

# NATIONAL HIGH SCHOOL ETHICS BOWL

## Guidelines for Odd Number of Teams



An Ethics Bowl competition is typically formatted for an even number of teams. However, a non-ideal situation where a team is unable to attend a competition may sometimes occur. Below are a number of formatting options recommended by the NHSEB Executive Committee if a competition must begin with an odd number of teams.

If you know ahead of time that there will be an odd number of teams competing in your event, work to be as transparent as possible with Coaches about the need for flexibility and the possibility of changing team arrangements or competition format. If a team fails to show up on the morning of the competition, plan to notify Coaches *as soon as possible* about any new procedures or team arrangements.

### OPTION 1: COMBINING OR SPLITTING TEAMS

Review the current field of teams competing at your Regional Competition. If a school has one large team (e.g., 6 or 7 students), you may ask the coach to split the team to form two competing teams. If a school has two small teams, (of 3 or 4 students each) you may ask the coach to combine to make one competing team. This is the simplest option for dealing with an odd numbered roster, as it doesn't require changes to the competition schedule or scoring method.

### OPTION 2: BYE ROUND, "ROUND ROBIN" FORMAT

If an odd number of teams on your roster is unavoidable, you may implement the use of a bye round, "round robin" format. Under such an arrangement, one team will not be paired for competition (a "bye") in each preliminary round, as it is impossible for all teams to play in the same round with an odd number. Overall, this system should be arranged such that all participating teams will compete in (and sit out of) the exact same number of preliminary rounds during the event. After the Preliminary Rounds are completed a "Bye Round" can proceed followed by typical Semifinals and Finals. For example:

#### ROUND 1

Team 1 vs. Team 2  
Team 3 vs. Team 4  
Team 5 (Bye)

#### ROUND 3

Team 1 vs. Team 4  
Team 2 vs. Team 5  
Team 3 (Bye)

#### BYE ROUND

Team 5 vs. Team 3  
Team 2 vs. Team 4  
(Team 1 sits out.)

#### ROUND 2

Team 1 vs. Team 5  
Team 2 vs. Team 3  
Team 4 (Bye)

#### ROUND 4

Team 1 vs. Team 3  
Team 5 vs. Team 4  
Team 2 (Bye)

If there is an odd number of preliminary rounds, an additional team will be needed for the bye round. One option is to randomly select a team to compete as a placeholder. This team's results are not counted in the scorekeeping, but the team they compete against results are official. Another option is to allow teams to volunteer as a placeholder.

### **ROUND 1**

Team 1 vs. Team 2  
Team 3 vs. Team 4  
Team 5 (Bye)

### **ROUND 3**

Team 1 vs. Team 4  
Team 2 vs. Team 5  
Team 3 (Bye)

### **ROUND 2**

Team 1 vs Team 5  
Team 2 vs. Team 3  
Team 4 (Bye)

### **BYE ROUND**

Team 5 vs. Team 4  
Team 3 vs. <Random Team>

If more than one additional team is needed, the same process will be employed to determine the second or third additional teams.

### **OPTION 3: CREATE AN ALTERNATIVE TEAM**

This approach creates a new team from extra or alternate members from schools with multiple teams in the competition. For this option to be successful, teams need to have more than 5 members and be willing to forego contribution from the selected students. Students should also feel comfortable forming a team with students unfamiliar to them. Once an alternative team is created, this team will be integrated into the schedule so every team will have a match. Similar to the "placeholder team" in a bye round, the alternative team's scores do not officially count in scorekeeping; ignore this team's scores. For example, if the alternative team ranks second after the Preliminary Rounds, teams in first, third, fourth, and fifth place would move onto the Quarterfinals or Semifinals. *Note that any alternative team formed for this purpose may not advance to compete at the NHSEB Divisional Playoffs or National Championship.*