

Tips for Making Your Speech Team Feel like a School 'Family'

If you have more than one coach . . . Join forces with your other coaches

- Don't let large group, individuals, and/or freshmen feel isolated
- Consider a student leadership team and/or mentors for novices
- Encourage students to watch teammates perform during the day
- Allow other non-participating speech members to ride the bus to support the team.

Keep the vibe positive

- Warm-up games are a great way to bond – Here's one idea . . .
 - Selfie scavenger hunts - Divide your team into equal sized groups and send them out with a list of items to take photos with.
 - Make a slide show of the fun they had and set it to music to play before each tournament.
- Remember to have fun during rehearsals, too!
 - Have student performing dramatic selections perform them as humorous pieces and vice versa
 - Have students come to practice in full costume and make-up – Not allowed at tournaments, but lots of fun for creating character
- Host a start of the season parent meeting with lots of snacks – A perfect time to get parents used to the idea of judging for the team!
- Hold extra speech team related events
 - Consider an early season in-house novice tournament
 - Let experienced students coach the novices and parents can get their feet wet judging for the day
 - Give out awards – to student coaches, competitors and parents!
- Select a team theme song to play on Mondays after each tournament – Devise with your team a dance or chant ritual to go along with the music.
- Don't let contests be the only days you all get together.

Team shirts

- Host a logo, slogan and design competition – Students vote for the winning design
- Encourage students to wear the team shirts to school on the Friday before tournaments.

4NG Fanatics

Recruitment

- Find the kids that need speech team and not just the talented ones. Ask drama and English teachers for recommendations, then seek them out.
- Bring a Friend to Speech Night – Complete with Award Winning performances (NSDA has lots to choose from)
- Have your team create a promo video and show it at Speech Night.
- Or if you have closed circuit televisions, see if you can show it during morning announcements to the whole school.

Be there for them

- Give them life advice and support all year. Not just during the season.
- If problems or challenges arrive, teach them how to team problem solve.
- Be goofy and encourage everyone's uniqueness
- Let them see the real you. But keep your personal boundaries intact and don't try too hard to be their friend.
- Be someone with integrity they don't want to let down.
- Time permitting, attend other activities your students are involved in . . . sports, choir concerts, theatre productions . . .

Have high expectations of behavior and performance.

- Make Mondays a team assessment of the weekend's accomplishments
- Don't forget your Monday team music!
- Display trophies and medals prominently
- Build up the unsung heroes – Who are the kids that didn't medal, but improved?
- Encourage student team leaders to seek out and compliment novices
- Encourage, encourage, encourage

Sing the praises of the team for all to hear

- Make sure the results of tournaments are on the morning announcements each week
- Plaster the hallways with posters before regionals, state and national competitions

Build a Legacy

- Encourage alumni students to become judges or volunteer coaches for the team.
- Have former students who have gone on to compete in college come back to perform for your team.
- Help students look for scholarships in speech/debate and post your letter of recommendation for all to see (if the student agrees)
- If parents are travelling with the team to support/judge/sponsor . . . train your students to treat them like royalty. Bring them coffee, lunch and ALWAYS a thank you from not only you, but the students as well.