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Editor's Section: A Guide to Scheduling the AFA-NIET

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Cover Page Footnote

Editor's Section

[Note: at the request of the DSR-TKA executive board, this article is presented in *Speaker & Gavel* so the AFA-NIET process explained here has a permanent record in forensic archives.]

A Guide to Scheduling the AFA-NIET

Daniel Cronn-Mills

Introduction

The American Forensic Association—National Individual Events tournament (AFA-NIET) is one of the largest intercollegiate speech tournaments in the country. The tournament had been for decades scheduled by hand. A few years ago, Larry Schnoor approached me with a task: a way to streamline scheduling the NIET using computers. The traditional "by-hand scheduling" process was a 3-5 day affair involving numerous people committing a vast number of hours to preparing the schedule for the tournament.

The computerized process takes one person about three hours to schedule the students into all the flights and events, and prepare the tabsheets for all 11 events, individual sweeps and team sweeps. However, the computerized process has resulted in relatively few people who fully understanding how the computer does this work. My purpose is to explain how MS Excel templates were constructed to replicate and streamline the NIET scheduling process.

- This guide assumes the reader is familiar with the AFA-NIET.
- This guide assumes the reader is familiar with MS Exce (the Excel documents are functional in both Macintosh and Windows OS environments).

I. Pre-Scheduling Process
1. Filling in the Master Entry Form. The first step happens many days before the actual scheduling of the tournament takes place.

2. The tournament director collects the entries for the tournament.
    2.1. The tournament director transfers all the data from the entries into the Master Entry Form creating a master list of entries for the tournament.
    2.2. The tournament director assigns codes to schools and students in the order the entries are received, thus ensuring the codes are random (see 2.7 for instructions on assigning codes).
    2.3. Each Dramatic Duo entry has its own separate code from a student's code for all other events (see 2.7.4 for an example of assigning codes)

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    2.4.   The tournament director is responsible for copying the Dramatic Duo code(s) into the "Duo1" and "Duo2" columns. This is necessary for proper functioning of individual sweeps.

    2.5.   The Individual Sweeps column is automatically tallied for each student.

    2.6.   The tournament director fills in the Dist (district code) column.

    2.7.   The tournament director fills in the Code column. Coding uses a 5-digit sequence.

        2.7.1. First three digits designate the school.

        2.7.2. Last two digits designate the student.

        2.7.3. All school codes end in "00"

        2.7.4. Example:

            2.7.4.1.   10200 – Minnesota State, Mankato

            2.7.4.2.   10201 – Heather Kaiser

            2.7.4.3.   10202 – Chad Kuyper

            2.7.4.4.   10203 – Laurel Waldock

            2.7.4.5.   10204 – Seth Michael Smith

            2.7.4.6.   10205 – Kaiser/Kuyper

            2.7.4.7.   10206 – Kuyper/Smith

            2.7.4.8.   10300 – South Dakota State

            2.7.4.9.   A visual example of the above codes entered into a Master Entry Form.

3.   The Master Entry Form automatically tallies and tracks a number of variables important to the tournament.

    3.1.   the number of participants in each event.

    3.2.   the number of sections needed for each event.

4.   The tabs at the bottom of the page provide other forms and data for the tournament director

    4.1.   The "Judges" tab provides a fillable form for keeping track of the tournament judges.

    4.2.   The "Confirm and Fees" tab provides a fillable form for creating confirmation page for entries.

    4.3.   The "Entries by District" tab is automatically populated from the "Entries" tab and provides:

        4.3.1. the total at-large entries per district

        4.3.2. the total district entries per district

        4.3.3. the total qualifiers per district

II. Scheduling the AFA-NIET

Flash demonstration of the scheduling process.

[Adobe Flash Player plug-in required for viewing Flash Demonstration]

1.   Sort by an event.

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2. Open up three documents.
    2.1. The completed Master Entry Form.
    2.2. The "Entry Count" document.
    2.3. An appropriate scheduling grid for the event (link is a zipped folder holding all the scheduling grids used for the NIET).
        2.3.1. Select a scheduling grid based on the number of sections in the event (number of sections is provided at the top of the Master Entry Form.
        2.3.2. The AFA-NIET does not schedule more than six students per event.
        2.3.3. The scheduling grids are named by the number of students per section by the number of sections. For example:
            4.3.3.1. 6x18 = six students per section with 18 sections in the event.
            4.3.3.2. 6x24 = six students per section with 24 sections in the event.

3. Switch to the Master Entry Document.
    3.1. Sort all data by an event.
    3.2. Copy the codes for the event from the Codes column.

4. Switch to the "Entry Count" document.
    4.1. Paste the codes for the event into the Codes column.
    4.2. Select the cells and sort by the A column—this will sort all students from the same school together.
    4.3. Select the cells and sort by the B column—this will sort the entries from the school with the most entries to the school with the least entries.

5. Switch to the appropriate scheduling grid (the layout of the grid is described below in pt. II.6).

6. Use the column-school scheduling process to input student codes for round 1. Copy/paste the codes from the "Entry Count" document into the scheduling grid for the event using the school-column method of scheduling an individual events tournament. Rounds 2 and 3 will be automatically populated based on the scheduling of Round 1.
    Flash demonstration of the scheduling process.
    [Adobe Flash Player plug-in required for viewing Flash Demonstration]

7. The scheduling grid is divided into five (5) sections separated by vertical gray bars (visual example of a completed scheduling grid).
    7.1. Section 1 (columns A-F) is for copying the codes from the "Entry Count" document (see pt. 6 below).

7.2.   Section 2 (columns H-I) is for typing in the school code (only first 3-digits) for the judges assigned to each section.

7.3.   Section 3 (columns K-L) will automatically identify any conflicts between students and the judges assigned to each section. The word "Conflict" (in red) will automatically appear if a judging conflict exists in that section.

7.4.   Section 4 (columns N-V) are the columns printed out for distribution to students and judges.

7.4.1.   Column N identifies the section number.

7.4.2.   Column O is for typing in the room assigned to that round/section.

7.4.3.   Column P is for typing in the last names of the two judges assigned to each section.

7.4.4.   Columns Q-V are automatically populated and the speaking orders sorted by the data provided in columns A-F.

7.5.   Section 5 (columns X-AE) is computing space for operating the automatic judge conflict process described earlier.

8.   Save the scheduling grid by the name of the event and the year of the tournament. For example:

8.1.   Prose-sched08

8.2.   Impromptu-sched08

8.3.   Duo-sched08

9.   IMPORTANT: *ALL* TABSHEETS (INCLUDING SWEEPS) *MUST* BE SAVED IN THE SAME FOLDER FOR SWEEPS TABSHEET TO PROPERLY INTEGRATE ALL DATA.

10.   Repeat this process to schedule the remaining events.

11.   Schedule the judges using the traditional "by hand" approach.

12.   Schedule the rooms using the traditional "by hand" approach.

III. Prepping the Individual Event Tabsheets for the AFA-NIET

1.   Open the "Tabsheet" template (note that Dramatic Duo has its own tabsheet template since the event has two participants).

2.   Open the Master Entry Form.

3.   Select, copy, and paste the Code and Student columns in to the "Tabsheet" template.

4.   Resort by the Code column to ensure all students are listed in correct code order.

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5. Save the document in the name of the event in the following way "event-tab-year". For example:
   5.1.1. Prose-tab2008
   5.1.2. Impromptu-tab2008
   5.1.3. Duo-tab2008
        5.1.3.1. Dramatic Duo has its own tabsheet template since the event has two participants. The need for the special tab-sheet will become evident when the individual event tab functions are explained later on this process.

6. Repeat this process to set up the tabsheets for the other events.

IV. Prepping for Individual Sweeps and Team Sweeps
1. Open all eleven (11) individual events tabsheets you created in steps III.3.

2. Click on the "Indy Pts." Tab (located at the bottom of the page) in each tab-sheet.
   2.1. Select cell A:6 in each tabsheet.
   2.2. Open the Master Entry Form document.
   2.3. Sort by the IS column (Individual Sweeps).
        2.3.1. Copy the Code and Student cells for each student in Individual Sweeps.
        2.3.2. Paste the code and Student cells into all eleven (11) individual events tabsheets.
             2.3.2.1. <u>All</u> students in Individual Sweeps must be copied into each tabsheet, regardless of whether the student is competing in the event or not.

3. Click on the "Team Pts." Tab (located at the bottom of the page) in each tabsheet.
   3.1. Select cell A:6 in each tabsheet.
   3.2. Open the Master Entry Form document.
   3.3. Sort out the Schools from the student entries.
        3.3.1. Copy the code and school-name cells for each school entered in the tournament.
        3.3.2. Paste the code and school-name cells for each school into all eleven (11) individual events tabsheets.
             3.3.2.1. <u>All</u> schools must be copied into each tabsheet, regardless of whether the school has a student competing in the event or not.

4. Open the NIET Sweeps document.
   4.1.1. Select the Individual Sweeps tab.
        4.1.1.1. Paste the code and Student cells into the NIET Sweeps document.

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    4.1.2. Select the Team Sweeps tab.
        4.1.2.1.   Paste the code and Team cells into the NIET Sweeps document.
5.   Syncing the individual event files to the sweeps file. The specialized names you gave each of the event tabsheets in step III-5 requires re-setting the NIET Sweeps document so it will draw data from the correct files.
    5.1.   Open the NIET Sweeps document
    5.2.   For Excel 2007. Follow this path: Data→Edit Links
    5.3.   For Excel 1997-2003. Follow this path: Edit→ Links→Change Source

You are now ready to start the American Forensic Association—National Individual Events Tournament

V. Running the Tournament

1.   The tabsheets may be copied to other machines in whatever pairings are desired by the national tournament director.

2.   Be sure to continually save the tabsheets to the tab station computers and continually backup the data.

3.   Data integration for sweeps is accomplished by copying the filled-in tabsheets back into the master folder holding the sweeps tabsheet.

4.   Open all tabsheets, including the sweeps tabsheet.

5.   Check all event tabsheets to ensure no error codes are present. An error code will indicate a mismatch in codes between an event and the sweeps tabsheets. If an error code appears, doublecheck the relevant tabsheets until the error is rectified.

[A complete set of tournament documents for the 2007 AFA-NIET](#)
Provided with permission of Larry Schnoor, AFA-NIET tournament director
[file has been compressed/zipped]

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