

# ROOTED & RADICAL (R&R) OFFICIAL RULES\*

\*Official rules as of **January 2023**

## QUALIFICATIONS FOR PARTICIPATION

- Participants must be 19 years old or younger on the day of our kickoff event and enrolled in a high school or GED program.
- Participants on school teams must be enrolled in that institution and not yet graduated within that academic year.
- Participants must be sponsored by a school or community organization. Indy poets must be sponsored by a mentor or coach who works at a school or community organization.

## TEAM MEMBERSHIP

- Poets who wish to compete as members of an R&R team must register with their school team. If poets do not have an active R&R team at their school, they are eligible to join a Community Organization Team or can choose to work with Young Chicago Authors or a community organization to start a poetry slam team at their school.
  - We acknowledge that schools are, at times, unsafe spaces for some of our participants. If a student feels unsafe on their school team, there will be a process that will seek to restore safety on the school team for that student, and if at the end of the restorative process, the student continues to feel unsafe on their school team, they are welcome to join a community organization R&R team.

## TEAM REGISTRATION, BOUTS, & ADVANCEMENT

- **Team Registration**
  - Teams must consist of the same poets whose names are on the team roster. If you have changes to your roster, R&R organizers must be notified before March 10th, 2023, after which only registered team members may compete.
  - There must be a minimum of four people on each team, a maximum of ten. No alternates. All 10 members are eligible to perform during R&R bouts. Teams may register up to 3 additional poets as indys.
- **Bout Structure for Preliminary Bouts**
  - Each team must participate in two Preliminary bouts.
  - Preliminary bouts will consist of four rounds. Each team must send up one individual piece per round. There will be a fifth, optional group piece round in prelims.
  - Poems may be repeated between the two bouts.
  - Each team will have one individual poem per round. Poets may not perform more than once in a bout. Bout order draw will be determined by a draw, assigning a placement of A, B, C, or D to each team.
  - The order of the rounds will be as follows:
    - Round 1: ABCD
    - Round 2: BCDA
    - Round 3: CDAB

Round 4: DABC

Round 5: ABCD (amongst who is participating in the optional group piece round)

- ● **Poet Advancement**

*\*Refer to “Coaches Guide to R&R Rules” under “Advancement Eligibility” for more detailed information on the advancement process.*

- Festival participants will be able to vote for awards throughout the festival and for poets in their bouts.
- Participants will only be able to submit bout votes for bouts in which they are scheduled in. In order to submit bout votes, poets must attend the bout.
- Each participant will rank their top five poems of the round. The vote must be for a poet outside of their team.
- Voting forms must be submitted no later than an hour after their bout.
- Five points for each top poem vote, four for each second favorite poem vote, three for each third favorite poem vote, two for each fourth favorite poem vote, and one for each fifth favorite poem vote.
- The votes will be tallied on a bout by bout basis. If poets compete in more than one bout their highest scoring bout will be considered.
- Initial rankings will be set by proportion of total votes each poet in the bout captured.
- Ties in ranking will be determined by point differential within the bout. If a tie remains, the Teaching Artist Corps will break the tie by vote.

- ● **All Star Week**

- Within 48 hours of the last preliminary bout, the top 20 ranked poets from preliminaries will be invited to become an R&R All Star and perform in the R&R Semi Final Showcase. They will need to confirm their participation within 48 hours.
- Poets, whether they are on a team or an indy poet, will advance to All Star Week (ASW) as individuals. They will be placed onto newly formed ASW teams. During ASW, they will have the opportunity to attend private writing workshops, team building sessions, and artists’ talks.
- The ranking will be determined by the participants through participant voting.
- YCA staff will coach ASW teams. All Star Week will take place April 10 - April 13.
- All poets, whether advancing as All Stars or not, are invited to come to the Open to All Prep Shops taking place April 17 - April 20.

- ● **Final Showcase**

- A final showcase will replace Team Finals this year. The event will showcase R&R All Stars and 2023 Award winners.

## **INDIVIDUAL (“INDY POET”) REGISTRATION, BOUTS, & ADVANCEMENT**

- ● **Indy Poet Registration**

- All schools or organizations may register up to three Indy poets.

- ● **Bout Structure for Indy Poets**

- Indy poets must participate in two Preliminary Bouts.
- Indy Poets will share one poem in each bout.
- The order of Indy Poets in the bout will be determined beforehand with the team order through an online randomizer.
- Indy Poets may repeat poems throughout the festival.

## POEMS & PERFORMANCE

### ● Poet Introductions

All poets should introduce themselves in the following order:

- their name (REQUIRED)
- their school/community organization name. (REQUIRED)
- a *brief* call and response to encourage positive energy in the space prior to beginning their piece (OPTIONAL)
- the title of the poem. If the poem is untitled then the poet must say, “This piece is untitled.” (REQUIRED)

### ● Plagiarism & Authorship

- Participants must perform their own original writing. Participants who plagiarize will be disqualified.
- Clearly quoting/sampling other works and utilizing literary allusions is not considered plagiarism. Determining plagiarism infractions is the responsibility of the bout managers and/or grand master slam.
- Repeating poems from previous YCA festivals is not allowed.

### ● Props, Costumes, & Music

- Props, costumes, and/or musical accompaniment may not be used in the slam. (i.e. performing a piece involving a hoodie while wearing a hoodie is allowed. Using a hoodie you’re wearing as a prop to emphasize your words is not).  
Determining prop, costume and music infractions is the responsibility of the festival staff.

### ● Safe Space Rules

- Rooted and Radical participants must abide by YCA’s safe space rules: *No racist, sexist, homophobic, gender-biased, ableist, transphobic or otherwise derogatory speech that is degrading to any specific group of people.* Failure to heed this can result in point deduction as determined by festival staff.
- Discriminatory language is prohibited. Violations may result in disqualification. Determining content infractions is the responsibility of the festival staff. *\*Refer to The Coaches Guide to R&R Rules under “Profanity/Safe Space” for examples of content infractions.*
- Any disparaging of other teams by R&R poets in their poems is strictly prohibited.
  - If a poet and/or team writes a poem disparaging another competing team or poet, their score will be zeroed out for the round.
- If you have any concerns about your piece safe space rules, please reach out to festival staff prior to your bout.

## PROTESTING

### ● Protesting Rule Infractions

All coaches will be notified of rule infractions at the conclusion of the bout. Any protests of possible rule infractions must be logged with the bout manager prior to ending that bout. Festival staff will review the complaint with the rest of the tournament staff before

making a decision regarding potential consequences. The decision will be presented to the affected individuals the next morning (or earlier if time-sensitive).

## **COACHES' GUIDE to Rooted and Radical RULES 2023**

Welcome to the 2nd official season of Rooted and Radical: The Chicago Youth Poetry Festival! As a coach/mentor, you are one of the most important movers in making this festival happen and making it happen in the best way for all of our young people. This short guide is meant to offer additional guidance and support as you prepare your students for R&R.

### **POET REGISTRATION**

At R&R, we want as many students as possible to be able to join our community while at the same time offering the same advantages to all schools or organizations. Accordingly, we have expanded team registration to allow for up to 10 participants on an R&R team.

In addition to those 10, the coach of an R&R team may also sponsor three other Indy Poets at their school/organization.

This means up to 13 poets can be affiliated with any one school/organization.

If you have more than 13 poets interested in being involved in R&R, consider the following options:

- Encourage them to participate in auxiliary events. Visit <https://youngchicagoauthors.org/rnr> for more information.

If your school/organization signed up as a team, but has fewer than 4 poets able to compete, please inform the Director of Programs **no later than March 6th, 2022**, so that we can change your team registration to individual registrations. This is no problem because we want your young people to play an active role in R&R. Transferring incomplete team registrations to individual registrations whenever possible will also help us preserve competitive balance in the team competition.

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### **AUTHORSHIP**

Our community values young people and their power to represent themselves. To this end, we require that students present their own original work at our festival. In the tradition of hip hop, at R&R we encourage the use of literary allusion, sampling, found poems, and poems that reference other works while still maintaining their own original voice. When sampling or modeling new work after a pre-existing poem or song, it is best practice to shout out the original author in the title or dedication of the poem.

[Sorrow Is My Not My Name by Ross Gay, written after Gwendolyn Brooks](#)  
[Palindrome by Nate Marshall, written after Lisel Mueller](#)  
[Homage to My Hips by Dominique James, written after Lucille Clifton](#)

*A final note on Authorship:*

Remember: the spirit of R&R is collaborative. All poems can be helped by the poet(s) utilizing

the collective wisdom of the team, mentor, and community. If you have any concerns about the eligibility of any of your pieces, please ask the Slam Sensei.

## **PROFANITY/SAFE SPACE**

R&R is first and foremost a community space. In this spirit we limit the language at our slam, not because we believe in censorship, but rather so that we can provide access to the widest audience for our poets and our festival. To this end, the following words and all their variants are NOT allowed in the competition:

- (1) Fuck
- (2) Shit

The following words are allowed within reason:

- (1) Damn
- (2) Ass
- (3) Hell

In addition to the words above, there are a number of words that we feel can be used either to challenge structures of intolerance or, conversely, to attack members of particular groups and destroy safe space. The context determines which of these outcomes is achieved. Therefore, if these words/phrases appear in poems, particular attention will be paid to who is saying them and in what context:

- (1) Nigger/Nigga and other derogatory terms for racial or ethnic groups.
- (2) Bitch, Slut, Hoe, THOT, and other derogatory terms for women.
- (3) Faggot/Fag, Tranny, and other derogatory terms for queer people.

Again, we believe these words (and all words) are powerful and must be used responsibly. If you find students using this language on stage (or in general) in a damaging context, please use that opportunity to engage with them, dialogue, and encourage them to make the most thoughtful choices about their language and their art. In general, whenever students are attempting to use these words (or any words) we should, as mentors, challenge them to think about if it is the best and most essential way to communicate what they intend to communicate.

If you have any specific questions or concerns about these guidelines please contact [asia@youngchicagoauthors.org](mailto:asia@youngchicagoauthors.org).

## **R&R RECOMMENDATIONS**

- R&R is rooted in the craft of poetry. Although we encourage poets to hone their performances skills, writing and language are valued over any performance elements.
- We encourage you to memorize your poems, though it is not required.
- Be respectful of yourself, the youth writing community, and the group you represent.
- Invite people to support you at your bout.
- We advise teams to have as much fun as possible and be as prepared as they can be.
- We encourage coaches to talk to their poets about Rooted & Radical as a poetry festival, where community-building and sharing of poetry is more important than winning. While R&R is structured as a competition, please remember that the point is not the points, the point is the poetry!