General Judging Guidelines

Thank you again for judging. Without you the tournament could not run. In order to make this a smooth, on time experience please read all of the information in this packet carefully.

**THE SCHEDULE:**

* Rounds are scheduled to start at 8:00a, but the competition always starts late.
* Please report to the judges’ room a minimum of thirty minutes before the competition starts to sign in.
* If you are not assigned a ballot for a particular round, please remain in the judging lounge on “stand-by” until dismissed by the judges’ room chair.

**HOW MANY JUDGES WILL THERE BE IN EACH ROUND?**

* There will be one judge in each of the preliminary rounds.
* Some rounds are “double-flighted” and two judges may be assigned to that round, taking turns judging and timing.
* Final rounds will have three judges.
* It is important to know how many judges you are waiting for and to not start until all judges have arrived.
* Prior to the round you may speak to the other judges, but we want each judge to make their own decisions and thus we ask that you not confer after or during the round. It is also a good idea to wait until after all the ballots are turned in to talk to the judges about anything at all as a student may see you talking and assume that you are discussing the round.

**WHAT ARE THE TWO SIDES IN THE DEBATE CALLED?:**

* In LD and policy, the “affirmative” is for the topic. The “negative” is against the topic.
* In Public Forum , the “proponency” is for the topic. The “opponency” is against the topic.
* In Parliamentary debate, the “government” or “proponency” is for the topic. The “opposition” is against the topic.
* For general use – the students understand “Aff” to be for the topic, and “Neg” to be against the topic.

**WHAT DO I DO ONCE I RECEIVE MY BALLOT?**

* When you receive a ballot, please proceed to that room immediately.
* The debaters will meet you there. Debaters are not allowed in the room without a judge.

**JUDGING CONFLICTS**

Do not start the round if any of the following occurs, instead ask the students who are there (if any) to remain outside while you return to the judges’ room and inform them of the problem. Depending on the conflict, you may be assigned to judge different event, or another judge may be assigned instead of you.

* A contestant does not show up after a few minutes
* One or more of the students are from your own school or are related to you
* You have already judged a round of the same contestants in the same event.

At the organizers discretion, you may be asked to judge the round anyway. In this case, do your best to judge the round as an isolated incident, without bias or outside preconceived notions about the competitors.

**WHAT DO I DO DURING THE ROUND?**

* Start the round by making sure you know which student(s) are representing each side and write the students names on the ballot. Make it easy on yourself by asking the students to sit on the side of the room that corresponds with your ballot – Aff on your left, neg on your right.
* If you are at all unsure about which student is which, ask the students what their code is before they speak. When ready, let the students begin the debate.

**Time:** Time is important. Please time each speech using an accurate time piece. A cell phone or stopwatch is usually sufficient.

* While many students will have their own timers, it is a good idea to “check their work”.
* You may also want to ask the students whether they would like time signals and how they would like them. A section on how to give time signals can be found later in this packet.
* Note: A speaker’s time begins as soon as he starts to speak including “roadmaps” and “thank yous”.

**Judging:** Be sure to listen attentively to all of the speeches in their entirety. You will find that they will give you a better “show” if they feel like you are enjoying yourself and listening attentively. You should take notes on the arguments on a separate piece of paper and try to follow the chain of argumentation. In general a debater will make an argument, the opponent will respond and then the original speaker will refute that response.

* Usually Aff (pro side) will define the debate and give you a main argument. Then give contentions (usually 2-3) to support the main argument.
* Then the Neg (con side) will either accept those definitions or refute them and try to redefine them. After that, the Neg usually refutes the Aff’s contentions and gives 2-3 contentions to support their own side.
* You decide which side did a better job of defining the debate, regardless of what the competitors state.
* If either side fails to refute any point of the debate, that means they accept the point as valid and it ‘flows through’.
* The winner is the side who convinces you the most that their side should win, even though both sides will usually tell you they have won the debate.
* Speakers on either side are not allow to introduce new arguments in their last speech of the debate, because the opposition will not be able to refute those new arguments.

**TERMS YOU MAY HEAR IN THE DEBATE:**

* **Cross apply:** Rather than the negative re-explaining the whole argument they may ask you to apply (cross apply) the argument they already made to the repetitive affirmative argument.
* **Non-unique or Non-exclusive**: A debater may assert that an argument applies to both sides equally or equivalently and therefore it doesn’t count as a true benefit from going the other way.

General Debate Instructions

**Preparation time:** Varies in length for each form of debate, but may never be yielded in order to gain extra speaking time. In two-person events the prep time is total for both debaters. Preparation time can only be used before a speech for that side and cannot be used before cross-examination (or crossfire). Prep time ends and speaking time begins when the debater begins speaking.

**Validity of Evidence:** Debaters are responsible for the validity of all evidence read in the debate. It is not necessary for a debater to read a full citation on each piece of evidence, but they must have that information readily available if challenged by their opponent. Evidence acquired from the use of the Internet during the round is not valid. In order to prove that they did not get their evidence from the internet during the round a team might provide the judge with an electronic copy of their evidence in a digital format (e.g. CD, USB drive etc.). The judge need not “do” anything with this other than set it on the table near them in case there is an evidence challenge later. They should not access the files or try to validate evidence on their own in any way.

**Evidence challenges:** Judges may not request nor be given any evidence or written material from teams except when the evidence is challenged as illegal by the opposing team during the round. The evidence in question should be collected by the judge and delivered to the Tournament Committee at the conclusion of the round. If an evidence challenge is pending the judge should not cast a decision in the debate until that challenge is resolved.

**Evidence exchange:** Teams or individuals may request evidence from opponents during cross-examination or preparation only and must return the requested evidence prior to their opponent’s next speech if requested.

**Cross-examination:** Questions must pertain only to materials and arguments offered by the opposition. The respondent may decline to answer only if a valid reason is given for doing so. The questioner controls the time and may interrupt a lengthy reply. Any form of time-wasting is considered unethical. Cross-examination time may not be yielded for the purpose of gaining additional preparation time.

**Computers and the internet:** The use of computers or electronic devices of any kind is prohibited in all debate events EXCEPT policy debate and LD Debate. The use of the internet is prohibited in ALL debate events, except to electronically share evidence they have already acquired before the round. Students are allowed to access electronic devices as a stand-alone timer.

**Constructives and rebuttals:** All arguments a team intends to present during the debate may be presented in the team’s first two speeches. Rebuttals are a team’s formal response to opponent arguments or an extension of their own arguments. No new arguments may be introduced in rebuttals. However, new analyses of prior arguments are allowed in rebuttals.

**Oral prompting (does not apply to LD):** Oral prompting by the speaker’s teammate either during cross-ex or during a speech should be discouraged, and may be considered by the judge as a factor in deciding the debate.

**Oral critiques:** Following the round a contestant might ask you for an oral critique of their performance. Please tell the student that oral comments are against the rules and that your comments will be written on the ballot.