



September 13, 2009

Dear Coach,

On behalf of the McGill Debating Union, we are pleased to invite you to our upcoming 50<sup>th</sup> annual High School Debating Championships. The important information regarding this year's tournament is as follows:

**Date:** October 30 & 31, 2009

**Location:** McGill's downtown campus in Montreal

**Registration Fee:** \$125 CDN per team, with a deposit of \$80 per team

**Registration Deadline:** October 12, 2009

**Team Cap:** 5 teams per school, 2 debaters per team

### **Format**

This year's tournament will consist of two rounds of prepared debate on Friday evening, and three rounds of impromptu debate on Saturday, breaking to open quarterfinals. All rounds will be held in Canadian Parliamentary (CP) style of debate, with no squirreling permitted. More information can be found in the enclosed style guide. Teams should be prepared to debate both government and opposition sides in the prepared rounds. The prepared motion is as follows:

***This house regrets the indictment of Omar al-Bashir.***

### **Registration**

Registration will be conducted on a first-come, first-serve basis. The deadline to register is Monday, October 12; however, based on past experience, we recommend that you submit your registration forms as soon as possible, as spots fill up very quickly. Schools are permitted to register up to five teams initially, but additional teams may be placed on the waiting list. All waitlist spots will be released shortly after the registration deadline, so you can expect to hear back from us regarding waitlisted teams during the week of October 12 at the latest.

A deposit of \$80 per team is required in order to reserve your spot in the tournament. All deposits must be received by the registration deadline. Please note that your deposits for each team are both non-refundable and non-transferable. If your contingent registers five teams and one drops out, for instance, the \$80 deposit for the fifth team will not be refunded and will not be used to subsidize the remaining balance for the other four teams. We ask for your cooperation in ensuring that you only register as many teams as you intend to send.

The registration form is available online at: <http://tiny.cc/mcgillhs>

Upon completion of your registration form, cheques can be mailed to:

Sean Stefanik & Nicole Gileadi  
McGill Debating Union c/o SSMU Front Desk  
3480 McTavish Street  
Montreal, Quebec  
H3A 1X9

### **Accommodation**

For teams from outside Montreal, we have secured a discounted rate at the Best Western Hotel at Peel and Sherbrooke, less than five minutes walking distance from McGill's campus. The rate is \$109/night for one queen bed and \$129/night for two queen beds, irrespective of how many guests are in the room. To make a reservation, email the hotel manager Rafik Zikry at [rafik@hotelvillemarie.com](mailto:rafik@hotelvillemarie.com), and mention the "McGill Debating Tournament." Please note that no rooms have been set aside, so you will need to book early in order to ensure availability.

Billeting will also be provided on a very limited basis, with preference given to teams traveling the furthest and incurring the highest travel expenses. No spots are guaranteed. Should you select this option on the registration form, we will let you know by email if space is available.

### **Miscellaneous**

Dinner as well as a reception for coaches will be provided on Friday evening, and breakfast and lunch will be provided on Saturday. Please let us know as soon as possible of any dietary concerns (eg. Vegetarian, kosher, etc.).

Continuing with past practice, we will be selling wide range of trendy and fashionable McGill Debating Union clothing. If anyone from your school is interested in purchasing anything, please complete the attached form and mail it along with your registration deposit.

New to the tournament this year, we will be offering a variety of seminars designed to cater to both experienced and beginner debaters. For students who have never been to a tournament before, or those who have limited experience, we *highly* recommend that you arrive in time to attend an introductory workshop that will be held during the last hour of registration (see attached schedule). Other workshops are optional and will take place between rounds.

Finally, for those who may be interested, the English Speaking Union will be hosting a public speaking tournament in Montreal on the morning of Sunday, November 1. For more information, please visit [www.qsda.net/esu](http://www.qsda.net/esu), or contact Chris George at [cgeorge@videotron.ca](mailto:cgeorge@videotron.ca).

Should you have any further questions, please feel free to contact us at [mcgill.hs@gmail.com](mailto:mcgill.hs@gmail.com), or visit our website at [www.ssmu.ca/debate](http://www.ssmu.ca/debate). We look forward to seeing you in October!

Sincerely,

Sean Stefanik & Nicole Gileadi  
Tournament Directors

## *Tentative Schedule*

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### **Friday, October 30**

Registration*	1:30pm – 4:00pm
Beginner's Seminar	3:00pm – 4:00pm
Show Round	4:00pm – 5:00pm
Dinner/Coach's Reception	5:00pm – 5:45pm
Debaters Briefing	5:45pm – 6:30pm
Pairings for Rounds 1 & 2	6:30pm – 6:45pm
Round 1	7:00pm – 8:00pm
Round 2	8:15pm – 9:15pm

### **Saturday, October 31**

Breakfast	8:00am – 8:45am
Round 3	9:00am – 10:30am
Seminar	10:30am – 11:15am
Round 4	11:15am – 12:45pm
Lunch/Campus Tour	12:45pm – 1:30pm
Round 5	1:30pm – 3:00pm
Quarterfinals	3:30pm – 4:30pm
Semifinals	4:45pm – 5:45pm
Finals	6:00pm – 7:00pm
Awards	7:00pm – 7:30pm

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\*Registration will take place on the fourth floor of the University Centre (AKA Shatner Building), 3480 McTavish Street. Please arrive no later than 4:00pm.



# *Tabs Policy\**

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## **1. On-time policy**

In order to comply with McGill University's room booking policies, we must run the tournament on time. Therefore, several policies will be in effect.

a) Per the schedule posted above, **registration will close at 4 p.m.** on Friday. This means that we *actually* close registration at 4:00pm - as in we pack up the registration room and begin final preparations for round 1. To be clear: you **MUST** be registered before 4:00pm in order to partake in the tournament. Schools that are running late are asked to contact the tournament directors at the phone numbers provided below.

Sean Stefanik 514-467-0397  
Nicole Gileadi 514-465-9615

Registration will take place on the 4th floor of the Shatner University Center building (3480 McTavish St). There will be people in the lobby directing you to the elevator that will take you to registration.

b) For all rounds, including the first round on Saturday morning, failure to appear in the room where your debate is scheduled 15 minutes after pairings are released - and they will be released on time - will result in your team being dropped in that round. This should not pose a problem for those of you staying in the hotel, since it is within shouting distance of the tournament's primary building.

## **2. Team Names**

As is customary for our tournament, teams will be given letters, ie. McGill A, McGill B, etc. Coaches are asked to email the names of their debaters to the tournament directors as soon as your teams have been finalized. This speeds up the registration process for everyone.

## **3. Pull-ups**

- a) In the case of uneven brackets, the middle team from the bracket below the uneven bracket will be pulled up to hit the middle team from the uneven bracket.
- b) A team may only be pulled up once in the tournament.
- c) A team may only hit a pull up once in the tournament.

## **4. Ties**

- a) During the tournament, all ties that need to be broken (which team is gov if two teams with the same number of gov's hit each other, which team to pull up if two middle teams have the same number of speaker points, etc.) will be broken randomly.
- b) After round five, ties that affect break order or speaker awards will be broken according to the following priority:
  - i) High/low drop
  - ii) Lowest deviation in scores
  - iii) Gov strength
  - iv) Coin flip

## **5. Swing**

If a swing team is necessary, there will be one team of two junior McGill debaters that will participate in the tournament as a normal team that cannot break. The swing team would be tabbed as any other team.

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\*A finalized version of this policy will be provided in your tournament packages; some minor changes may be made.

# Style Guide

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## 1. The Tournament

The tournament will consist of five rounds of closed debate – two on Friday and three on Saturday – followed by three open rounds. The first two rounds will be on a prepared topic; each team will debate both government and opposition. All rounds on Saturday will be impromptu, in which the topic and sides will be assigned 15 minutes prior to the start of the round. No further preparation is necessary or will be made available.

All motions will be accessible to the average high school student who reads a newspaper a few times a week (by newspaper, we mean something like the Globe and Mail rather than the Toronto Sun; by read, we're referring to the front section, not the comics.)

Hybrid teams will be permitted to break.

## 2. Speaking times

Each team (government and opposition) shall consist of two debaters. The order of speeches and speaking times will be:

Prime Minister	7 minutes
Member of the Opposition	7 minutes
Minister of the Crown	7 minutes
Leader of the Opposition	10 minutes
Prime Minister's Rebuttal	3 minutes

## 3. Format of Debates & Speaker Roles

Squirreling is strictly prohibited in all rounds. The resolutions must be debated within "the spirit of the motion," or according to the ordinary meaning of the words. The primary focus of the debate should be the respective merits of supporting one side of the issue or another.

While no formula exists for the correct fulfillment of a particular speaker's role, there are some guidelines that should be followed in each speech.

*Prime Minister* – The PM has the task of opening the debate by defining the motion and laying out the groundwork of the government team's case. The PM should clearly indicate at the beginning of his/her speech what exactly the subject of the debate is to be. By the end of this speech, everyone in the room should have a clear understanding of what is being debated. He/she should also set out the bulk of argumentation on government benches in support of the motion.

*Member of the Opposition* – As the first speaker on the opposition team, the MO's job is to outline the case for the opposition. This speech should not merely rebut the constructive points brought forward by side government, but should present a few lines of original constructive argumentation; it is essential that the MO brings something new to the round. As a team, the opposition's burden is not only to rebut the government's points, but to prove how the opposition's stance can positively be defended. This should not, however, be construed to suggest that the opposition must present a counter-case (an alternative plan); indeed, doing so often hamper's the ability to respond fully to the government.

The MO may structure their speech in whatever manner they choose (ie. Constructive may come before rebuttal and vice versa), so long as both those components are present. Remember: a good debate is one with lots of 'clash,' so be sure to engage with the government's case.

*Minister of the Crown* – As the second speaker for the government, the MC generally has three main responsibilities: refuting the positive matter brought forward by the MO, reconstructing the arguments of the PM that have been attacked by the opposition, and adding new constructive matter to the round.

Note, however, that new constructive matter is *not* a strict requirement of the MC at this tournament. So long as the MC brings new content to the round and substantially adds to the opposition's case, it is perfectly acceptable for the MC to *only* have refutation and reconstruction. Should the MC decide to have new constructive arguments, they should not substantially shift the focus or meaning of the case; again, the bulk of government's arguments should have been presented in the PM's speech.

*Leader of the Opposition* – the 2<sup>nd</sup> opposition member has a number of tasks and can accomplish them in a number of ways. In no specific order, he or she may introduce new constructive arguments to the round, refute the arguments brought to the round by both government speakers (there should be lots of clash in this speech!), and re-construct the arguments raised by the 1<sup>st</sup> opposition member.

While the LO may bring substantial new argumentation to the round, the majority of the opposition's constructive analysis should be introduced in the MO speech. The philosophy of the opposition team (ie. The stance that they take on the issue) should remain consistent between both speakers.

In roughly the final three minutes of the LO's 10 minute address, the speaker is to summarize the debate in terms of general principles or themes. Essentially, the question that underlies this speech is "what is this round really about, and why have we made our case better than the government?" No new arguments may be introduced in the final three minutes. An argument is considered to be new if it is an independent line of argumentation previously unstated during the round. New information that is used to specifically refute a government argument, or new examples to illustrate an argument raised previously, are perfectly acceptable in this speech.

*Prime Minister's Rebuttal* – This is the government team's final address to the house. It is a three-minute speech that should answer the same question that the LO addressed at the end of his or her speech: "what is this round really about, and why have we made our case better than the opposition?" This speech is subject to the same constraints regarding new information as the opposition rebuttal.

*Points of Information* – Debaters are encouraged to stand and offer points of information (POIs) to the opposing team during the round. Upon standing to offer a POI, a debater may speak briefly ("Sir/madam," or "on that point"), however he or she is *not* to heckle or make his/her point before being accepted by the debater holding the floor. The person speaking may reject the point either verbally or with a polite gesture. Points are to be offered in 10 seconds or less, during which the clock does not stop. Judges will consider the quality and quantity of POIs offered and the skill with which POIs are answered when assigning speaker scores to each debater.

Debaters are expected to both offer and accept POIs at this tournament, however the number you choose to offer or accept often depends on the context of the round. A good rule of thumb is that each debater should offer two POIs during your opponents' speeches and accept two during your own. You are, however, permitted to rise more often. It is perfectly acceptable if a debater rises *quietly and politely* every 20-30 seconds. Debaters who rise far too frequently (eg. Every 5-10 seconds) and those who disrupt the speech through excessive noise are considered to be barracking, and will be penalized by the judges.

POIs may *not* be offered during protected time. For the PM, MC and MO speeches, all of which are seven minutes long, the first minute and the last minute are protected. During the LO's ten minute speech, the first minute and the last four minutes are protected. The entirety of the PMR is protected. The person timing the round

will clap or bang on the desk to indicate the end and beginning of protected times.

*Burdens* – In every round, the government team sets up two burdens: the burden of proof on themselves and the burden of disproof on the opposition. The government can take on either a very difficult burden of proof or a very easy burden of proof. It is up to the judge(s) to recognize the burden that the government has taken on and score them accordingly. If the government adopts too light a burden and does a good job, this does not necessarily mean that they will win the round. Remember: we want clash, so a “tight case” (one with an unfair low burden) is not good.

While we reward clash, it should never come at the expense of decorum. Debaters must be polite and respectful throughout the entirety of the tournament. Debating is about presenting the arguments in an intelligent and articulate way. Rigorous arguments make the round interesting, and allows for a pleasant and constructive experience for all. Best of luck!