Tab Observer Selection and Qualifications

Background
Although Section 5.08C and BP15 describe the selection process of a Tab Observer, neither section clarifies the exact process and qualifications of finding a Tab Observer. The intention of this document is to do exactly this.

Qualifications
A Tab Observer should have the following qualifications:
1. Should be neutral. They should be unaffiliated with the host school and should not have any relationship with a member of the tournament and tab staff that would qualify for a tab scratch, or that would compromise their judgement in the event of poor practices by tab.
2. Should have at least 3 years of experience with APDA debate, whether as a competitor, a judge, a coach, or in some other capacity that gives them knowledge about how a tournament is meant to be run.
3. Should not have a personal history of taking actions that are personally or professionally unethical, inequitable, or which cast doubt on the TO's judgement. The bar to determining whether a claim that the TO has a history of flawed or unethical judgement should be high, and should require multiple (2 or more) third-party verifications before the Board considers it to be a legitimate claim. However, in cases of extraordinarily unethical conduct, verification by a single third party can be sufficient for a legitimate claim.

"Nice To Have" Attributes
The following attributes are ideal but not necessary for a good TO:
1. Being a dino (former competitor) rather than current competitor on the league.
2. Experience with MIT-tab/NU-tab, Tabroom, or other tabulation software the tournament uses. TOs are often tasked with setup in the face of inexperienced tab staff.

Selection Process
Tournament directors should reach out to local dinos who meet the above qualifications and inquire whether the dino can serve as TO. The dino database can be found here. In the event that there are no dinos who can physically be at the tournament, the tournament director may find a remote TO, who will be required to keep abreast of tab developments, take tab scratches, and to check pairings and brackets for mistakes.

If there is a dino willing to TO the tournament, the tournament director must then submit the TO's name and the name of their tournament to the Board by emailing board@apdaweb.org.

If the tournament director is not able to find a TO on their own, they should reach out to the Board via email, and the Board will recommend a TO.