



CIVICS BOWL — RULES

Update Season 3 - 3/20/24

KSPS PBS and the League of Women Voters of the Spokane Area are pleased to bring Civics Bowl back for season 3. The tournament pits teams representing each participating high school against one another in half-hour contests televised on KSPS PBS and streamed online in spring 2024. Teams answer questions about national, state, tribal, and regional governments and other topics which align with Washington state high school curriculum standards in civics and government.

Tournament Structure: Season 3 of Civics Bowl is a ten-team, single-elimination bracketed academic tournament comprised of two play-in matches, a first round with four matches, a semifinal round with two matches, and a championship match.

KSPS will host a live drawing via Zoom to determine each team's bracket placement. Four teams will be selected, at random, to meet in the play-in round. The remaining teams will play their first game in round 1. Coaches will be given a copy of the bracket structure. More specifics on how to watch the drawing will be made available to each team in advance.

Team Creation: Participating schools form teams based on their own criteria and selection process. Teams must consist of four students, one alternate (student) and a faculty coach. It is strongly recommended that each team be composed of students with diversity representative of their schools. Each team must designate a captain.

We suggest that each participating school create a club to train for Civics Bowl. Teams that used this strategy during the pilot season performed better than those that used class time to prepare. If your school has more than five interested students, we encourage you to include them in the prep and practice meetings. They are also welcome to attend Civics Bowl in the studio audience to cheer on their classmates—and hopefully they will be able to compete next year.

Team Participation and Attendance: All matches are recorded in advance at the KSPS PBS studios located at 3911 S. Regal Street in Spokane. All members from each team (players, alternates, and coaches) are required to be present for their team's recording session(s) and will appear on camera. Alternates cannot be swapped in or out once recording has begun (except in case of emergency), however they are still required to attend the recordings.

Matches will be recorded over a two-week period between. Not all teams will advance to the second week of play, but each team still needs to be available in case they do advance.

Recording sessions will be scheduled in two-and-a-half hour blocks on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and/or Thursdays. Teams need to plan to be available for that entire time period, although we hope to keep

each session around two hours. This kind of production involves several KSPS employees as well as dedicated studio time. For that reason, the recording and air schedule is set in stone.

A schedule will be determined after all participating teams are confirmed. Each school must coordinate all travel to and from the KSPS studios.

If a team does not attend its scheduled match, the team is considered to have forfeit its place in the tournament.

Television Production Notes: Matches will be edited for television broadcast without impacting the scoring. Also, please be aware that television production will create some down time for the teams as the KSPS crew prepares video and graphic elements and troubleshoots any technical challenges. We also must take appropriate time between each round to finalize the score and hear any challenges. The long recording window includes time to familiarize the teams with the studio and buzzer system.

CIVICS BOWL FORMAT

The Game: Each Civics Bowl match consists of four (4) rounds of gameplay, with a provision for a tie-breaker round as necessary.

Buzzer System: Active players use a hand-held buzzer or a desktop buzzer depending on the round. Players are required to wait until the host completes each question before buzzing in. The buzzer system is activated as the last word of each question is read. Once active, the system automatically recognizes which player is first to buzz in.

Scoring: Point values are outlined below. The score will be visible to the teams during all rounds.

Negative points on the scoreboard: Because points are deducted for wrong answers in some of our rounds, it is possible for a team's score to dip into negative territory. Negative points will be accounted for, but at the end of each round any cumulative game score that is below zero will be adjusted to zero. The subsequent round will begin with zero points for that team.

ROUND 1: TOSS-UP ROUND

Format: The Toss-Up Round consists of a toss-up question to all players (on both teams) and a follow-up bonus question to the team that correctly answers the toss-up question. All questions in this round are open-ended with short answers. This round may also have photo and video questions and multiple-choice questions.

- **Toss-up question:** Any player on either team can buzz-in when the host has finished reading the question. The player who buzzes in first has three (3) seconds to answer.
 - If the answer is correct, that player's team will get a bonus question.
 - If the answer is incorrect, all players on the opposing team can buzz-in to answer.
 - **NOTE:** Players on the opposing team cannot collaborate at this point. Any player on the opposing team who thinks they know the answer can buzz in and answer.
 - **NOTE:** Only one attempt to answer will be allowed. If a player on the opposing team attempts to answer the question and gets it wrong, the host will give the correct answer and play will move forward.
- **Bonus question:** the team that wins the toss-up question gets one (1) bonus question. The team can collaborate for up to five (5) seconds after the full question is read. The team captain gives the answer.
 - If the answer is correct, play moves forward with another toss-up question.
 - If the answer is incorrect, the host will give the correct answer and play will move forward. The opposing team DOES NOT have the opportunity to steal the points in a bonus.

Time Limit: 5 to 7 minutes.

Points: Any correct answer, whether a toss-up question or a bonus question, is worth 10 points.

Penalty: There are no deductions for wrong answers in this round.

Conferring: Team members ARE NOT allowed to confer during the toss-up question. Team members ARE encouraged to confer during the bonus questions.

ROUND 2: HEAD-TO-HEAD ROUND

Format: Opposing players from each team go head-to-head. The player in position 1 goes against the player in position 1 on the opposing team, the player in position 2 goes against the player in position 2, and so on for positions 3 and 4. These numbers will be attached to each position on the participants' podium. The team captain will always be located in position 2 and the rotation will begin at position 1. The lineup is expected to stay the same unless there is an emergency that would force the use of the alternative who would then assume the player's regular position.

- Active players have three (3) seconds to buzz-in after the host has read the entire question.
- The player who buzzes in first has three (3) seconds to give an answer.
 - In the case of a correct answer, the players move into position for the next question and play moves forward.
 - In the case of an incorrect answer, the player on the opposing team has (3) seconds to give an answer (no need to buzz in at this point). No conferring is allowed. If the answer is incorrect, the host gives the correct answer and play moves forward (no additional chances to answer).
- Questions in this round are primarily open-ended with short answers, and may include some "yes/no," "true/false," and "this/that" style questions, as well as multiple-choice.

Time Limit: The 1-4 sequence will cycle through as many times as possible within 4-5 minutes.

Points: A correct answer is worth 10 points.

Penalty: There are no deductions for wrong answers in this round.

Conferring: Team members ARE NOT allowed to confer with teammates during this round.

ROUND 3: CATEGORY ROUND

Format: Teams take turns choosing and answering questions from various categories.

Time Limit: 5 to 6 minutes.

Questions: Teams pick from a board displaying five (5) themed categories. Each category has five (5) questions. Questions will include open-ended questions with short answers, multiple-choice questions, and photo/video questions.

Selection: The team that is trailing after Round 2 gets to go first choosing a category.

- **NOTE:** In the event of a tie after Round 2, a coin toss is used to determine the team that makes the first category selection. The host will audibly designate the “heads” and “tails” designations to the teams prior to the coin toss.

Points: Questions are worth 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 points as they increase in difficulty in each category. Questions must be answered in order of difficulty—for example a team cannot choose the 30-point question before the 10-point question. However, teams are free to choose any category in their turn.

Penalty: The point value associated with the question is deducted for incorrect answers. “Declining” (choosing not to answer) does not impact the score. (except for “tossed” questions; details below).

Answering: The designated team captain provides the team’s answer to each question. The team has 10 seconds to give an answer, or decision to “decline” (see below), or to “toss” it to the other team. (see below) The 10 seconds start after the host has read the entire question; teams may answer before the 10 seconds have finished.

- In the event of a correct answer, play moves forward with the opposing team picking a category. A correct answer DOES NOT give a team “control” of the board. Play alternates whether a question is correct or incorrect.
- In the event of an incorrect answer, the question DOES NOT go to the other team. The host will give the correct answer and play moves forward with the opposing team picking a category.

Tossing a Question to the Opposing Team: Teams may choose to send the question and its associated points to the opposing team. The opposing team then has 10 seconds to confer and answer the question; the question MUST be answered. The opposing team cannot choose not to answer at that point. For example, if Team A tosses a 30-point question to Team B, Team B must answer the question; if correct, Team B gets 30 points. If incorrect, they lose 30 points. After the opposing team answers the “tossed” question, that team will have control of the board to choose a new question. **There is no limit to the number of times a team may toss a question to the opposing team.**

Declining a Question: Teams have the option of not answering a question (unless the other team has “tossed” it to them.) There is no penalty for choosing not to answer. **Each team is allowed three (3) “decline” choices in this round, one (1) per category.**

Conferring: Team members ARE encouraged to confer in this round.

- **NOTE:** The opposing team, host, and production staff can hear teams conferring. For example, if Team A is conferring, Team B will be able to hear that discussion. In the event Team A decides to

toss a question, all information discussed by Team A players during the conference can be used by Team B to produce an answer.

ROUND 4: LIGHTNING ROUND

Format: All players (on both teams) are eligible to buzz in and answer all questions. Players have three (3) seconds to buzz-in after the host has read the entire question. The player who buzzes in first has three (3) seconds to give an answer; in the case of an incorrect answer, the host reads the correct answer and play moves forward (there is no chance for other players to steal). If no one buzzes in during the three-second timer, no player is eligible to answer and play moves forward.

Time Limit: 90-seconds.

Questions: Questions in this round are primarily open-ended with short answers, and may include some “yes/no,” “true/false,” and “this/that” style questions, as well as photo questions.

Points: All questions are worth 20 points in this round.

Penalty: Incorrect answers result in a 20-point deduction. This includes buzzing in then choosing not to answer. Non-answers (if no one buzzes in) do not impact the score.

Conferring: Players ARE NOT allowed to confer with their teammates.

GENERAL RULES

End of a Round: Rounds will end once the time limit has been reached (Rounds 1, 3 and 4) or the designated number of questions has been asked (Round 2).

Match Tiebreaker: In the event the two teams are tied at the end of the match, three toss-up questions (Round 1 format) will be asked and the team with the highest cumulative score will win. Team members are not allowed to confer during the tiebreaker.

Judging: The judges are selected by KSPS PBS and the League of Women Voters of the Spokane Area (LWVSA) for the duration of the season. KSPS and LWVSA make every effort to ensure a fair game, but the occasional mistake may occur. If the judges become aware of a mistake, every effort will be made to correct it. Questions are repeated at the discretion of the host or a judge. Disputes or discrepancies should be voiced by the coach to the judges immediately following the end of the round in which the discrepancy occurred. Coaches may not interrupt a round while in play. If the dispute is determined to be valid by a judge, play stops between rounds and the discrepancy is addressed at the sole discretion of the KSPS production staff and judges. Scores may be adjusted, or questions eliminated, if necessary. Play then resumes. Any ambiguity or disputes that may arise concerning the rules of play and their interpretation is clarified or resolved by the production staff and judges. Judges’ rulings are final. Once an individual round is completed and the next round begins, the completed round becomes final and challenges are not accepted retroactively. If the score changes, an explanation will be announced to the

viewing audience just before the next round begins. In the event of a tie, the competition is final once the match tiebreaker protocol has been completed and any associated disputes or discrepancies have been addressed. No protests are accepted once teams have left the recording session.

Cell Phone Policy: Cell phone use by players, alternates, coaches, and studio audience members during the course of the match is prohibited. All cell phones must be powered off and out of reach. Coaches will be asked to secure the cell phones for their team for the duration of each match.

Code of Conduct: To encourage a positive atmosphere and foster good sportsmanship, all participating schools, teams, and audience members (including coaches, students, and administrators) are presumed to be responsible individuals and will be treated as such and are therefore expected to conduct themselves in a responsible and ethical manner. This includes, but is not limited to, treating all other players, coaches, judges, LWVSA volunteers, and KSPS staff with courtesy, abiding by all decisions of the Civics Bowl staff, promptly reporting violations, and honestly reporting details of game situations to KSPS producers. Coaches and administrators are expected to actively use their influence to enhance sportsmanship in the broadest possible manner and should not engage in conduct that may incite players or the audience during the competitions and recordings. Unsportsmanlike conduct includes using outside resources (including books, computers, third-party assistance, etc.), or engaging in the observation and relaying of signs/signals given by another party to aid in answers, or any actions or comments by coaches or players which are intended to bait, anger, ridicule, or demean others, whether or not the deeds or words are vulgar, or in order to gain an unfair advantage during the competition. Public criticism of KSPS, the League of Women Voters, the crew of Civics Bowl, or any participating team, players, and coaches during the competition or recording will be considered disruptive and unethical. KSPS at its sole discretion reserves the right to decline participation of a school prior to and at any point during the competition, including future competitions, due to unsportsmanlike, disruptive, or unethical behavior.

Confidentiality: All participating teams, coaches, and audience members agree to keep and retain in the strictest confidence such confidential information as guest and team member appearances, including identity and information, game results, game questions, references, and any information not publicly known, since such disclosure will affect and/or destroy the surprise, tension, and outcome of the series for the viewing public or may provide an unfair advantage to other participating teams. Confidentiality will be expected until the episodes have aired on KSPS PBS.

COVID Protocols: Team members, coaches, audience members, judges, volunteers, and staff working and/or attending the Civics Bowl recording sessions will be required to follow any applicable COVID protocols.

Gameplay shall be in the sole discretion of KSPS. Clarification of these rules may be updated by KSPS in its sole discretion.

Teams participating in season 3 of Civics Bowl are encouraged to watch the matches from last season at ksp.org/civics-bowl to get a better idea of what to expect. Game play will be very similar, with a few minor changes made after feedback from the first season. Any changes are outlined in the above official Civics Bowl rules.

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