

FIST Rules and Regulations

This document, in its entirety, is the governing document of the spoken word and slam poetry event known as the “Florida Individual Slam Tournament” herein referred to as F.I.S.T. or FIST, which will take place each year as part of the Fall convention of the Florida State Poets Association.

Section 1

Executive Committee:

FIST will be controlled and presided over by the Executive Officers of the Florida State Poets Association (FSPA), its Slam Coordinator, and other personnel as needed, herein referred to as the Executive Committee (EC).

The EC is comprised of FSPA Members and other needed persons who will be given specific tasks agreed upon by the EC. Each member of the EC will adhere to the code of conduct governing FIST and the FSPA as well as fulfill each of their responsibilities to the best of their ability. Committee members may be removed if their duties are not completed to the expectations of the rest of the EC.

Committee Duties:

It is the responsibility of the EC to interpret the rules of the FIST. Designated personnel from the EC will act as both “Scoring Committee” and “Protest Committee.” Each member will cast a vote in the event of a protest.

In the event of a tie, the Slam Coordinator may have final sway.
Official scoring will be done by no less than two EC members and/or designated personnel.

If a committee member is competing, they do NOT have the right to vote.

Section 2

Judging:

The judges will be randomly selected by the host & bout manager together. Preference will be given to selecting random FSPA convention attendees as well as members of the general public. Each judge will be asked if they have an affiliation with ANY competitor (not just the ones in that bout). Each poet will have a chance to approve EACH judge after their appointed check in time. The judge does NOT have to be new to poetry slam. It is encouraged to invite judges who are poets or supporters of the art.

Venues:

There will be at least two (2) venues for Prelims and one (1) for Finals. There will be four (4) Prelim bouts. There will be two (2) early Prelim bouts and two (2) late Prelim bouts if there are only two (2) Prelim venues. The poet allocation for each bout is 12 to 15 (12-15) at each of the four Prelims. The top three (3) performing poets from each Prelim bout will move on to Final Stage. Twelve (12) poets will compete in Finals. The next highest score from Prelims will be the Sac Poet at Finals.

Bouts:

Venue selection will be done by the EC board before the Convention. There will be twelve to fifteen (12-15) poets competing at each venue for Prelims. Each poet will be selected randomly and then assigned a random venue. The poet will not be given preference to venue with the exceptions of: Venue age limit, disability access or severe conflict of interest. Exceptions will be ruled on by the EC.

Poets will check in to the venue no later than 45 minutes before the scheduled start time. The poet is acknowledged as "Checked-in" when they have made their presence known to both the host and bout manager. Failure to check in at appointed time may result in loss of competition slot. Registration will not be refunded.

Prelims:

Once every performer is accounted for, the draw for order will begin by the host. The poets will randomly draw their order for first round.

The sacrificial poet will be selected by the host or the bout manager with preference going to members of the host area slam scene.

Each performer will be called to the stage in the pre-determined order. They will read a single poem of three minute or less in length. After the first round is calculated, the second round will continue with the performers reading another, completely different poem of three minute or less in length, with the HIGHEST SCORING POET performing first, followed by the SECOND HIGHEST SCORING POET, and so on until all poets have read a second time.

Note: All rounds will be allotted a 10 second grace period.

The highest three cumulatively scored poets from each Prelim will advance to Finals.

Finals:

Performers must check into the venue at least 45 minutes prior to the scheduled start of the bout.

The final stage consists of three rounds of competition. During all three rounds, poets will have up to 3 minutes and 10 seconds (3:10) to perform.

The order for finals will be RANDOM DRAW. All 12 competitors must draw their own number. After the first round, we will eliminate the bottom 4 poets. The top 8 scoring poets from the first round will advance to the second round. The order in the second round will be highest to lowest scored poet. The bottom 3 scoring poets from the second round will be eliminated. The top 5 scoring poets from just the 2nd round will move on to the third round, where order will be determined by the highest to lowest scored poet from just the second round (non-cumulative).

The highest cumulative scored poets from the Final Stage scores are the winners.

PLEASE NOTE: The second round is a clean slate round in respect to those poets being advanced. For example, poets going on to the third round are NOT the highest cumulative scored poets. The second round is a CLEAN SLATE round. You MUST score in the top 5 slots from just the second round to move on to the third round. Cumulative scores ONLY matter for the final round.

In the event of a tie for first, second or third place, an additional "head to head" 4 minute round will be conducted. The judges will select the winner by voting for one of the participants in the same method as in previous rounds.

Section 3

Registration:

Once you have paid in full for registration, you are forfeiting any right to a full refund. If a refund is requested **before** the poet list has been filled, then **half of the registration fee will be refunded**. If a refund is requested **after** the poet list has been filled, **no refund will be provided**.

Florida Individual Slam Tournament, the EC, and the Florida State Poets Association have made this stipulation to hedge against the risk of poets dropping out last minute and the festival losing capital.

FIST, the EC, and the Florida State Poetry Association will agree to consider certain cases of potentially extraordinary circumstances. Contact the Slam Coordinator at macdelandslam@gmail.com to initiate such a process.

Prizes:

The 9 runners up from finals night and the Sac Poet (the 4th through 12th place poets plus the Sac poet) will be paid \$100. The poets placing 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in the competition will receive the allotted cash prize; however, they will not receive the \$100 in addition to the award.

The first through third prizes are as such:

1st Place: \$1,500
2nd Place: \$1,000
3rd Place: \$500

This will be paid within one hour of the conclusion of the bout. Winners may decide to be paid later and this will be at their discretion. Payment will be made promptly barring any legitimate protests that must be considered by the EC. If there is such a protest, it is to be considered and concluded before 11am the next morning and prize money will then be paid out immediately or at the winners' discretion. FIST, the EC, and the FSPA reserve the right to administer payment in the manner customary to regular conduct of business.

Code of Conduct Stipulations:

Every participant, volunteer and organizer of FIST is required to sign the FIST Code of Conduct, which is intended to ensure participation in the tournament adhere to the highest of standards. Copies will be distributed to every person involved.

Failure to fill out a Code of Honor will result in denial of active status in the tournament.

General FIST Specific Rules

FIST will crown a champion that is arguably the best in the world. We believe that the standards which competing poets must reach and surpass during our tournament will give any winners ample justification to consider themselves at the zenith of the artform. As such, we insist upon the following:

1. You are not allowed to repeat any poem at any time. Not during Prelims, Finals or tiebreakers.
2. Time penalties will be .5 for EACH SECOND over 3:10. Time will start once a performer speaks or makes any kind of performance gesture toward the audience. The Timekeeper and Bout Manager will have full authority in determining when a performance has begun.

3. Should a competitor's performance be interrupted beyond a reasonable noise level, unforeseen circumstance or anything beyond the performer's control, the performer will have the right to restart the poem. The performer also has the right to select a different poem if he or she chooses. A performer may not restart due to ordinary and common background noise including audience hum, microphone feedback, cell phones, distant car horn ETC. The poet should make his or her desire to restart known immediately and should not finish the poem at that time. They may restart the same poem or start a different one. Only scored poems will count towards the no-repeat rule.

4. Poets must stay "on stage" (behind the microphone) during the performance. The poem may not be started, ended, or performed anywhere else in the venue but "On stage" (behind the microphone). Poets performing "Off stage" will receive a full point penalty. Off stage is defined as going outside the designated performance area as specified by the host or venue, outside an elevated stage or moving beyond parameters set by the bout manager before the bout.

5. In the event of ties, the order of performance will be the reverse of the order before it. Example: Poet A and Poet B are tied in round 2, they will perform in reverse order from round one.