

# Walt Whitman Speech and Debate Club

## Newsletter

November 20, 2022

### Contents

<b>Meet the coaches</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>WACFLs</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>National Tournaments</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>MCPS Tournaments</b>	<b>5</b>

### Getting to know the Coaches

**Coaches are the cornerstone of speech and debate. Every practice, they run drills and practice sessions. Our coaches come from a variety of backgrounds. We have three in-person Public Forum coaches, one Speech coach, one virtual Congress coach, one virtual Lincoln-Douglas coach, an in-person general coach, and one remote administrative coach.**



### Important Dates

MCPS tournaments

Wednesday, Dec 14

#### WACFL

PF: Nov 19

Speech, Congress & Policy: Dec 3

PF, Lincoln-Douglas: Dec 10

#### National Tournaments

Dec 3-4: Princeton

Dec 16-19: Blake (Minneapolis)

**Frances Laufer**

**General coach**

**Frances is a first-year at George Washington University studying Psychology and Criminal Justice, with a minor in Dance. She was a member of the Walt Whitman Speech team for all four years of high school, competing primarily in Dramatic Interpretation along with other events. Outside of studying, she enjoys competing, performing, and teaching highland dance and ballet while breaking her wallet at Whole Foods.**

# Coaches (cont'd)

**Josh Cann**  
Congress

Hello, my name is Josh Cann and I am the Congress coach for this year. I am currently a sophomore majoring in Finance and Applied Business Technology at Butler University, which is about 15 minutes outside of Indianapolis. I competed in congress for all four years of my high school career and began coaching at Whitman last year, where I filled in for the previous congress coach while she took a temporary leave. Outside of debate, I enjoy hanging out with friends and playing Ultimate Frisbee.



**Nicole Rybak**  
Speech

I am a 2nd year Master's student at Georgetown University studying Language & Communication and graduated with a BA in Linguistics and Spanish at Georgetown in 2022. I have been coaching speech at Whitman for 3 years now, and have enjoyed every second of it! Outside of school and coaching, I love kayaking and going on hikes in the Midwest (for now, as that's where I'm from); my favorite spot I've been to so far is Devil's Lake State Park in Wisconsin.



**Jonas Poggi**  
Public Forum

Jonas Poggi is a recent graduate of the George Washington University. He graduated with a major in Political Communications and a minor in Political Science. Jonas was part of the George Washington Parliamentary Debate Society. While debating for GW, Jonas was the 2022 Western States champion, the American Parliamentary Debate Association's 2021 9th Team of the Year, a 2020 U.S. Universities Debate Championship octofinalist, and a 2022 U.S. Universities Debate Championship quarterfinalist. Jonas has coached high school debate for three years. Jonas likes to try new restaurants and listen to music to craft his annual Top 10 albums list (this year's clear favorite is Ants From Up There by Black Country, New Road).



**Cooper Carlile**  
Public Forum

I am currently studying Science, Technology, and International Affairs with a concentration in Energy and the Environment with a Minor in Computer Science at Georgetown University. I debated all four years in high school from 2016-2020, being the captain of the Public Forum team at my high school my senior year. I qualified to the Tournament of Champions my senior year with bids from the Glenbrooks and Grapevine tournaments, advanced to elimination rounds at every tournament I attended my senior year, and won the Texas state tournament in 2020. I have coached debate at several summer camps and have privately coached individual teams to great success. Outside of debate, I enjoy reading, programming, and spending time with friends.



**Gio Cutri**  
**Lincoln Douglas**



**Giovanni Cutri is a sophomore at Duke University, double majoring in Political Science and Public Policy on the pre-law track. As a debater, Gio was captain of the Harrison High School debate team, qualifying twice for the Tournament of Champions, and was the National Speech and Debate Association's #1-ranked Lincoln-Douglas debater in the United States. In his free time, Gio is an avid follower of politics, enjoys going on runs, and likes to swim.**

**Yukiho Semimoto**  
**Public Forum**

**Yukiho is a PF coach who teaches once a week. She is Junior at Georgetown University student and this is her second year coaching PF for Whitman.**

**Katherine Sylvester**  
**Public Forum- Administration**

**Katherine is a student at Yale University who works with the Board and the coaches on administrative and training issues. She has a long history with Whitman debate and competed on the national circuit during her years at Whitman.**



**Washington Arlington Catholic Forensic League (WACFL) tournaments are local tournaments that occur most Saturdays throughout the year. They are good for first-time through experienced debaters and involve little travel, no cost, and just a single day. They are parent judged, including lots of first-time judges (but not for novices). Parents need to provide transportation and judging, so parent involvement is an absolute necessity. Information can be found at [www.WACFL.org](http://www.WACFL.org), from team captains, other upper class members, and coaches.**

**See the schedule for tournaments [here](#).**

**The deadline to sign up for each WACFL is 9:00 pm on the Monday before the tournament. Students can only attend if there are enough transportation and volunteer parent judges. There is no experience is required to be a parent judge and informational videos can be found [here](#). One judge is required for every four teams. These judges must be in place by 9:00 on Wednesday evening, to avoid the need to drop from the tournament.**

**Please email Jonathan Levy with any questions at [jlevy@legalaiddc.org](mailto:jlevy@legalaiddc.org).**



# National Tournaments

**Valley (online Sept 24-26): 2 PF teams, both received TOC bids (William/ Mitra, Sara/ Diya)**

**Yale (in-person Sept 30-Oct 2): 3 PF teams participated; Joseph A came in 3rd for Oral Interpretation in Speech**

**Georgetown (online Oct 7-9): 2 PF teams participated**

**Bronx (in-person Oct 14-16): 1 LD, 1 Congress participated**

**Blue Key (in-person Oct 28-30) 2 PF teams, both received TOC bids (William/ Mitra; Harrison/ Rachel)**

**Apple Valley (in-person Nov 4-6); 3 PF teams participated, 2 received TOC bids (Sara/ Diya, William/ Mitra)**

**Congratulations to all participants, and thank you to all the parent volunteer organizers, judges, and chaperones!**



**Apple Valley Tournament, Minneapolis, MN**

Anyone who would like to  
volunteer to help with  
articles and photos for this  
newsletter, contact  
[Susanjh00@gmail.com](mailto:Susanjh00@gmail.com)

# MCPS Tournaments



**On November 17, Helen Barold chaperoned and judged for three Whitman PF teams at a MCPS tournament, which was held at Montgomery Blair High School.**

**Thanks to the students and Dr. Barold for their participation!**