Professional Resources


Much information is available to the forensics contestant. Beyond the wealth of information provided by coaches, an enormous amount of material is available in print. The *National Forensic Journal, The Forensic of Pi Kappa Delta*, and the *CEDA Yearbook* are but a few of the journals available to student competitors. Michael Bartanen's (1994) *Teaching and Directing Forensics* provides an excellent overview of forensics targeted to coaches, but it is full of information for competitors as well. Tom Hollihan and Kevin Baaske's (1994) *Arguments and Arguing—The Products and Process of Human Decision Making* is an excellent argumentation and debate text, and Teri Gamble and Michael Gamble's (1994) *Literature Alive—The Art of Oral Interpretation* is a valuable textbook for the oral interpretation contestant. Much of this material is, however, advanced and often too complex for the beginning contestant. Where should the novice turn? One excellent place is *Intercollegiate Forensics* edited by Terry Winebrenner.

*Intercollegiate Forensics* is a product of work conducted by the Northern California Forensic Association (NCFA). The NCFA reached an unusual level of consensus regarding expectations and guidelines for student competitors and generated a handbook containing that information. This book is a collection of pieces based upon that earlier work. Despite the fact that this book started as a NCFA-specific project, it offers much to the forensics community as a whole.

The individual components of the book address a host of issues central to the forensics experience. The articles are grouped into four major sections: the fundamentals of participation in forensics, platform speaking, interpretation, and debate. The first few chapters on participation in forensics provide useful information on the benefits of forensics and specific behaviors expected at
tournaments. The section on platform events covers communication analysis, impromptu speaking, and five other popular events. Dramatic interpretation, duo, poetry, prose, program-oral-interpretation and reader's theater are addressed in the interpretation section. The final section of the book covers NDT, CEDA, and Lincoln-Douglas debating. The text closes with three appendices that discuss eligibility, ethical standards, and guidelines of the American Forensic Association, the National Forensic Association, the Cross-Examination Debate Association, Phi Rho Pi, and the NCFA.

The novice forensics contestant will find this book to be a true handbook. The book is designed so that pages may be separated and torn out so that student contestants can carry information on particular subjects of interest or concern into their tournament experience. Further, the book provides helpful information that the novice is unlikely to encounter in other sources. For example, Winebrenner gives detailed information about "how to" do things for and at tournaments: Where to find resources, how to prepare for the tournament experience, and even how to enter the contest room.

The chapters on platform events are particularly valuable. The novice competitor can get an excellent overview of what is involved in each event. Advice on the actual development of speeches is detailed for student competitors. This type of practical advice is something that novices often have difficulty gleaning from more theoretical texts and journal articles. The chapters also include examples of well written, competitively successful speeches, which gives both the novice and the advanced competitor a better idea of what many judges are expecting as they critique the various platform events discussed in this section.

Despite these advantages Intercollegiate Forensics does have some limitations. The section on interpretation does not, for example, compare favorably with the material on platform events, for interpretation material is more disjointed and less robust. Some chapters in this section are short on detail and lacking in practical examples.
Although the sections on individual speaking events are more detailed and extended than those on debate, the preliminary discussion about the value of forensics relies heavily upon data regarding debate competition. The novice individual events contestant may be left questioning the value of his or her decision to compete. These contestants may also find it more difficult to inform parents and others of the value of the particular extracurricular activity in which they have invested their time and effort. This is unfortunate, for good reasons and values of competition in individual events should be a central component of any introduction to forensics practice.

The subject of Lincoln-Douglas debate, which is so noticeably missing from many debate texts, is prominently discussed in *Intercollegiate Forensics*. The pivotal role of the National Forensic Association is well developed in this section. In addition, the academic objectives of L-D debate are clearly and effectively illuminated.

The discussion of L-D debate is a valuable contribution, but the book falls short with regard to other debating formats other than CEDA and NDT. Audience debate, parliamentary debate, and other alternative forms are missing, as is a discussion of the more rule-governed debate that is sanctioned by the National Education Debate Association (NEDA) or the American Debate Association (ADA). The student competitor must look elsewhere for this information.

Despite some shortcomings, *Intercollegiate Forensics* contains a host of valuable information. The values that competitors can garner from reading and using *Intercollegiate Forensics* clearly outweigh drawbacks that can be found in the book. Although most intercollegiate forensics or debate practicum courses do not have required texts, this book might well be worth considering for that purpose. *Intercollegiate Forensics* provides a clear introduction to forensics, practical advise and illustrations, and guidelines for participation. Such information would serve as a valuable supplement to what is provided by each individual coach. The
contributions of *Intercollegiate Forensics* warrant the attention of teachers, coaches, and especially student competitors.

**Works Cited**


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