

## Part 2 Deleting TBAs

There is one important date that isn't listed on the dates and deadlines page of tabroom.com, but is simply a function of tabroom's data management: deletion of the TBAs.

Setting up a waitlist for your tournament enables teams to reserve TBA slots. If you're working on the usual sort of advance timeframe, this makes sense. Schools have a decent idea relatively early that they want to come to your tournament, but they're not sure yet which teams they'll be sending. No problem: they reserve TBA slots. Your reliable attendees will, over time, replace those TBAs with real names.

It is your unreliable attendees who are the problem. For as many schools as reserve the slots they need, there are other schools that automatically reserve every slot they can, with little or no likelihood that they will be filling those slots. This is obviously a problem for a Tournament Director looking to get realistic numbers.

Fortunately, there is that tabroom data function that can delete all TBAs. This is a doomsday button: when you press it, there is no going back. Deleted entries are—*whoosh!*—deleted. Gone. They are nowhere to be seen in the system. George Orwell couldn't have disappeared them better. So you'd better make sure that you delete in a very public and very deliberate fashion.

I recommend deleting all TBAs about a month before the tournament. At this point, people are reasonably certain who is attending, or at least certain enough to put in names that they can change later. Given that changing names on their end is a minor pain in the patoot, you're sort of forcing coaches to get their act together now. A month in advance of a tournament is not an unreasonable time for this.

A week before you're going to delete TBAs, send a message out to all your registrants that you're going to do it, telling them exactly when. The day before, send another, similar message. As often as not, by the time you actually get to the deletion moment, most of the TBAs will already be gone. As for the rest, push the button, and—*whoosh!* If there were still any waitlisted entries, now they can be let in, taking the vacated TBA slots. And you are now pretty close to having some certainty over your number of attendees.

It should be noted that there are some who do not agree with this deletion of TBAs. They view it as simply an annoyance to the coaches who are definitely coming, forcing them to decide too early in the game who might be attending, hence annoyingly driving them to enter dummy names that they will change later, and at the same time making no difference in the overall tournament numbers. My experience is quite different from this, especially at big college tournaments, which notoriously attract dubious entries. While I will admit that, yes, some coaches may indeed put in temporary names that will change later, when they are faced with evaluating TBAs they are pretty much committing to their number of entries. But more to the point, the schools that gobbled up endless TBA slots at the opening gun with virtually no likelihood of supplying those numbers, if

they're even coming at all, will now evaporate, making room for the schools who are serious contenders. You want your real entries to have the most time possible to make their arrangements, and this is one way to make that happen. The customer satisfaction of getting maximum slots far outweighs the dissatisfaction of having to—oh, the humanity!—enter student names.