided with an extra minute, for a total of six minutes, during the Presentation period. Regional Competitions may use their discretion to keep the Presentation period at five or to use six minutes.

Each team will participate in four seeding matches between April 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> with teams assigned to matches by random draw. At the end of the fourth round, teams will be ranked by the number of wins (0-4). When two or more teams have the same number of wins, the following tiebreakers will be exercised, in this order:

- **Lowest number of losses** (so a team that has 2 wins, 1 tie, and 1 loss will rank higher than a team with 2 wins and 2 losses)
- **Highest number of judge votes** (over the course of four rounds, a team has the opportunity to win the votes of 12 judges. If two teams finish with 4 wins, but one team has 11 judge votes and the other has 10, the team with 11 votes is ranked higher)
- **Greatest point differential** over all four matches (If two teams have 3 wins and 1 loss and 9 judge votes, and Team A has a total point differential of +30 [winning two matches by 12, winning one match by 10, and losing one match by 4] while Team B has a point differential of +28 [winning one match by 11, winning two matches by 9, and losing one match by 1], Team A will be ranked higher in the standings).
- **Highest point total** over all four matches.
- **Coin toss**

The top eight teams after the four seeding matches will advance to the quarterfinals. The eight quarterfinal teams will be announced after lunch on Sunday, April 22nd.

The rules and procedures for the quarterfinals, semifinals, and finals will be identical to the other rounds. The winning teams from each of these rounds will advance (with tiebreakers as determined above). The winning team of the finals match will be named the National High School Ethics Bowl Champion. In the event of a tie of judges' votes during the finals, the two top-ranked teams will be named co-champions. If more clarification is needed on tiebreakers during the semifinals, quarterfinals, or finals, please contact the NHSEB Executive Committee.

After the finals, the finalists and semifinalists will be presented with trophies and the winner of the Robert Ladenson Spirit of the Ethics Bowl Award will be announced. The Spirit of the Ethics Bowl Award is given to the team that best embodies the spirit and ideals of the ethics bowl, as voted on by other competitors. All participating teams will be recognized for their achievement.

## **B.Match Format**

Matches feature two teams meeting face-to-face. Each team can be composed of three to five members in any one match. The team members must be selected and seated at the table before the moderator opens the match. Each match will have three judges and one moderator. Judges evaluate teams based on their performance during the match. Moderators "run the room." They keep time and move the match through its various components while ensuring that all participants and spectators comply with the rules. For more on the roles of judges and moderators, see Section V and Section IV.

Each match will begin with a coin toss, either with a physical coin or the use of a coin flip application. The team that wins the coin toss may elect to present first (designated as Team A) or to have the other team present first (in this situation, the winner of the coin toss is then designated as Team B).

To open the first half of the match, copies of the first case and question will be distributed to the judges and teams. The moderator will then read the case number, title, and question. Neither judges nor the teams will know in advance which case will be presented or which question will be asked.

Team A will have up to two minutes to confer, after which any member(s) of Team A may speak for up to six minutes (total) in response to the moderator's question, based on the team's research and critical analysis. This is known as the Presentation period. Team A must address and answer the moderator's question during the Presentation period.

Next, Team B will have up to one minute to confer, after which Team B may speak for up to three minutes in response to Team A's presentation. This is known as the Commentary period.

Team A will then have up to one minute to confer, followed by three minutes to respond to Team B's commentary. This is known as the Response period.

The judges will then begin their ten-minute question & answer session with Team A. Before

asking questions, the judges may confer briefly. Each judge should have time for at least one question, and may ask more questions if time permits.

Teams are allowed to briefly confer (20 to 30 seconds) before answering a judge's question. More than one team member may respond to a given judge's question. Judges then evaluate the Presentation, Response, and Responses to Judges' Questions by Team A and the Commentary by Team B, and assess the teams based on the judges' guidelines found in Section V.

The judges will score each team as follows:

- 1-15 for a team's Presentation to the Moderator's case question (15 best). In evaluating a team's answer to the moderator's question, the judges will give the team a score of 1-5 on each of the three evaluation criteria on the score sheet:
  1. Did the presentation clearly and systematically address the case question asked?
  2. Did the presentation identify and thoroughly discuss the central moral dimensions of the case, raised by the case question asked?
  3. Did the presentation indicate both awareness and thoughtful consideration of different viewpoints, including those that would loom large in the reasoning of individuals who disagree?
- 1-10 for the opposing team's Commentary (10 best)
- 1-10 for the presenting team's Response to the opposing team's commentary (10 best)
- 1-20 for the presenting team's Responses to the Judges' Questions (20 best)
- 1-5 for each team's display of respectful dialogue throughout the match (5 best)

The judges should not discuss their scoring decisions with each other; each judge is to rely on their own private judgment. For more information on the guidelines and rules for judges, see Section V.

After the judges have made their scoring decisions, the moderator will read the second case number, title, and question to the same two teams, beginning the second half of the match.

The match will proceed as above, with Team B presenting in the second half, Team A offering commentary, Team B responding, and then Team B participating in the judges' question and answer session. Thus, in each match, each team will have the opportunity to present one case and to respond to the other team's presentation of another case, for a total of 60 points possible from each of the three judges.

Moderators will help validate scores with the judges and tabulate, based on the scores, which team receives each judge's vote. The winner of the match will be the team with the highest number of votes (out of three totals). For example:

Judge 1: Team A 48, Team B 43 (1 vote for Team A)  
Judge 2: Team A 45, Team B 44 (1 vote for Team A)  
Judge 3: Team A 39, Team B 49 (1 vote for Team B)

Here, Team A is the winner of the match with two judges' votes despite the fact that Team B had a higher overall point total.

If a judge scores both teams equally (a tie), both teams are awarded  $\frac{1}{2}$  of that judge's vote. A match can end in a tie—if all three judges score the match a tie, or one judge votes for Team A, one for Team B, and one scores a tie. Point differential is not a factor in determining the winner of an individual match although it is a criterion that is used as a tiebreaker when ranking teams at the end of the seeding rounds (see Section II-A).

At the end of the match, the moderator will ask all the judges to raise their match tally sheets and individually announce their vote and awarded points to each team. Next, the moderator will name the winning team (or announce a tie) and the number of judges' votes for that team. Moderators will then pass score sheets to a room staffer who will return all materials to the NHSEB headquarters for compilation with scores from other matches.

## C. Match Rules

There are no limits to the resources that may be used in researching the questions prior to a competition. Students are encouraged to consult all resources to understand the full breadth of the cases, determine their positions, and make the strongest possible presentation. Although teams may use outside research to prepare for a match, they should not assume that merely presenting factual information will impress the judges. Teams need to propose valid, sound, persuasive arguments that are buttressed by fact to score well. If a team introduces a specific fact not contained in the case, the team should cite the source (e.g. "according to a 2011 article in National Geographic...").

At the start of each match, scratch paper will be provided for team members to make notes during the match, but outside notes and materials are prohibited. All materials will be collected at the end of each match by the moderator or room staffer.

The moderator will keep official time of each period of the match. The moderator is allowed to use a device that stores data or connects to the internet (this includes most cellular phones and tablets) to keep accurate time. **Teams may use their own timers** with the following restrictions and conditions: the timer cannot be any device that stores data or connects to the internet and a team may not time the portions of the match when the other team speaks or confers. The moderator can allow a team to finish a sentence/thought once time has expired.

All teams will get two standardized time notifications from the moderator during their Presentations: one when three minutes remain and one when one minute remains. During the Commentary and Response portions, the moderator will give notifications when one minute remains. Prior to the match starting, moderators will consult with teams if they prefer verbal or physical (a hand gesture, visual representation, etc.) reminders. When judges ask questions, the moderator will notify the panel when there are two minutes remaining.

The moderator controls the room during matches and should address any unacceptable behavior including, but not limited to:

- Coaches, parents, or audience members communicating—verbally or non-verbally—or demonstrably reacting to, team members during a match.

- Judges showing hostility or asking inappropriate questions to team members. Inappropriate questions include, but are not limited to, any that highlight a participant's race, religion, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, appearance, etc. Judges should direct their constructive questions to teams based on the discussion, not to individuals.
- Anyone in the room who intentionally makes distracting noises while one of the teams, judges, or moderator has the floor.
- Foul, insulting, or excessively graphic language or confrontational behavior by anyone in the room.

Please note, the moderator can only control the noise within the match room. If there are outside distractions, such as construction or students talking, it is up to the moderator, not coach or parent, to decide if the match should be paused.

Teams must answer the moderator's case question during the Presentation period. Teams are judged and scored on how well its members clearly and systematically address and respond to the question asked.

**Teams will not be penalized or rewarded by the judges depending on whether one person speaks or everyone contributes.** To dispel any preconceptions that a judge may harbor, we strongly urge that a team outline its presentation when it begins—that is, the team should explain who will be discussing which aspect(s) of the case and why. This way, a judge will know what kind of presentation to expect. We have let the judges know that they should neither penalize nor reward a team for using either approach: both are welcome.

When one team confers or speaks, the other team and audience members must remain silent although writing and passing notes is permitted. (For example, when Team A is given the case and question, they are allowed to confer for two minutes and then present for six minutes. During those eight minutes, Team B is permitted to write notes, but must remain silent.)

## **D. Case Questions**

Teams competing at the Nationals should use the National case set and their accompanying study questions to practice for the competition. **The study questions do not necessarily include the questions moderators will ask teams during the competition.** Study questions are designed to help teams prepare for the Nationals and to think more deeply about the issues at hand.

### III. REGIONAL QUALIFYING ETHICS BOWLS

Regional ethics bowl competitions (“regional competitions”) will be held between September 5, 2017 and February 4, 2018. In order to be recognized by the NHSEB, each regional needs to complete an information form either before that regional competition takes place or by December 8, 2017, whichever is first. The completed form will be used to categorize each competition as “large” or “small” depending on the number of reported, registered, and participating schools (not teams). **In the event that a regional competition does not report the number of participating schools by December 8, the NHSEB Executive Committee will use its discretion to determine the regional size.**

A regional competition will be recognized either as a:

- a) **Large Regional** which will be categorized as large after December 8, 2017 or after the regional competition takes place, whichever is first. Large Regionals are those bowls with the highest number of competing schools in the total field of regional competitions. The winning school of a large regional will automatically advance to the Nationals.

OR

- b) **Small Regional** which will be categorized as small after December 8, 2017 or after the regional competition takes place; whichever is first. Small Regionals are those bowls with the least number of competing schools in the total field of regional competitions. The winning school of a Small Regional will compete in a virtual bowl playoff against the winner of another Small Regional. This playoff will consist of a single match between the two teams, and the winner of this match will advance to the Nationals. Small Regionals will be matched according to time zone region and/or on a rolling basis (e.g. if two small regionals take place on the same weekend) between February 10 and February 28, 2018. The Parr Center for Ethics will coordinate the pairing of small regionals and organization of the virtual bowl playoff. For more information about the virtual bowl playoffs see section VII.

The NHSEB Executive Committee will be using a general formula to decide the field of Large and Small Regional Bowls. For 2018 Nationals, if 24 schools will field the competition (x), and the number of regionals competing in the season is (y), then:

Large Regional Bowl = largest  $2x-y$  bowls

Small Regional Bowl = smallest  $2(y-x)$  bowls, which will compete in  $y-x$  virtual playoffs to determine which school will compete at the National Bowl

In the event that some, but not all, of the bowls with a given number of schools competing can be defined as Large Regionals according to this formula, the NHSEB Executive Committee will use its discretion to determine which of those regionals will count as Large Regionals, and which will count as Small Regionals.

For example, if the total regional field for 2017-18 is 33 regionals, then 15 regionals will be categorized as a Large and 18 regionals will be categorized as a Small Regional Bowl. The Small Regional Bowls (18) will be matched according to time zone and/or on a rolling basis,



creating nine virtual bowl playoffs. The winners of the virtual bowl playoffs will advance to the Nationals.

If a winning school cannot attend the Nationals, the NHSEB Executive Committee will allow the regional or virtual playoff runner-up to participate. **A qualifying school that cannot attend the Nationals should notify the NHSEB Executive Committee as soon as possible after winning their qualifying regional bowl, so that the runner-up has sufficient time to prepare to attend in their place.**

The NHSEB Executive Committee places no maximum limit on the number of schools or teams in any regional competition: however, regional organizers are allowed to cap the number of participating teams per school to enable a fair competition. Team composition is allowed to change from the regional competition to the Nationals; the high school is being represented, not an individual team. Multiple teams from one high school that competed in a qualifying regional competition can combine to form one team with up to seven members for the Nationals. If a school has multiple teams, all members must have competed in the same regional competition in order to create one team for the Nationals.

If members of a winning team cannot compete at the Nationals, the result of which the team has fewer than three members and the high school has no additional teams, the coach/advisor should contact the NHSEB Executive Committee to request permission to add new members to the team.

A school may only participate in one qualifying regional bowl during an academic year. Schools are required to participate in the regional competition closest to their geographical area. Schools can ask the NHSEB Executive Committee for permission to participate in a different regional competition in lieu of their most local bowl. In order to be recognized as a participating school in a regional bowl, a team must comply with all provisions of Section IV.

Regional competitions are encouraged to use the NHSEB Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines. Experimentation with the NHSEB format is welcomed with approval by the NHSEB Executive Committee. Regional organizers should notify the NHSEB Executive Committee about any modifications before their competition and report the effects of these changes after the competition. Successful changes may ultimately be adopted by the NHSEB. Lastly, regional organizers must inform the winning team about any changes compared to the NHSEB standard in order to minimize disadvantage at the Nationals.

Matches in regional competitions must be judged by three neutral judges (not parents, coaches, or teachers from participating schools). See Section V.

At the Nationals, the Presentation period has expanded to six minutes in order to provide teams with more time due to the quality of preparation acknowledged from judges at previous Nationals. Regional organizers are not required to adopt the extra minute at their competition; they may continue to keep the Presentation period at five minutes. Please communicate to teams about any similarities or differences in competition match format in comparison to the Nationals to minimize any confusion.

A winning regional school must have a school administrator (e.g. principal, dean, head of school) complete the Authorized Team Registration form and all participants (students,

coaches/advisors and official chaperones) must complete Participant Disclosure and Release forms. These forms must be submitted to the Parr Center for Ethics *no less than four weeks* before the Nationals.

In order to be recognized as a participating school, **a school must pay a registration fee of \$75 to NHSEB** at least four weeks before the regional competition. The preferred method is through the online registration located at <https://nhseb.unc.edu/registration/>. If schools cannot pay online using a credit card, they may remit a check to the Parr Center for Ethics (the address can be found on the webpage listed above). In the event of economic hardship, a school should consult the NHSEB Executive Committee for scholarship opportunities. **Regional organizers may charge additional registration fees for schools/teams in order to cover regional bowl expenses.**

**When a school pays its registration fee to the NHSEB, this does not automatically register the school to compete in a regional bowl.** The coach/advisor of a team(s) must contact the regional organizer to participate in that bowl. Information on how to contact your regional organizer is located at <https://nhseb.unc.edu/regionals/>.

Upon completion of a regional competition, the regional organizer should complete a post-qualifying information report provided by the NHSEB Executive Committee.

**\*\*The NHSEB Executive Committee reserves the right to make exceptions to these rules in the interests of fairness and consistency or when in the best interest of the NHSEB participants and the overall event.\*\***

## IV. TEAMS – RULES AND GUIDELINES

### A. Rules

A team must meet the following criteria to qualify for, and to participate in, the National High School Ethics Bowl and to count as a qualifying team in their regional competition:

- A team must be composed of *at least three high school students*. NHSEB teams will be capped at seven students (all of whom participated on a qualifying team at a regional bowl – see below), **but keep in mind that only five students can be seated on a team in any one match.**
- A team must represent an accredited and certified school that offers classes for grades 9, 10, 11, and/or 12 in the United States and *must* have the official endorsement of the school administration to participate in NHSEB.
- Students participating in a dual enrollment program qualify to join or create a high school ethics bowl team.
- Homeschool exception: Regional organizers may, at their discretion, allow a team or teams of homeschool students to participate. Regional organizers should attempt to verify high school age and encourage homeschool students to form a team from multiple families. Participants may not be otherwise enrolled in another accredited high school.
- All teams must have a coach or advisor vetted and approved by school administration. *If a team does not have an adult coach or advisor approved by the school's administration, the team cannot compete at the Regional or National bowl.*
  - Homeschool exception: the coach or advisor of a homeschool team will be vetted and approved by the NHSEB Executive Committee.

**The student composition of the team is allowed to change from the regional bowl to the National**

- The high school is represented at the Nationals, not individual teams.
- If a school enters multiple teams into a regional competition, those teams can combine to form a new team for the Nationals with up to seven members. All members from both teams need to be registered and must have competed in the same regional competition in order to create one team for the Nationals.
- A team may substitute members from round to round if a team has more than five registered members; substitution cannot occur not during a match.
- If members of a winning team cannot compete at the Nationals, the result of which the team has fewer than three members and the high school has no additional teams, the coach/advisor should contact the NHSEB Executive Committee to request permission to add members to the team.

All members of the team must be enrolled at the participating high school during the semesters that both the regional competition and Nationals take place. No graduates may participate.

Teams must pay the NHSEB registration fee prior to competing at their regional competition.

Team members (students, coaches, and official chaperones) are expected to follow all federal, state, and local laws while traveling to/from and attending either their regional competition or the Nationals. Illegal activity and/or disruptive behavior (including, but not limited to, intoxication, violence, verbal abuse, or harassment) may result in the removal of the participant(s) and disqualification of the team.

## **B. Guidelines**

High school ethics bowl is not Speech & Debate, and this is an important distinction. In ethics bowl, teams are not required to pick opposing sides, nor is the goal to “win” the argument by belittling the other team or its position. Ethics Bowl is, at heart, a collaborative discussion during which the first team presents its analysis of a question about the ethical dilemma at the core of the case being discussed, offering support for its position but also considering the validity of other positions.

**The goal is to demonstrate breadth and depth of thinking about difficult and important ethical situations.** In fact, teams are rewarded for the degree to which they eschew adversarial positioning and instead adopt a more collegial, collaborative stance.

- In other words, teams are strongly encouraged to think of themselves as being on the same side rather than as opponents. That is, both teams are working together trying to solve a difficult problem—while impressing the judges with thoughtful, considered analysis and support. Listening to the other team with an aim to affirm, gently correct, supplement, or build on their argument is a prudent approach and one that expresses the ideals of the NHSEB.
- Because an ethics bowl encourages collaboration, team members are encouraged to remain seated rather than standing during a match.

Teams are not penalized or rewarded depending on whether one person speaks or everyone contributes. We understand that each team has its own process:

- Some divide up the cases so that individuals are responsible for a certain number of cases; as a result, one person would present. Other teams ask that each member of the team become responsible for a different aspect of all the cases; as a result, all team members would speak.
- **Either of these strategies or variations is feasible and scoring is neutral on this issue.** However, judges do not know which approach a team will take unless they are informed. Therefore, to dispel any preconceptions that a judge may harbor, we urge that a team outline its presentation when it begins—that is, the team should

explain who will be discussing which aspect(s) of the case and why. This way, a judge will know what kind of presentation to expect.

- At the Nationals, judges know that they should neither penalize nor reward a team for using either approach: both are welcome.

Successful analyses will include a clear and detailed understanding of the facts of a case. Since cases are often highly complex, researching the topic or incident involved may be helpful. Although teams may use outside research to prepare for a match, they should not assume that merely presenting factual information will impress the judges. Teams need to propose valid, sound, persuasive arguments that are buttressed by fact to score well. If a team introduces a specific fact not contained in the case, the team should cite the source (e.g. “according to a 2011 article in National Geographic...”).

When researching cases, teams should think of this as an opportunity to gather and assess arguments supporting a wide range of points of view rather than to seek only those sources that support opinions the team already holds. As team members analyze the range of arguments, they should strive to get inside the heads of those who have different beliefs and concerns than the ones with which they are familiar. What motivates people to have certain beliefs? What are their values? A team should also ask, “Why is this case hard?” If it doesn’t seem hard, it is a good sign a team is not probing deeply enough. The cases are supposed to challenge worldviews. Asking questions like these will help a team solidify its own position.

During the Presentation period, a team should make sure it briefly introduces the case and identifies the central moral question. A team must clearly and systematically address the case question asked by the moderator. After presenting a position, a team should explain how others might have different points of view. Empathize with these other positions even if your team disagrees.

**During the Commentary, a team’s role is to help the other team perfect its presentation, NOT to present its own position on the case.** When team members comment, they should think of themselves as thoughtful, critical listeners. Their goal is to point out the flaws in the presentation, to comment on its strengths, note what has been omitted or needs further development; all this is in the interest of making the presentation of the case stronger.

Although teams are allowed to and should pose questions during Commentary, the first team is under no obligation to answer any or all questions raised by the second team (or vice versa). The presenting team, however, should be able to answer the most crucial or morally pressing question or two (in the event that there are more than two questions).

- Teams are expected to ask insightful questions that target the primary position, key implications, or unaddressed central issues.
- When scoring Commentary, judges will consider the questions raised by the opposing team and whether the questions addressed truly substantive issues—both in relation to the presentation and the moderator’s case question.

- A “question shower” or “spit-fire questioning,” during which a team rapidly asks many questions in an attempt to overwhelm or dominate the other team, is inconsistent with the aims of NHSEB, and will not merit a high score.

On occasion, team members may discover that they want to modify or perhaps change an aspect of their initial position as a result of the second team’s commentary. Some judges may think this indicates that the team did not fully think through its initial position. However, because the ethics bowl is about ethical inquiry, and because these are high school students, and changing one’s mind can be considered a sign of fluid rather than crystallized intelligence—a hallmark of higher-order thinking—**changing or modifying a position is not necessarily negative.**

Judging the quality of a team’s analysis is subjective and difficult. It is easy for teams to fault or blame judges if they lose a match. To fully understand how each judge reaches their decisions, please read the guidelines for judges (Section V-B). Judges come from diverse backgrounds: some are philosophers or professional ethicists; others come from a range of professional fields such as business, education, medicine, or journalism; and some are fans of ethics bowls. Part of the task of a successful team is to communicate reasoning effectively to judges who have different viewpoints and life experiences.

Because of judges’ diverse backgrounds, it is not essential for teams to reference specific ethicists or ethical theories: doing so is not a requirement of a good answer, nor is it indicative of a poor answer. The argument matters; it is not necessary to name the philosopher associated with the argument. Keep in mind that a team is speaking to a broad audience: many judges have no formal background in philosophy or ethics, and may not understand your reference to “Kantianism.” A good strategy is to explain ethical reasoning in terms everyone can understand.

If a team member does refer to “deontology,” for example, make sure the reference is accurate. A judge may question a team about that specific theory during the judges’ question & answer portion of the match.

**\*\*In short, remember that philosophical name-dropping is not a substitute for presenting a sound argument.\*\***

## V. JUDGES—RULES AND GUIDELINES

### A. Rules

All matches at the Nationals or a regional competition should be judged by a panel of three neutral judges. That is, a judge should not be a coach or parent of a child on any participating team; teachers should not judge their own students; judges should not have other obvious conflicts of interest. If a regional organizer is unsure if a judge is neutral, contact the NHSEB Executive Committee before assigning the judge in question.

Judges should not interrupt teams during their presentation, commentary, or response periods by asking questions, offering prompts, or gesturing. Judges should maintain a judicial and unbiased tone towards all teams. Socializing with teams and/or their coaches before or after to a match is discouraged (e.g. greeting teams or coaches you may know). This behavior can appear to confer an unfair advantage to one team over another. Please wait until the competition has completely ended to approach teams or coaches to avoid the appearance of unfair judging.

Judges should direct their questions to a team as a whole and not an individual or a subset of the team. It would be particularly inappropriate to ask a question of student(s) based on an immutable characteristic, such as race, religion, gender, gender identity, ethnicity, disability, national origin, sexual orientation, appearance, etc. (e.g. addressing a question about immigration to a student who speaks with an accent).

**Judges should score based solely upon content, not on whether one person, a few, or all team members speak.**

- Each team decides for itself how to divide up speaking time during all portions of the match. Some teams choose to have an individual “own” a certain case. Other teams prefer to have each person on the team speak for a portion of the match.
- Teams should be neither rewarded nor penalized for taking either approach. Teams have been advised to explain who will speak at the beginning their Presentation so that everyone has an idea of how the presentation will be structured.

Judges should not discuss their scoring decisions with each other; each judge is to rely on their own private judgment.

It is counterproductive when judges talk to teams about their scoring (particularly other judges' scoring). Teams will receive score sheets with comments after the event is over. **Please refrain from explaining scores, giving overt criticism to a team during or after a match, or expressing disagreement with a fellow judge's scoring.** Teams need to focus on their next match, not a comment that a judge made at the end of the previous match.

The moderator “rules the room.” The moderator will direct the match by indicating whose turn it is to speak and how much time remains. At the end of the match, the moderator will collect the judges' score sheets, help assist with math if needed, and ask individual judges to announce their team vote and score using the winner tally sheet. In the unlikely event that

something out of the ordinary occurs or the match is disrupted, the moderator will direct participants on next steps.

## **B. Guidelines**

A judge's role in ethics bowl is to gauge a team's breadth and depth of thought as applied to a specific ethics case. These guidelines will help to explain how to evaluate a team's performance in combination with the score sheet and scoring criteria:

- Teams have received the cases several weeks, if not months, in advance. They have "practiced" by meeting to discuss the ethical components of the cases and to formulate their analyses. During ethics bowl, the teams know that the cases they will discuss come from this set, but they do not know which case will be used in any given round, nor do they know the question asked (until announced by the moderator).
- A good answer indicates both breadth and depth of thought. A prepared team recognizes that there are multiple viewpoints or possible "answers," discusses them, and then explicates its own position about the case. The presentation should clearly and systematically address the moderator's case question.
- The second team then has time to comment on the first team's presentation. This commentary should be focused on the team's primary answer. That is, during the commentary, the second team can ask for clarification, point out contradictions, ask for more information, etc. The second team should NOT use this time to present its analysis of the case. They will have the opportunity to present a case during the other half of the match.

During the Commentary period, the first team is under no obligation to answer any or all questions raised by the second team (or vice versa). The presenting team, however, should be able to answer the most crucial or morally pressing question or two (in the event that there are more than two questions).

- Teams are expected to ask insightful questions that target the primary position, key implications, or unaddressed central issues.
- When scoring the Commentary period, judges will consider the questions raised by the opposing team and whether the questions addressed truly substantive issues—both in relation to the presentation and the moderator's question.
- A "question shower" or "spit-fire questioning," during which a team rapidly asks many questions in an attempt to overwhelm or dominate the other team, is inconsistent with the aims of ethics bowl, and will not merit a high score.

During the answer, commentary and response, judges do not ask questions or comment. However, after the primary team responds to the other team's commentary, the moderator will indicate that it is time for the judges to ask questions. **This is the longest individual portion of the match because the questions posed give the team an opportunity to think on their feet—they cannot prepare for this portion of the match.** As a result, judges will gain more insight into the breadth and depth of the team's analysis of the case.



- A judge’s question should be short and to-the-point (usually 30 seconds or less) and should be designed to help probe the team’s understanding of the case. Please do not use this opportunity to argue your own perspective. When asking your question(s), please be mindful of the time that remains for other judges to ask their questions as well as for the team to respond.
- Most importantly, please remember that the main criterion for judging is to evaluate teams based on the breadth and depth of their thinking about a difficult ethical situation. This includes addressing and evaluating opposing or different viewpoints. Judges should NOT engage a team in an argument based on a personal viewpoint nor score a team based on whether the judge agrees or disagrees with the team’s position.

On occasion, team members may discover that they want to modify or perhaps change an aspect of their initial “position” as a result of the second team’s commentary. Some judges may think this indicates that the team did not fully think through its initial position. However, because the ethics bowl is about ethical inquiry, and because these are high school students, and changing one’s mind can be considered a sign of fluid rather than crystallized intelligence—a hallmark of higher-order thinking—changing or modifying a position is not necessarily negative. Before making a judgment, consider several questions: Was the team’s initial position well-founded and thought-out? Is their revised position well-founded and thought-out? **In short, modifying or changing a position needs to be judged on its individual merits.**

Judges should maintain a judicial and unbiased tone towards all teams. Socializing with teams and/or their coaches before or after to a match is discouraged (e.g. greeting teams or coaches you may know). This behavior can appear to confer an unfair advantage to one team over another. Please wait until the competition has completely ended to approach teams or coaches to avoid the appearance of unfair judging.

Finally, at the bottom of the score sheet, a team can receive 1–5 points for engaging in productive and respectful dialogue as opposed to combative debate. This is to underscore the importance of civil and respectful dialogue, an essential value of ethics bowl. Teams that earn five points in this category demonstrate their awareness that an ethics bowl is about participating in a collegial, collaborative, philosophical discussion aimed at earnestly thinking through difficult ethical issues. Ethics bowl is not a contest between adversaries. Teams that score poorly in this category are those that resort to rhetorical flourishes, adopt a condescending, critical tone, and are unduly adversarial.

## VI. MODERATORS—PROCEDURES

All moderators will use the NHSEB moderator script to guide the matches. The moderator script can be downloaded from the NHSEB website under “Rules and Resources.” It is essential that moderators adhere to the script, word by word, and not improvise.

The moderator’s timekeeping efforts help the event unfold in a timely manner and ensure that all teams have equal opportunities to express their arguments.

All teams will get two standardized time notifications from the moderator during their Presentations: one when three minutes remain and one when one minute remains. During the Commentary and Response portions, the moderator will give notifications with one minute remaining. Prior to the match starting, moderators will consult with teams if they prefer verbal or physical (a hand gesture, visual representation, etc.) reminders. During the judges’ questions portion of the match, the moderator will notify the panel when two minutes remain.

No more than five students can be seated on a team. Teams cannot substitute members, review notes or confer with their coach once a match begins. Moderators will provide scrap paper and pens supplied by the event organizer.

The moderator will announce the beginning of the match once everyone is settled by welcoming teams, coaches and judges, and introducing themselves. Next, judges and the teams will be invited to introduce themselves.

Match Format (in brief):

- a) Each match will begin with a coin toss, either with a physical coin or the use of a coin flip application by the moderator. The team that wins the coin toss may elect to present first (designating them as Team A) or to have the other team present first (in which case the team winning the toss is designated as Team B).
- b) In the first half of the match, copies of the first case and question will be distributed to the judges first and then the participants, Team A and Team B. Neither the judges nor team members will know which case will be presented or what question will be asked. The moderator will distribute copies of the cases and question face down so that no one sees the case before the moderator reads the case question.
- c) The moderator will announce the case by its title and read the question. The moderator should only read the case title and the question; not the entire case, if listed.
- d) **Team A has 2 minutes** to confer. Either team may make notes, but Team B must remain silent.
- e) **Team A has up to 6 minutes** to make its presentation. Any member(s) of the team can talk (see Section IV).

- f) **Team B has 1 minute to confer** (Team A is silent).
- g) **Team B has up to 3 minutes to comment on the presentation.** Any member(s) may comment.
- h) **Team A has 1 minute to confer** (Team B is silent)
- i) **Team A has 3 minutes to respond to Team B.** Any member(s) may respond.
- j) **Judges have 30 seconds to confer** if they would like, and then ask questions of Team A. The question & answer period will last **for up to 10 minutes.** Judges' questions should be brief and clear, and devoid of personal commentary.
- k) Judges score Team A's presentation and response, and Team B's commentary.
- l) In the second half of the match, Steps (b) through (k) are repeated with a new case and question, and with the teams reversing positions (Team A becomes Team B).
- m) At the end of the match, the moderator will ask the judges to hold up their match tally sheet and announce their scores and votes. After all the judges state their votes, the moderator will name the winning team (or announce a tie) and the number of judges' votes for that team. Moderators will then pass score sheets to a room staffer who will return all materials back to the competition headquarters for compilation with scores from other matches.

## VII. Virtual Bowl Playoffs

The winning schools of small regional competitions will compete in a virtual bowl playoff to qualify for the Nationals. This playoff will consist of a single match between two winning teams from small regional bowls using Google Hangouts (or another preferred video conference system). Small regional playoffs will be matched according to time zone region and/or on a rolling basis (e.g. if two small regionals take place on the same weekend) between February 10<sup>th</sup> and February 28<sup>th</sup>. The playoff time and date will be mutually decided by the matched teams.

The NHSEB will provide a brief guide about using Google Hangouts and how to accept a video call. Find more information about Google Hangouts [here](#). A team will need a Gmail account.

The virtual playoff will follow the NHSEB Rules, Procedures, and Guidelines. The Parr Center for Ethics will select the two cases from the regional case set, create moderator questions, and select three judges and a moderator. A computer/laptop with a web camera is required for a successful playoff. Each team only needs one computer/laptop with a web camera. Using external speakers or a microphone is not required but are helpful tools. Coaches will provide their students with blank paper, pens, and the complete regional case set. Before the virtual playoff begins, coaches and students will be asked to show their blank paper.

After Team A and Team B are determined for the match, the moderator will then announce the case number, title, and question. The moderator will use Google Hangouts “conversations” to also send this information to both teams. Once the teams confirm to have the accurate case and question, the moderator will proceed to start the match. At any point during the match if there is a technological issue, the moderator will pause the time until the issue is resolved. Additionally, teams may use “conversations” to communicate any issues that may occur to the moderator.

While one team is conferring, both teams will mute their microphones in order to eliminate any background noise. Although the microphone is muted, the other team cannot verbally communicate.

The winner of the virtual bowl playoff will advance to the Nationals.