

CT Middle School Debate League Tournament
November 21, 2015
Classical Magnet School, Hartford, CT

Judges' Instructions

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Scrimmage Day Schedule

Time	Activity	Location
9:30-9:45 AM	Registration & lunch ticket sale	Cafeteria
9:45-10:30AM	Judges' & Timers' Workshop Debaters' Workshop	TBA TBA
10:45-11:30AM	Round 1 (random pairing)	Rooms listed on round schedule
11:30-12:15PM	Round 2 (random pairing)	Rooms listed on round schedule
12:15-12:45PM	Lunch	Cafeteria
12:45-1:30PM	Round 3 (power matched, flip for side)	Rooms listed on round schedule
1:30-2:15PM	Final Round between 2 highest scoring teams	Auditorium
2:15-2:30PM	Awards & Departure	Auditorium

What you will need to take to each round:

- Ballot (take 2, in case you need to re-write the first one)
- Pen or pencil and paper to flow (take notes)
- Smartphone with timing app or stopwatch to keep time

Structure of Round

Speech	Duration
1 st PROP Constructive	5 min
Prep time	1 min
1 st OPP Constructive	5 min
Prep time	1 min
2 nd PROP Constructive	5 min
Prep time	1 min
2 nd OPP Constructive	5 min
OPP Rebuttal	3 min
Prep time	1 min
PROP Rebuttal	3 min
TOTAL	30 min

Grace Periods:

Every speech has a 15 second grace period. Judges should stop flowing and cut debaters off when the grace period ends.

Checklist of Speaker Burdens:

Speech	Duration	Burdens
1 st Proposition Constructive	5 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Provides clear definitions of the terms of the Motion. 2. May lay out an action plan. 3. Provides 2-4 clear arguments, each with a topic sentence, an explanation with explicit link to the Motion, reasoning, evidence & impacts. 4. Speaks instead of reads 5. Answers 1-3 POIs if offered.
1 st Opposition Constructive	5 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Clearly states Opp's case. 2. May lay out a counter-plan. 3. Provides 2-4 clear arguments, each with a topic sentence, an explanation with explicit link to the Motion, reasoning, evidence & impacts. 4. Explicitly refutes all Prop arguments, including restatement of the Prop argument with a directly related refutation of it. 5. Speaks instead of reads. 6. Answers 1-3 POIs if offered.
2 nd Proposition Constructive	5 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. May introduce new Prop arguments. 2. Rebuilds and extends 1st Prop's arguments with new analysis & examples. 3. Refutes Opp's refutations. 4. Explicitly refutes all Opp arguments. 5. Speaks instead of reads. 6. Answers 1-3 POIs if offered.
2 nd Opposition Constructive	5 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. May introduce new Opp arguments. 2. Rebuilds and extends 1st Opp's arguments with new analysis and examples. 3. Refutes Prop's refutations. 4. Explicitly refutes all Prop arguments. 5. Speaks instead of reads. 6. Answers 1-3 POIs if offered.
Opposition Rebuttal	3 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responds to any new Prop arguments introduced in 2nd Prop constructive. 2. Highlights most important points of the round and explains why each of these are more effectively dealt with on the Opp side. 3. Crystallizes the whole round down to a central value or key issue and demonstrates why the Opposition wins.
Proposition Rebuttal	3 minutes	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Responds to any new Opp points introduced in 2nd Opp constructive. 2. Highlights most important points of the round and explains why each of these are more effectively dealt with on the Prop side. 3. Crystallizes the whole round down to a central value or key issue and demonstrates why the Proposition wins.
Total		Speeches: 26 minutes, Prep time: 4 minutes. Total: 30 minutes

Points of Clarification (POCs)

There are two types of POCs:

1. If the Opposition team requires clarification of the definitions offered by the first Proposition speaker, an OPP debater should rise after definitions are presented and say “Point of Clarification” or “POC.” The first PROP speaker should then answer all of OPP’s questions about the definitions. This type of POC saves the round from becoming a long argument about what PROP’s definitions were or what they meant.
2. If a speaker says something unintelligible or inaudible, at any point in a round, an opponent may rise and ask for clarification.

In these instances, the opponent may stand and, without being recognized, say: “Point of clarification. Would you please clarify/restate your last definition or point because {reason}.” It must be done in 10 seconds or less and can be done at any point during the round, including protected times. **Time is paused when the judge hears “Point of clarification” and resumes after the point has been restated or clarified.** If it seems that the opponents are not really seeking clarification, but bothering, please silence them.

Points of Information (POIs)

A POI is a question or statement directed to the speaker by a member of the opposing team. To offer a point of information, the debater should stand. She may or may not say “Point of information” or “POI” or “On that point.” The speaker holding the floor has absolute power over whether or not to answer a POI. If the point is refused, the asker must sit down. If the point is accepted, the asker may ask a short question or make a short comment. The person speaking must respond to the point. Points of information should be no more than 15 seconds in length. The clock continues to run throughout.

POIs may be offered during the middle three minutes of the four constructive speeches (the 5 minute speeches), but are prohibited during the last two speeches (the 3 minute rebuttal speeches). Giving and taking points of information can help a debater increase their speaker points and debaters are encouraged to accept and ask points. However doing so excessively can be distracting and detrimental. It is generally recommended that each speaker accept one to three POIs during her speech and offer several during her opponents’ speeches, so long as it does not become overly disruptive. Speakers should not interrupt the flow of their speeches to accept a point of information; instead, they should wait until finishing their sentence or idea before accepting. It is ok to wave a POI down or tell a debater that you will not accept her point at this time, but will take it later in the round.

Judging Caveats

Do not bring your own opinions into the debate room when you judge. On many topics, the judge will be more informed (or at least more opinionated) than the debaters. Please try to judge the round on the basis of the information presented by the debaters, not on the basis of any prior knowledge you have of the topic. Debates should be decided primarily on the reasoning and explanations presented by the debaters, and secondarily on facts. Dress and appearance should not be considered. When choosing the winner, try to fairly and accurately compare the positions of the two teams as they presented them, with respect to both individual arguments and the main issues in the debate.

Remember that this form of debate is based on argumentation, so students should not expect their opponents to know every study or article or book written about the topic. Research is used to enhance arguments, but should not decide the outcome or speaker points on its own.

It is the burden of the first Proposition speaker to define the terms of the round. This includes defining general terms like “This House” “good” and “harm” and can also include creating a plan or narrowing the scope of the debate. Whatever is defined by the proposition stands unless the Opposition successfully argues that Prop’s definitions are either unreasonable or narrow the debate so much so that Opp has no room to argue. If Opp challenges Prop’s definitions, the judge does not rule who won the definitional battle during the debate but decides at the end when determining the winner of the round. If Proposition fails to offer definitions, the Opposition may mention this and offer alternatives. However, if terms are reasonably defined and/or narrowed by the Proposition, the Opposition must argue on the grounds provided by the Proposition. They may not argue another case or argue outside the limits set by the Proposition just because they prefer their own definitions.

No new arguments are allowed in the rebuttal speeches. Speakers may offer new evidence or examples for arguments that have already been made. If a speaker makes a new argument and the other team notes this to you, deduct from the speaker’s score and take that point off your flow. If the other team does not mention it, you are not required to deduct points for it but the content shouldn’t count toward their side in the debate and you should mention it to the speaker in your verbal or written comments. Carefully check your flow when examining a possible new argument because deciding what is a new argument and what is a new example can be tricky. If a second speaker introduces a new point in her speech, the third speaker should respond. This can often sounds like a new line of argumentation but it’s not.

Assigning Speaker Points — Half points are allowed between 23 ½ & 29 ½

Point Range	Considerations
29 29 ½ 30	<p>This is an extraordinary, verging on perfect, speech. Speaker’s burdens were fulfilled with aplomb. Speaker demonstrates a sophisticated grasp of debate technique and a superior understanding of the issue under discussion.</p> <p><u>Arguments</u> are perfectly clear with exciting and original analysis.</p> <p><u>Rebuttals</u>— All points are soundly and irreparably smashed.</p> <p><u>Organization</u>— Speech structure is clearly laid out at beginning and followed to the letter—the structure is clearer than your doctoral thesis; speech finishes exactly as the time expires with no second rushed or wasted.</p> <p><u>Presentation</u>—Speech is fluent, showing wide range of vocabulary and idiom; speaker uses wit, tone and volume to appropriately emphasize points.</p> <p><u>POIs</u>—Offered AND answered with precision and wit.</p> <p><i>The Tab Director will ask Judges to explain and justify point scores this high.</i></p>
27 27 ½ 28 28 ½	<p>Strong, consistent performance in all aspects of the debate. Debater fulfilled all or most of the speaker’s burdens but could have been more precise and witty.</p> <p><u>Arguments</u> are solid and clear, containing topic statement, explanation, evidence and impact with clear connection to motion.</p> <p><u>Rebuttals</u>— All points are addressed clearly.</p> <p><u>Organization</u>— Structure is clear; all or most time is used.</p> <p><u>Presentation</u>— Speech clear and fluent with effective presentation.</p> <p><u>POIs</u>— Offered AND answered at least 1 effectively.</p>
25 25 ½ 26 26 ½	<p>Solid average performance in all aspects of the debate. Debater fulfills most but maybe not all of the speaker’s burdens.</p> <p><u>Arguments</u> are present, containing most elements.</p> <p><u>Rebuttals</u>—Most points are addressed, although some inadequately or unclearly.</p> <p><u>Organization</u>—Some organization but some parts unclear; speaker uses time pretty effectively.</p> <p><u>Presentation</u>— Speech is clear; average middle school vocabulary used.</p> <p><u>POIs</u>— Offered OR answered at least 1. They could have been more effective.</p>
23 23 ½ 24 24 ½	<p>Performance is lacking in one or more aspects. Some of the speaker’s burdens are unmet. Debater may miss important issues in the debate and may not use all of the time available.</p> <p><u>Arguments</u> are weak and lack explanation, impact, evidence or explicit connection to the motion.</p> <p><u>Rebuttal</u>—Points are dropped and rebuttals are weak or unclear, not explicitly addressing opposing arguments.</p> <p><u>Organization</u>— Generally disorganized; time is greatly under or over used.</p> <p><u>Presentation</u>— Speech may be difficult to understand; vocabulary may be limited; general lack of effective presentation.</p> <p><u>POIs</u>—May have failed to ask or answer POIs. If they were offered or answered, they weren’t effective.</p>
22 ½ or less	<p>Scores this low should not be assigned unless the debater has done something—foul language, bad behavior—that the judge feels should be brought to the attention of the debater’s coach. <i>Judge should be prepared to explain the situation to the Tab Director, and the Tab Director will decide whether further action should be taken.</i></p>

How to Judge Well

1. **Make sure you're in the right room at the right time.**

The schedule will have the names of the two teams, the room number and the judge's name. The round starts immediately when the schedule is distributed.

2. **Fill out the ballot correctly before the debate begins.**

Enter the round number, the room number, your name as judge and the school you represent (if any), the school name of each team and the names of the speakers. Make sure you enter the speaker names in the proper order.

3. **Manage the debate.** The judge has four tasks during the debate:

- **Keep the debate moving:** The debaters should be ready when you finish filling out the ballot. Ask the teams if they are ready and give the 1st Proposition speaker permission to begin. If the debaters are slow to begin subsequent speeches, ask them to begin.
- **Keep time:** The speech times are in the attached table. Time each segment and try to signal when students have 2 minutes, one minute and 30 seconds left. All speakers are given 15 seconds of grace time to finish up. When the grace period is up, stop flowing. If the speaker continues talking, say "time." Students may time themselves, but you should still keep your own time to be sure. The clock stops during Points of Clarification (these are rare) but not during POIs. Do not allow POIs during protected time.
- **Keep order:** Judges should intervene as little as possible. Do not interrupt or correct a speaker unless absolutely necessary due to rude language or behavior. Do not "rule" on issues or arguments during the debate, even if asked.
- **Flow:** Note each team's arguments (contentions), supporting arguments and examples. Note how each team replies to its opponent's arguments. Note who asks and who answers POIs, how well they do so, and whether these points are used in later speeches.

4. **When the debate ends, have a useful, balanced word for the debaters**

The debaters will usually shake hands and offer to shake yours. Provide an oral critique. For each team or each speaker, try to find something praiseworthy, and something they can do to improve. Please **DO NOT TELL THEM WHO YOU THINK WON THE DEBATE.**

5. **Decide who won and who lost and fill out the ballot. Take around 10 minutes to do so.**

Ask the teams to leave and close the door before you start. We suggest you proceed as follows:

- **Decide who won.** By the end of the debate you may have a subjective impression as to which team's arguments were more persuasive. Check your impression by reviewing every argument and decide which team won each. Look for dropped arguments first (ones the opposing team did not respond to at all). Those are won by the team making the argument. Weigh the importance of each argument in order to decide the winner of the round. Enter the school name of the winning team on the ballot and circle whether they were Proposition or Opposition and give a one or two sentence reason for your choice.

- **Rank order the speakers from 1 to 6**, with 1 being the best, and 6 the worst. There can be no ties on speaker ranks.
- **Assign speaker points**, no lower than 22, no higher than 30, based on the rubric provided. Points should agree with the rank ordering, in that higher ranked speakers should not have lower points. Speaker points may be tied for speakers with adjacent ranks, e.g. your first and second place speakers may both receive 25 ½ points.
- **Provide a brief written critique.** You may provide comments for each speaker, or comments to each team, or explain your decision in more detail. You may use the back of the ballot if needed. Your constructive feedback is extremely important to the debaters. Try to praise where possible, and to offer suggestions for improvement rather than criticism.

6. Get your ballot back to the tab room on time.

Bring your ballot back to the tab room in person. Make sure someone reviews the ballot for accuracy before leaving. Do not go to lunch or to the next round without turning in your ballot. The next round cannot start until all of the ballots are collected.