



The Long Island Quiz Bowl Alliance
Rules of the Game for the Traditional Format
Condensed
Edition I, Revision 1
September 2026

These are the official rules of the Long Island Quiz Bowl Alliance for general use, appropriate for events of both a casual and serious nature, and intended for use at LIQBA regular-season events and events that use the “Traditional” style of questions. Any person who wishes to use these rules may do so for whatever purpose desired, and permission need not be sought; any modification may be freely made to these rules, and they may be freely adapted into any other ruleset. That said, if you make a modification, you can’t say it’s the original ruleset.

This ruleset is much more casual and lenient than the one for the New Four-Quarter Format, and is much shorter. It is intended primarily for use at low-stakes events; it would be inappropriate to use these rules for a National Championship or any event where there is greater prize value than that of token prizes.

Why is this ruleset so long?

This ruleset is meant to cover nearly any possible situation, or “edge cases”, as well as provide very clear rectifications to such situations. As such, it is very long. It may expand in time as new situations arise, or such situations may be placed into a casebook.

Think of this ruleset as akin to the rules of a sport. They are very long and detailed, as are these.

However, we condensed these quite a bit. Keep in mind that the Nationals ruleset is 18 pages long, with 14 pages of rules, 2 cover pages, and 2 pages comprising Section 9 on conduct. This set is just 8 pages long, with 5.5 pages of rules, 2 cover pages, and half a page comprising the equivalent Section 8. As such, it is less than half the length, and most rules have been significantly simplified. It is meant to be concise and easy to follow and use for every game of “20/20” Quizbowl.

Note that the replacement-bonus procedure in these rules assumes that bonuses are consistently in difficulty order (i.e. the first part is always easy, second part always medium, third part always hard, or similar). If they are randomized, if the parts are all intended to be of the same difficulty, or some other method is used, the procedure herein should not be used; another ruleset’s bonus-replacement procedure should be used instead.

In addition, the only appropriate scoring systems for different types of bonuses are:

1. If the parts are consistently in E-M-H order or similar: 10 points for each; OR 5 points on the first part, then 10 on the second, and 15 on the third (and 20 on the fourth if there is a fourth part).
2. If the parts are in random difficulty order: 10 points for each; OR 5 for the easy, 10 for the medium, 15 for the hard, and so on.
3. If the parts are all the same difficulty: 10 points for each part.

1. Definitions; Participants

- 1.1. An Event is a set of organized Quizbowl Matches. Each Event shall have a single Tournament Director, or TD, whose decisions are final; the TD may designate committees to make rulings.
- 1.2. Each Match shall have a Moderator to read questions, keep score, and uphold the Rules.
- 1.3. Other Staffers may be provided to assist the Moderator or TD in some capacity.
- 1.4. A Team consists of a roster of one to four Players, inclusive.
- 1.5. Each Team shall designate a Captain, who shall fulfill the duties laid out in these Rules.
- 1.6. Each Match consists of two sets of up to four Players.
- 1.7. Each Team may optionally have one Coach, **designated prior to each Match by the Captain.**
- 1.8. Anyone else who is not on staff shall be considered a Spectator. Spectators may not do anything that the Moderator determines is detrimental to a Match.
- 1.9. *Should unexpected circumstances make it impossible to follow these rules, or should some palpably unfair situation occur that cannot be remedied by these rules, the Tournament Director may adopt any reasonable remedy, including no action.*

2. Equipment

- 2.1. Each match shall be played using a physical Buzzer System, or System, suitable for the purpose.
 - 2.1.1. Once a System is set up in a game room, it shall be the sole method for buzzing in and must be used by all players unless the system is defective.
 - 2.1.2. If no System is available, the match will be delayed until a suitable System is procured.
 - 2.1.3. Any Buzzer System that does not have individual buttons for each player shall not be used.
- 2.2. The System shall be Cleared at appropriate times; such an action will allow new buzzes.
- 2.3. Before a match, a Buzzer Check shall occur, and anyone may object if the System is broken.
- 2.4. The only materials that may be used by Players during a Match are a piece of initially blank paper or a blank scoresheet, loose or bound, and a writing implement.
- 2.5. Players may not use any personal electronic devices, except those medically necessary, during a match, except for a Captain researching a Protest after one is lodged.

3. Match Execution

- 3.1. Each Match shall consist of twenty Tossups and twenty Bonuses, with an up to two-minute break for Halftime after Bonus 10; this is the Regulation Play of a Match.
- 3.2. Each pair of a Tossup and associated Bonus shall be one Cycle. A Cycle begins when the first syllable of the first word of the tossup is begun, and ends when the last answer is revealed for the associated bonus, or when the Tossup goes Dead and no bonus is read.
- 3.3. *After the twentieth Cycle is completed, the team with the higher score shall Win, and the other shall Lose.*
- 3.4. Should the score be tied at that time, Overtime will commence, with Tossups being read until a player answers one correctly; that player's team shall Win. Incorrect answers do not change the score in Overtime, though if a player answers a tossup incorrectly, their team is still locked out.
- 3.5. At Halftime and after the 20th Cycle, the Moderator shall read the Official Score, handle protests lodged, and reconcile scoring discrepancies, even if this takes longer than two minutes; the same will take place during a timeout, except that no protests may be handled at that time.
- 3.6. A Captain may call one Timeout, between cycles, of 30 seconds per Match. Calling for a timeout at any other time shall be treated as illegal conferring if during a tossup and otherwise ignored.

- 3.7. No Player or Coach shall request to check the score at any time, and no Player or Coach shall request to check Buzzers while the clock is running, unless one appears to have malfunctioned.
 - 3.8. *After Halftime, the Moderator shall request Players take their seats and continue the Match immediately, even if any players, coaches, or spectators are missing from the Game Room.*
 - 3.9. Should the Moderator be reading a word-for-word repeat of a question and be unaware, any player or coach should inform the Moderator, who shall remedy the situation off the clock.
 - 3.10. *Buzzes considered as Accidental may be ignored at the discretion of the Moderator; but no buzz shall be considered Accidental more than 6 words into a Question, unless:*
 - 3.10.1. The buzzer was clearly dropped or struck by another player or person; or
 - 3.10.2. An unambiguous system fault has occurred.
 - 3.11. The Moderator must read the appropriate questions in the Packet verbatim and may not provide teams additional substantive information beyond the clues presented while a question is live.
4. Questions
- 4.1. There shall be two types of Questions: Tossups and Bonuses.
 - 4.2. *All timing ties are in favor of the player.*
 - 4.3. Tossups are questions in the style of a single paragraph where any player may buzz in at any time while the question is being read and attempt to give an answer.
 - 4.3.1. No player may give an answer to a tossup except for an active player who has buzzed in while the tossup is live; that is, while it is being read and the five seconds after the entire tossup has been read.
 - 4.3.2. Should a player buzz in and give an answer that has been evaluated as Incorrect by the Moderator, the buzzers will be reset and question will continue to be read from the point of the buzz; however, no player from the team that gave the incorrect answer shall be permitted to buzz in, and any buzz from that team will be ignored. Optionally, but consistently within an Event, five points shall be deducted for the first incorrect answer.
 - 4.3.2.1. No question shall be “restarted” for any reason after a buzz has occurred.
 - 4.3.3. Should a player buzz in and give an answer that is ruled correct by the Moderator, that player shall be awarded points as appropriate, the buzzers will be reset, and that team will be awarded a Bonus.
 - 4.3.4. When a Player Buzzes In, the Moderator shall stop reading the Tossup Immediately and recognize that player in some way.
 - 4.3.4.1. A player does not need to wait to be recognized to begin an answer.
 - 4.3.5. From the moment at which a Player buzzes in, they have 5 seconds to begin a response; should no response be started by the 5-second limit, the Moderator shall call Time and follow Rule 4.3.2.
 - 4.3.5.1. Should a player be afflicted with a stutter or other speech impediment, the Moderator may use their discretion to allow the Player to complete a response on their own time.
 - 4.3.6. From the moment the Tossup has been read in full, players have 5 seconds to buzz in and give a response. Should no player buzz in within the time limit, or if both teams answer incorrectly, the Moderator shall reveal the answer and proceed to the next question.

- 4.3.7. Conferring is not permitted while a Tossup is live. Conferring is defined as any communication by any medium by a Player or Coach that conveys information about a question or answer. An instance of conferring shall be treated as per Rule 4.3.2.
- 4.3.7.1. The following shall not be considered conferring:
- 4.3.7.1.1. Non-substantive gestures or exclamations **by players**, including but not limited to waving hands, raising a buzzer, or uttering brief interjections of surprise or encouragement (“Aw darn!” “Buzz in!” “You got this!”)
 - 4.3.7.1.2. Informing the Moderator that the other team is Conferring;
 - 4.3.7.1.3. If the Buzzer System is not cleared and a Player or Coach requests it to be;
 - 4.3.7.1.4. A brief indication of an intent to Protest of no more than three words;
 - 4.3.7.1.5. The raising of a procedural complaint;
 - 4.3.7.1.6. Should a Player’s Buzzer malfunction, indicating that they desire to buzz in (“BUZZ!” “*smacks table*”). *The decision of a Moderator that such a player has buzzed in before or after someone else is not protestable.*
- 4.3.7.2. Moderator judgement as to whether Conferring occurred is not protestable.
- 4.3.7.3. Attempting to “buzz in for” a teammate counts as conferring, even if that teammate’s buzzer is malfunctioning.
- 4.3.7.4. Other actions that count as Conferring or are treated in the same way may appear throughout these Rules.
- 4.3.8. Should the Moderator accidentally reveal an answer to a Tossup while it is live, the tossup will be thrown out and a replacement Tossup will be read immediately to all teams who were allowed to buzz in before the error was made.
- 4.3.9. Optionally, but consistently within an Event, tossups are Powermarked, defined as a non-verbal symbol placed within the question text. Should a Player ring in at or before the Powermark, and give a correct answer, they shall be awarded 20 points instead of 10. Should a Player give a correct answer otherwise, the player shall be awarded 10 points.
- 4.4. Bonuses are Questions with three Parts. The total value of a Bonus always adds up to 30 points; a Tournament Director may assign these values as 10 points per part, or 5-10-15.
- 4.4.1. The Moderator shall read each bonus part individually, and one at a time. After the reading of one part, the team that was originally awarded the bonus, the Controlling Team, shall attempt a response. The moderator shall request an answer after 4 seconds, and call time at 5 seconds. Should the answer given be Correct, the team shall be awarded the points, and the next part will be read to the Controlling Team.
- 4.4.1.1. Optionally, but consistently within an Event, should the answer given be Incorrect, the non-Controlling Team shall have 5 seconds to answer with 10 points awarded if correct; after that answer, the next part will be read to the Controlling team.
- 4.4.2. Conferring between Players is freely permitted and strongly encouraged during Bonuses, though the non-controlling team should do so quietly per rule 4.3.7.
- 4.4.3. Only the Captain’s answer shall be evaluated by the Moderator. A Captain may “defer” to another player on the team, and that person shall be immediately prompted for a response.
- 4.4.4. *An answer may be given at any time during the Bonus, cutting off the Moderator.*

- 4.4.5. The Captain has five seconds to begin a response on either an original response or a bounceback, after which the Moderator shall call Time and treat the response as incorrect.
- 4.4.6. Should an answer to a bonus part be revealed prematurely by the Moderator, or by anyone who is not a player, that part shall be thrown out and an equivalent part from a replacement shall be read. Should this occur on a part that is not the first, the answers to the preceding parts shall be revealed by the Moderator prior to asking the replacement part.
 - 4.4.6.1. A bounceback shall occur in such a situation as normal. Should an answer be revealed after the Controlling Team has given a response, only the non-Controlling team shall be able to answer the replacement part.
 - 4.4.7. *Should a player on the non-controlling team speak loudly enough that the controlling team can hear them, or vice versa on a bounceback, the controlling team can use whatever information is gleaned therefrom to answer the question, without restriction.*
- 4.5. In general, should a question need to be replaced, it need not be of the same category.
- 5. Time (optional; does not need to be used consistently throughout an Event, at TD discretion)
 - 5.1. All Matches shall be timed to a total of 30 minutes according to the Moderator's timepiece.
 - 5.2. Should all questions in regulation be completed, the Match shall end, regardless of time.
 - 5.3. The clock shall commence at the beginning of the first tossup, and shall not be stopped, except:
 - 5.3.1. For up to two minutes at Halftime;
 - 5.3.2. For thirty seconds during a timeout;
 - 5.3.3. For whatever length of time past 5 seconds to determine the correctness of a response;
 - 5.3.4. If a player afflicted with a stutter requires more than five seconds to respond;
 - 5.3.5. Should some problem arise that necessitates it, as per Moderator discretion.
 - 5.4. Once time expires, the Match shall end at the end of the current Cycle.
- 6. Answer Evaluation
 - 6.1. On all responses, the moderator shall rule if that answer is Correct or Incorrect.
 - 6.2. In order to receive points, the answer must both be accurate and precise. The Moderator retains discretion to accept an answer as correct, or if the answer is "too specific", so long as it comports with every clue in the question at the point which the player buzzed in.
 - 6.3. The first answer given by a player to the moderator shall be the one that is evaluated. Giving an answer involves beginning at least one word, ignoring leading articles and extraneous interjections, without amendments. A response shall be considered incorrect if amended.
 - 6.3.1. Extraneous interjections do not count as starting an answer for the purposes of the Clock.
 - 6.3.2. Whether something is an extraneous interjection or not is at the discretion of the Moderator.
 - 6.4. Should a player give an answer that is ruled incorrect, the Moderator shall note that it is incorrect without revealing any reason as to *why* while the question is still live.
 - 6.5. Should a player give a response which is neither incorrect nor specific enough, the Moderator shall Prompt. A player or team has three seconds to begin a more specific answer. This may be repeated until an outright correct or incorrect answer is given.
 - 6.6. The Moderator may ask a player to repeat an answer. If the repeated answer is not the exact same as the original answer, misconduct shall have occurred.

- 6.7. Should a player give an answer which contains two or more pieces of related information of different types, such as both the title of a work and its creator, the answer will only be ruled correct if the answer has no segments that would render it incorrect.
- 6.8. Should multiple answers be required to a question, a player will have, once an answer is begun, a maximum of one second in between parts, with no prompts available on partial lists.
- 6.9. Players need not make an exact pronunciation of each answer; whether a pronunciation is acceptable or not is at the discretion of the Moderator, and should usually favor the Player.
- 6.10. The Detailed Correctness Guidelines section or its equivalent in the most recent edition of the rules of the Academic Competition Federation shall be considered a part of these rules.

7. Protests

- 7.1. A Protest is an official action taken by a person to ensure that possible errors do not disrupt the proper and consistent awarding of points for accurate and specific factual knowledge.
- 7.2. **A Captain is the only person who can lodge Protests.** The Captain must state that they are doing so in between Cycles. The Moderator shall note that the protest was made, **and carry on.**
- 7.3. At halftime or before Overtime, the Moderator shall ask the person who lodged the Protest if they wish to formally protest. If so, an explanation of the protest shall be made.
- 7.4. The Moderator shall attempt to resolve the protest; if it cannot be resolved within two minutes to the satisfaction of both teams, the protest will be written up and sent to the TD for resolution.
- 7.5. At any time, the opposing team may concede the protest, upon which it will be upheld, and the protesting team may withdraw the protest, upon which it will be denied.
- 7.6. The following errors, *and only the following*, are valid grounds for protest:
 - 7.6.1. A player gave an answer that should have been accepted but was not, or vice versa;
 - 7.6.2. The player should have been prompted but was ruled incorrect;
 - 7.6.3. A player gave an answer that was prompted, but should have been ruled incorrect;
 - 7.6.4. There is a factual error in the question that affected a given answer;
 - 7.6.5. The question did not uniquely identify a single answer and it affected a given answer.
- 7.7. *Nothing else may be protested*; however, if a Coach or Captain notices that a Match official has disregarded a rule, they may bring that to the Moderator's attention **in between cycles**; the clock will stop, the TD will be summoned, and the complaint will be resolved immediately.
- 7.8. The following may never be protested, nor the subject of a procedural complaint, and concerns of these types should be brought to the organizers only after an event has concluded:
 - 7.8.1. The quality of a question, or lack thereof;
 - 7.8.2. If a question is not of an expected category, or a distribution is not followed;
 - 7.8.3. If a given answer is "related to" the required answer, but is not the required answer;
 - 7.8.4. The appropriateness of a question for a grade level;
 - 7.8.5. Perceived bias in or political disagreements about a question;
 - 7.8.6. Complaints about the venue or setup of a game room;
 - 7.8.7. Very minor grammatical or factual errors that had no bearing on a response;
 - 7.8.8. That an answer was accepted, but should have merely been prompted;
 - 7.8.9. "What the moderator heard", unless both teams agree a hearing error was made;
 - 7.8.10. Anything that did not actually have a direct effect on scoring in a game;
 - 7.8.11. Italicized rules, as well as rules 7.8 and 8 in their entirety.

- 7.9. Multiple protests may be lodged concerning the same question.
- 7.10. There is no limit to the number of protests that a team can lodge during a match, *but if a team makes many frivolous protests, the TD may ban or limit them from making further protests.*
- 7.11. While a Protest is being written up, the Captains and Coaches from both teams may cite any sources as needed to support their position, except that information from AI may not be used.
- 7.12. Unless otherwise directed by the Tournament Director, a protest will be resolved only if it and the collective of protests in a given match could change the outcome of that match.
- 7.13. A protest can be resolved by either being Denied or Upheld. If a Protest is upheld, points shall be awarded or deducted and questions replaced as the situation calls for, at the discretion of the Tournament Director. *If a protest is denied, nothing happens.*
- 7.14. *Should the resolution of a Protest create a tie where there was none before, the match will proceed into Overtime as normal.*
- 7.15. *The decision whether to hold teams in the game room while a protest is being resolved or to let those teams advance to their next matches is at the discretion of the Tournament Director.*
- 7.16. No protest may be lodged once the final score is read by the Moderator; if it relates to Bonus 20 or a question in Overtime, it must be lodged within 10 seconds of the final score being read.
- 7.17. *A protest is considered resolved once its resolution has been conveyed to both teams. Once a writeup is complete, no team, or anyone affiliated with a team, including spectators, may communicate with a Staffer about a protest before resolution. Any such attempt will result in:*
 - 7.17.1. *The protest being automatically decided against the team who attempted to tamper, regardless of the merits;*
 - 7.17.2. *The person who attempted to tamper being subject to misconduct sanctions.*
- 7.18. *Protest resolutions are final, binding, and may not be appealed, revisited, reversed, or anything else, even if new facts arise or if there were errors in the initial writeup, and arguing with any Staff regarding the outcome of a protest constitutes Misconduct.*
- 7.19. *In games that are officially recorded on video or are otherwise declared by the Tournament Director to be a Game of Particular Importance, the Tournament Director may, only in advance of that game, waive certain rules to allow on-the-spot protest resolutions.*

8. Sportsmanship and Conduct

- 8.1. All persons associated in any way with an Event held under these rules shall follow them.
- 8.2. TDs shall declare misconduct if, in their broad judgement, the conduct is dishonest, unethical, unsporting, disruptive, or in violation of any rule, policy, or *ad hoc* rule previously stated.
- 8.3. If questioned by a Staffer, all participants shall be fully honest to the best of their knowledge.
- 8.4. All actions prohibited in the QBNC rules shall be considered prohibited in this ruleset.
- 8.5. A Tournament Director may, in an instance of misconduct, apply proportional sanctions as they deem necessary, including none at all, except that points shall not be changed as a penalty unless an entire match is declared a forfeit. Moderators shall have the discretion to eject a player or coach from a match for misconduct, or a spectator for any or no reason.
 - 8.5.1. At tournaments sponsored by the LIQBA, no ejections, except in an emergency, shall occur without prior authorization from the President of the LIQBA, who may apply further sanctions after an event concludes. Such sanctions are final and may not be appealed.