

## **College Forensics and Wellness**

In the early 1990s, the AFA-NIET began considering the topic of wellness as it relates to the activity of college forensics. A Wellness Subcommittee, chaired by Dr. Cynthia Carver, was established by the NIET Committee. In 1997 and 1998 the NIET gave its endorsement to the following wellness initiatives for Tournament Directors and Forensics Coaches and Directors.

### **AFA-NIET WELLNESS INITIATIVES FOR TOURNAMENT DIRECTORS**

(Approved by the AFA-NIET Committee, April, 1997)

- Tournament Directors should schedule tournaments and tournament formats in consideration of the regional activity surrounding the date of the tournament, working to create a regional schedule that fosters a variety of tournament formats which allow students and coaches time during weekends to spend at home or campus.
- Tournament Directors should schedule tournaments where no competition round begins before 8:00 a.m. or after 6:30 p.m., applied equally to all competitors (debaters, extemporaneous speakers, etc.). Adequate time should be created between rounds to allow short breaks between rounds and to avoid rushing for participants who are double-entered.
- Tournament Directors should create a schedule that allows meal breaks during normal eating hours on all days of competition, applied equally to all competitors.
- Tournament Directors should facilitate the availability of “healthy” food choices during the tournament, including breakfast, snacks, and other times when food is provided or area restaurants are recommended.
- Tournament Directors should hire ample amounts of hired judges in order to create a schedule where all coaches attending a tournament are provided with a minimum of one round off per day of competition.
- Tournament Directors should provide a lounge(s) that is available at all times of competition to allows students, coaches, and judges a comfortable atmosphere to relax or rest between rounds or during off rounds.
- When evening activities are scheduled, Tournament Directors should promote activities that do not hinder wellness initiatives, being mindful of activity elements which might limit a full night’s rest or might encourage unhealthy practices (e.g. the consumption of alcohol, tobacco, etc.).
- Tournament Directors should offer options to the conventional Pentathlon Sweepstakes system, encouraging students to participate in fewer events by offering triathlon or general Individual Sweepstakes (similar to the AFA-NIET system) or eliminating pentathlon awards entirely.

### **AFA-NIET WELLNESS INITIATIVES FOR COACHES AND DIRECTORS**

(Approved by the AFA-NIET Committee, November 1998)

- Coaches should become aware of the specific wellness issues for students in their programs, encouraging healthy choices regarding tournament travel schedules, number of events, and competitive goals. Coaches should assist students in creating a healthy balance between forensics activities and other academic, personal, spiritual, and physical aspects of life.
- Coaches should determine a healthy starting date for their travel season, making individual choices for the program rather than attending as many tournaments as possible during the season.
- Coaches should determine a specific number of tournaments that their students can attend per season, determining a limit that best serves the health needs and interests of the individual student rather than the competitive interests of the program.
- Coaches should seek out and facilitate healthy meal options for students during tournament travel;

- Coaches should prohibit or restrict student activity that may jeopardize wellness, including the consumption of alcohol, consumption or exposure to tobacco or smoke, and any activity that might limit or disrupt a healthy amount of sleep.
- Coaches should monitor the number of events in which their students compete, becoming aware of individual tolerances to stress and when warranted, reducing the number of events for individual students regardless of its competitive impact on the program.
- Coaches should promote wellness education to their students by offering or promoting attendance at wellness seminars, workshops and classes.